



Couple and Family Therapy

Education

Couple and family therapists enter the field with a master's degree in family therapy (MFT) or a master's of science degree (MS).

Licensure and certification

Couple and family therapists must pass state licensing examinations in almost all states. In addition there are post graduate requirements for clinical hours and supervision to qualify for licensing that vary from state to state. While the vast majority of states require licensing a few do not. For information on Pennsylvania licensing requirements contact The Pennsylvania State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors at www.ST-SOCIALWORK@state.pa.us.

Couple and Family therapists may receive additional certification by the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy in the area of clinical supervision (Approved Supervisor).

Roles and functions

Couple and family therapists are qualified to diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders, whether cognitive, affective, or behavioral, within the context of marriage and family systems and other significant relationships. They apply psychotherapeutic and family systems theory and techniques in the delivery of professional services to individuals, couples and families for the purpose of treating such nervous and mental disorders. The training of marriage and family therapists is based on a relational view of life in which an understanding and respect for diversity and non-discrimination are fundamentally addressed, valued and practiced. Some examples of clinical problems treated by couple and family therapists range from marital and couple conflicts, eating disorders, psychosocial issues in coping with chronic illness, divorce and stepfamily issues and issues of family violence. Based on this view, marriage and family therapy is a professional orientation toward life and is applicable to a wide

variety of circumstances, including individual, couple, family, group and community problems. It applies to all human systems; not only to persons who are married or who have conventional family relationships. Administrator, researcher and educator are additional potential roles.

Practice settings

Couple and family therapists work in a variety of settings including, but not limited to, outpatient mental health clinics, hospitals, schools, court settings, psychiatric hospitals, day care settings and private practice settings.

Professional association links:

www.aamft.org.

Link to TJU education program:

<http://www.jefferson.edu/jchp/mft/>