

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

The Marriage and Family Therapy program offers a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT), that prepares candidates for careers as marriage and family therapists. The curriculum and clinical training at Fairfield University equips the candidate to work in a wide variety of professional settings with diverse populations who are experiencing a broad range of clinical concerns. The program provides a learning context that fundamentally values diversity through a core curriculum and clinical supervision that incorporates a social justice framework in all aspects of training and education. Toward that end, faculty members are committed to creating an environment that welcomes and provides mentorship to a diverse student body by a diverse group of faculty, instructors, and supervisors.

The program is accredited through 2027 by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). Upon completion of the planned program of study, candidates may apply for pre-clinical fellow membership in AAMFT and are eligible to take the licensing examination in the State of Connecticut. Upon completion of additional required clinical experience, supervision and a passing score on the national licensing exam, according to Connecticut statutes, graduates may apply for Connecticut licensure in marriage and family therapy and Clinical Fellow membership in AAMFT.

The School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy (SB-MFT) certificate is an advanced training certificate program that prepares candidates to fulfill the requirements for certification with the State Board of Education to work in the public school system. The program is available to current MFT master's students and to licensed graduates of COAMFTE-accredited programs.

The Queer and Trans Mental Health certificate prepares mental health professionals to meet the diverse mental health needs of queer and trans youth and adults. The program is designed for the working professional or graduate student and is suited for marriage and family therapists, counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, and more.

Mission Statement

The Marriage and Family Therapy program at Fairfield University is designed to prepare students for careers as competent professional marriage and family therapists by providing them with a solid conceptual knowledge base and the clinical skills necessary for effective practice. Students are exposed to the broad range of family systems theories and models with a particular emphasis on the utilization of the Structural and Strategic approaches. The program is dedicated to providing a learning context that fundamentally values diversity, nondiscrimination and the promotion of justice. The program seeks to educate students to be socially aware and ethically responsible professionals.

Philosophy Statement

The philosophy statement of the Marriage and Family Therapy program is an extension of the Mission Statement and incorporates the Conceptual Scholar-Practitioner Framework of the School of Education and Human Development and the Ignatian Jesuit values of the university. The Marriage and Family Therapy program instills in graduates the value of the inherent worth and dignity of all people and promotes the wellbeing of individuals, couples, families and communities, is committed to

serving a diverse society; possesses strong conceptual and clinical knowledge and upholds the highest standards of professional conduct. The program supports the development of intellectual rigor, personal integrity, multidisciplinary collaboration, informed decision-making, self reflection and social responsibility.

Admission to the Program

Contact the Office of Graduate Admission at gradadmis@fairfield.edu for deadline information.

All potential candidates will be required to participate in a mandatory *in person* on-campus group interview as part of the admission process and will be notified via the online admission portal of their eligibility for the group interview.

All candidates are required to adhere to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and the Marriage and Family Therapy Program policies and procedures. Failure to comply with ethical and professional standards may also result in termination from the program. In addition, the disposition statement presented in this catalog is applicable to this program as it is to all programs in the School of Education and Human Development. Given the professional responsibility one assumes as a marriage and family therapist, candidates whose work continues to be of marginal academic quality despite remedial efforts, demonstrates behavior that is not conducive to the role of the marriage and family therapist (See Marriage and Family Therapy Program Student Handbook), or an unsuccessful attempt to maintain or be placed in a practicum or internship site may be terminated from the program.

Kathryn P. Koslow Center for Marriage and Family Therapy

The Marriage and Family Therapy program operates a clinical facility on the campus of Fairfield University. The Kathryn P. Koslow Center for Marriage and Family Therapy is a new, state-of-the-art facility that was made possible through a generous gift. The Center is a beautiful facility that is equipped with the latest in technology which enables advanced master's degree candidates to receive the finest professional training for students entering the profession. The Koslow Center offers a wide range of clinical services available to the community, as well as new and exciting opportunities for students to engage in research, grants, and community partnerships.

The Koslow Center for Marriage and Family Therapy is dedicated to providing therapeutic services to individuals, couples, and families; to excellence in the training of professional marriage and family therapists; and to creating a community of professionals where both graduates and current students can be engaged and remain connected. In keeping with Fairfield University's identity as a Jesuit and Catholic institution of higher learning, the Koslow Center is committed to the ideals of embracing difference, examining social systems critically, and becoming directly involved with those who are underprivileged and underserved.

Programs

- Master of Arts in Family Studies
- Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy

- Certificate in School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy
- Certificate or Concentration in Queer and Trans Mental Health

Courses

MFTH 5433 Social Justice and Diversity in Professional Practice 3 Credits

Students examine professional practice with individuals, couples, and families from diverse ethnic, cultural, racial, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds with a focus on issues of diversity, social justice, power, privilege, and underserved communities, in accordance with Key Element IV-B and Foundational Curriculum Area (FCA) 3 of the accreditation standards set forth by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). The course addresses the issues of gender role stereotyping and changing sex roles, and integrates professional contributions from the professional literature.

MFTH 5447 Human Development Across the Family Lifecycle 3 Credits

This course explores the processes of individual and family development from childhood through old age. Presenting theoretical perspectives for studying child, adult, and family development, the course examines the modifications of family structures over time and psycho-social development within family systems and cultural contexts.

MFTH 5465 Introduction to Substance Abuse and Addictions 3 Credits

Candidates explore basic information about the history and current use/abuse of various drugs and alcohol. Topics include addiction, the 12-step programs, physiological effects, FAS, COAs, and family systems as well as culturally relevant prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies for individuals and families.

MFTH 5470 Queer and Trans Mental Health 3 Credits

This class is designed to expand candidates' multicultural competence when working with sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals, couples, and families in educational, mental health, and healthcare settings. This course adopts an intersectional, critical, and social justice perspective by interrogating heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, power, privilege, and oppression. Using the minority stress model, candidates will examine health disparities and critical presenting concerns, such as coming out, depression, suicide, and gender transition. Candidates will engage in critical self-reflection of their own multicultural identities and the influence of these on the therapeutic process or the educational setting.

MFTH 5471 Sexual and Gender Minority Mental Health

Treatment 2 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 5470.

This course is designed to follow MFTH 5470 and expand candidates' multicultural competence when working with sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals, couples, and families in educational, mental health, and healthcare settings. This course adopts an intersectional, relational, and family life cycle perspective. Topics include barriers to accessing treatment, effective approaches to treatment, and mental health prevention and promotion. Candidates will integrate professional practice standards, research evidence, healing and liberation practices, and critical reflection of their own multicultural identities to articulate an affirmative approach to treating SGM individuals, couples, and families.

MFTH 5480 Transgender and Gender Expansive Affirming Care 1.5 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 5470.

This course is designed to expand candidates' understanding of transgender and gender expansive youth, adults, and their families in educational, mental health, and healthcare settings. This course adopts an intersectional, relational, and family life cycle perspective. Topics include the unique challenges faced by transgender and gender expansive individuals, couples, and families, gender identity development, and letters of support for medical gender transition. Candidates will integrate professional practice standards, research evidence, and critical reflection of their own social identities to articulate an affirmative approach to treating transgender and gender expansive individuals and their families.

MFTH 5481 Conversations with Queer and Trans Youth 1.5 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 5470.

This course is designed to expand candidates' understanding of queer and trans youth, their families, and their communities through a critical, intersection, and queer lens. In particular, we will consider the implications for family work with young people whose identities are relationally and discursively constructed and situated. Candidates will focus on cultivating a praxis of self-reflexivity and accountability for power relations. Candidates will integrate queer theory, research evidence, and critical reflection of their own multicultural identities to articulate an affirmative approach to treating sexual minority youth and their families.

MFTH 5525 Divorce, Single Parenting, and Blended Families 3 Credits

This course considers the implications of divorce, single parenting, recoupling, and step-parenting for families experiencing these transitions and for society at large. Specific topics include boundary issues during transition, legal aspects of divorce, custody decisions, school issues for children of divorce, and the complexities of single-parenting and blending families, with an emphasis on recent research regarding divorce and its aftermath.

MFTH 5550 Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy 3 Credits

This course provides an overview of the historical development of the field of family therapy, acquainting candidates with the models developed by Minuchin, Haley, Madanes, Satir, Bowen, Whitaker, and others. The course focuses on distinguishing between the systemic approaches in terms of assessment, conceptualization, diagnosis, treatment, and theoretical foundations, and explores contemporary directions of the field.

MFTH 5598 Tevera Site Placement Process 0 Credits

This zero-credit course is designed for students as a mechanism for payment of MFTH Technology Fee associated with the Tevera site placement platform used for the clinical training process.

MFTH 5999G Queer and Trans Mental Health Capstone 3 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH TBD.

In this course, candidates apply the knowledge and skills gained throughout the certificate program to create and implement a project in their place of employment, other sponsoring organization, or community. The project is developed with a faculty mentor and community partner to directly impact the mental health of SGM individuals, couples, or families. Candidates take this course after completing all other coursework required for the Certificate in Sexual and Gender Minority Mental Health.

MFTH 6425 Private Practice and Small Business Management 3 Credits

This course will provide an overview of small business and private practice management. Students will become acquainted with the technical and personal elements necessary to create and sustain a private practice. Attention will be focused on narrowing student focus in order to develop a feasible strategy for creating, implementing, and maintaining small business goals.

MFTH 6450 Techniques of Narrative and Solution-Focused Therapy 3 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 6553.

This course will provide an overview of two postmodern and strengths-based therapeutic theories, concepts and applications. The student will become acquainted with the theories and concepts developed by White, Epston, Anderson, Freedman, Combs, de Shazer, Berg, and others. Attention will be focused on distinguishing between the postmodern approaches in terms of assessment, conceptualization, treatment and theoretical foundations.

MFTH 6552 Intervention in Structural and Strategic Family Therapy 3 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 5550.

This course focuses on the models of Minuchin, Haley, Madanes, and MRI, with an emphasis on developing a substantive understanding of diagnosis, assessment, and intervention design. The course addresses the range of techniques associated with each orientation, indications and contra-indications for using specific techniques, rationale development for intervention, and the role of the therapist.

MFTH 6553 Family Therapy Pre-Practicum 3 Credits

Prerequisites: MFTH 5550, MFTH 6552.

Taken with the approval of the clinical director, this course provides simulated experiences in the practice of family therapy and focuses on developing skills in joining and forming a therapeutic relationship, designing and implementing interventions, and the use of self at the various stages of therapy. The course emphasizes the structural, strategic, and systemic family therapy models and addresses culturally sensitive practice, management, and treatment of cases of suicide, child abuse, domestic violence, and incest. Successful completion of this course and the requirements determines readiness for clinical practice. Candidates must have a signed clinical training agreement on file before registration.

MFTH 6555 Foundations of Marital and Family Therapy 3 Credits

This course exposes candidates to the theories upon which the models of family therapy are based, exploring the critical epistemological issues in family therapy theory. Furthermore, it helps candidates think about therapy theoretically applying systems theory to an understanding of the variety of contexts in which marriage and family therapists work, including mental health systems, medical systems, etc. The course prepares candidates to understand and contribute to current thinking in the field in regard to theory and practice. Topics include general systems theory, cybernetics, communication theory, constructivism, and current developments in epistemology.

MFTH 6556 Research in Marriage and Family Therapy 3 Credits

This course covers the methodology, design, and statistical procedures for research in marriage and family therapy. The course addresses selecting appropriate experimental designs, data analysis and understanding the inferential potential of statistical procedures, and evaluating published research, including efficacy and outcome studies in marriage and family therapy. The course content includes quantitative and qualitative research in the field with recognition of cultural factors in research design and methodology.

MFTH 6561 Advanced Interventions in Family Therapy 3 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 6951.

This course explores in depth the theory and techniques of Bowen Family Systems Theory. It focuses on developing a substantive understanding of the theoretical assumptions and clinical applications of Bowen theory and emphasizes self-of-therapist processes as central to effective practice of Bowen therapy.

MFTH 6565 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Family Therapy 3 Credits

This course examines issues specific to the clinical practice and profession of marriage and family therapy. Areas of study include ethical decision-making and the code of ethics; professional socialization and the role of professional organizations; licensure and certification; legal responsibilities and liabilities of clinical practice; research, family law, confidentiality issues, AAMFT Code of Ethics, inter-professional cooperation, and mental health care delivery systems.

MFTH 6566 Substance Abuse and the Family 3 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 5465.

This course brings together substance abuse studies and family systems approaches. Students are presented with a knowledge base of skills and methods for assessing and treating family systems. The course identifies the addictive and inter-generational patterns within families. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the theoretical frameworks to understand and create interventions for alcoholic and substance-abusing family systems. Relational clinical models including developmental, systemic, solution-focused, and narrative approaches are reviewed and evaluated. The course examines the history and methods of treatment models. Issues of social justice are emphasized in a review of socio-cultural and social policy that influence family behaviors and treatment.

MFTH 6567 Couples Therapy 3 Credits

Prerequisite: MFTH 6553.

This course examines couple relationships including issues of intimacy and sexuality throughout the lifespan. The focus is on understanding, conceptualizing, and treating couple relationships across sexual orientations and partnership types. The course addresses assessment and intervention in critical cases as well as treatment of common presenting problems such as infertility, child-rearing conflict, infidelity, domestic violence, and chronic health issues. The course also covers sexual dysfunction as it occurs in each phase of the couple relationship. Students learn methods for biopsychosocial assessment and diagnosis and develop ethically informed treatment formulations using systemic models of therapy.

MFTH 6569 Assessment Techniques in Marriage and Family Therapy 3 Credits

This advanced family therapy course addresses clinical diagnosis and assessment in the treatment process. Topics include major family therapy assessment methods and instruments, familiarity with the DSM V, pharmacological treatments, and recognition and critical assessment of cultural factors.

MFTH 6570 School-Based Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy 3 Credits

This course is a requirement in the Area of Specialization in School Marriage and Family Therapy and provides an opportunity for candidates to apply theory to practice in the context of the public school system. The practicum is an advanced level clinical experience that is specifically designed to meet the requirements established by the Connecticut State Board of Education for certification in School Marriage and Family Therapy. Enrollment by permission only.

MFTH 6900 Special Topics (Shell)**1-3 Credits**

This course explores advanced topics in the field of family therapy. Topics may vary each semester and are determined by the marriage and family therapy faculty as a reflection of pertinent themes of interest in the field.

MFTH 6951 Practicum in Family Therapy I**3 Credits**

Prerequisites: MFTH 5433, MFTH 6553, MFTH 6565.

This course provides clinical experience working with families and meets the standards for training established by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and the Connecticut Department of Health and Addiction Services. Candidates provide five hours per week of service in the Koslow Center plus five to 10 hours per week of service in a community agency offering family therapy treatment under supervision.

MFTH 6952 Practicum in Family Therapy II**3 Credits**

Prerequisite: MFTH 6951.

This course is a continuation of MFTH 6951.

MFTH 6971 Thesis**3 Credits**

Prerequisite: MFTH 6556.

This elective seminar is for candidates wishing to conduct original research in the field of family therapy or family science. The thesis is expected to make a scholarly contribution to the field. Credit for this course is contingent upon approval of the completed thesis. Prior to beginning this course, candidates must consult with their advisor and complete the prerequisite steps, including the preparation and acceptance of a thesis proposal.

MFTH 6972 MFT Thesis Research I**3 Credits**

Prerequisite: MFTH 6971.

This course is the second in a series of three Master Thesis courses in MFT. This course operates as an independent study experience under the supervision of a full-time, core faculty Chairperson and the secondary supervision of two additional full-time faculty Committee Members from Fairfield University. All thesis proposals are submitted for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption. The student must independently engage in the continual collection and/or analysis of data. Students are required to remain in close contact with the thesis advisor, particularly around any participant concerns or unforeseen circumstances that occur during data collection. This course is open to students in the marriage and family therapy program.

MFTH 6973 MFT Thesis Research II**3 Credits**

Prerequisites: MFTH 6971, MFTH 6972.

This course is the third in a series of three Master Thesis courses in MFT. This course operates as an independent study experience under the supervision of a full-time, core faculty Chairperson and the secondary supervision of two additional full-time faculty Committee Members from Fairfield University. All thesis proposals are submitted for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption. During this final semester of the MFT thesis project, the student will complete the data analysis process, write chapter 5, the discussion, and complete the final defense. This course is available for MFTH students only.

MFTH 6981 Internship in Family Therapy I**3 Credits**

Prerequisite: MFTH 6952.

During internship candidates provide 10 to 15 hours of clinical services at an off-campus internship site. They receive weekly individual and group supervision by an approved site supervisor and weekly group supervision by University faculty.

MFTH 6982 Internship in Family Therapy II**3 Credits**

Prerequisite: MFTH 6981.

This course is a continuation of MFTH 6981. Candidates must complete all clinical and supervisory hours by the close of the grading period to be eligible for graduation.

MFTH 6983 Continuing Internship in Family Therapy**1 Credit**

Prerequisite: MFTH 6981.

This course is a continuation of MFTH 6981. Candidates must complete all clinical and supervisory hours by the close of the grading period to be eligible for graduation.

MFTH 6990 Independent Study**1-6 Credits**

Candidates undertake individual projects in consultation with a faculty member based on proposals submitted one semester in advance of course registration.

MFTH 6999F Comprehensive Exam in Family Studies**0 Credits**

The family studies comprehensive exam is a standardized exam in which the candidate answers questions that require them to demonstrate understanding and mastery of terms reflecting the content they have learned throughout the program. It is highly recommended that candidates complete their comprehensive exam during the semester prior to the one in which they plan to graduate.

MFTH 6999T Comprehensive Exam in Marriage and Family Therapy**0 Credits**

The marriage and family therapy comprehensive exam is a standardized exam in which the candidate answers questions that require them to demonstrate understanding and mastery of terms reflecting the content they have learned throughout the program. It is highly recommended that candidates complete their comprehensive exam during the semester prior to the one in which they plan to graduate.