

## **Coursework Requirements and Clinical Experience for Licensure as Marriage and Family Therapist or Marriage and Family Therapist Intern**

### **Coursework Requirements:**

Theoretical Foundations-3 courses/9 sem hrs (13.5 quarter hours)

Clinical Practice-5 courses/15 sem hrs (22.5 quarter hours)

Individual Development and Family Relations-2 courses/6 sem hrs (9 quarter hours)

Professional Identity, Legal and Ethical Issues-1 course/3 sem hrs (4.5 quarter hours)

Research-1 course/3 sem hrs (4.5 quarter hours)

Clinical Experience-3 courses/9 sem hrs (13.5 quarter hours)

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By law, all applicants must have a minimum 48 graduate semester hours or 72 quarter hours in marriage and family therapy along with an earned master's degree, specialist's degree or doctoral degree. Each course must be a minimum of at least a 3 semester hour graduate level course with a minimum of 45 classroom hours or 4.5 quarter hours; one course cannot be used to satisfy two different categories.

This course of study may be completed during the qualifying degree program or additional graduate-level coursework may be completed successfully at a college or university accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, one of its transferring regional associations, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, a post-degree program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education, or a regionally-accredited institution of higher learning subsequent to receiving the graduate degree, along with evidence of an earned master's degree, specialist degree, or doctoral degree.

### **Definition of Categories for Required Coursework**

#### *1. Theoretical Foundations*

The coursework content in this area must enable students to conceptualize and distinguish the critical epistemological issues in marriage and family therapy. The material in this area must be related conceptually to clinical concerns. All courses in this area must have a major focus from a systems theory orientation. One of these courses must be an introductory course. Summary or overview courses in which systems is one of several theories covered are not acceptable.

Studies in this area include, but are not limited to:

- a. Systems theory
- b. Theories of family development
- c. Theories of family functioning
- d. Family life cycle
- e. Values, belief, and meaning systems of the family
- f. Families under stress
- g. Family sub-systems
- h. Contemporary family forms
- i. Theories of marital and family interaction

## *2. Clinical Practice*

The coursework in this area must address marriage and family therapy practice and be related conceptually to theory. Coursework in this area must focus on assessment, including marriage and family therapy methods and major mental health assessment methods and instruments, and must provide a comprehensive survey and substantive understanding of the major models of marriage and family therapy, as well as address a wide variety of clinical problems. Coursework must educate students about appropriate collaboration with related disciplines.

Two of these courses must be psychopathology and diagnostics of psychopathology. Survey or overview courses in which family therapy is one of several theories covered are not acceptable. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to:

- a. Marital and family communication
- b. Family psychology
- c. Family therapy
- d. Methods of intervention
- e. Family assessment
- f. Sexual issues

- g. Major theories of marriage and family therapy such as structural, strategic, trans-generational, experimental, object relations, contextual & systemic therapy

### Description of Psychopathology

Studies that provide an understanding of psychopathology, abnormal psychology, abnormal behavior, etiology dynamics, and treatment of abnormal behavior. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to:

- a. The understanding of various forms of abnormal behavior and psychopathology in children, adolescents, and adults;
- b. Focus on the etiology and morbidity of differing mental disorders;
- c. Assessment techniques when evaluating psychological disorders, including personality and behavior;
- d. Evaluate the psychometric properties of personality and behavior assessment instruments;
- e. Determine the benefits and limitations of assessment, including current and legal ethical issues;
- f. Determine how to integrate information from various sources in order to more fully describe personality and behavioral patterns;
- g. Introduction to the science and art of clinical assessment as a foundation for the actual practice of assessment in school and community mental health settings;
- h. Practical training in the process of clinical assessment as associated with the specific disorders, which is focused on the use of assessment techniques in a professionally and ethically responsible manner; and
- i. Focus on the serious problems, other than adjustment disorders and V codes and codes that are assigned to normal lifecycle transitional conflicts. Serious problems are defined in standard diagnostic nomenclature (DSM-Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders).
- j. Counseling theory, diagnosis, techniques, and interventions.

## Description of Diagnostics of Psychopathology

Studies that provide an understanding of the diagnostics of Psychopathology (study includes DSM). Studies in this area include, but are not limited to:

- a. Use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in relation to the psychology of deviant, or abnormal behavior;
- b. The understanding of the history and theories of abnormal psychology in the field through lecture, readings, the internet, group discussions, and research;
- c. The understanding of diagnoses in the DSM IV-TR or DSM V;
- d. The application of this knowledge through exercises, assignments, class participation, and videotaped role-plays;
- e. The application of this knowledge through assessment, treatment plans, counseling, projects, and presentations; and
- f. Diagnosis of DSMIV disorders.

### *3. Individual Development and Family Relations*

The coursework content in this area must include significant material on individual development, family development, and family relationships. Coursework must include significant material on issues of sexuality as it relates to marriage and family therapy theory and practice. Sexual dysfunctions and difficulties as well as individual development, gender, multicultural and sexual orientation, as related to marriage and family therapy theory and practice must be included. Test and measurement courses are not accepted toward this area.

### *4. Professional Identity, Legal and Ethical Issues*

The coursework in this area must include information about legal responsibilities and liabilities in the practice of marriage and family therapy. The coursework must include research, family law, confidentiality issues, and codes of ethics. Religious ethic courses and moral theology are not accepted toward this area. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to:

- a. Professional socialization
- b. Professional organizations
- c. Legal issues
- d. Interprofessional cooperation
- e. Professional ethics

## *5. Research*

The coursework content in this area include significant material on research in marriage and family therapy. This area must focus on research methodology, data analysis and the evaluation of research. Individual personality, test and measurement, and library research courses are not accepted toward this area. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to:

- a. Research design
- b. Methods, statistics
- c. Special issues in marriage and family research

## *6. Clinical Experience*

The coursework content in this area must include client contact and clinical supervision with individuals, couples and families in a clinical setting. The clinical experience must include a minimum of three hundred (300) hours of face-to-face client contact, one half (1/2) of which must be relational.

A minimum of fifty (50) hours of clinical supervision must be provided by a marriage and family therapy supervisor.

**Please note:** If, as a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Intern, an applicant would like to assess and treat the more problems as categorized in standard nomenclature, they must have completed an internship of at least six hundred (600) hours under the supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapy supervisor that included experience assessing and treating clients with the more serious problems as categorized in standard diagnostic nomenclature. This internship can be a component of the practicum.