

Syllabus

Course Overview

This course is delivered in the GuidedPath format. In this course, you will examine the ethical and legal responsibilities that frame the profession of marriage and family therapy, as well as the criteria for licensure in the state in which you intend to practice. You will also analyze the impact of a therapist's personal value system, culture, and ethics on his or her practice. You will explore approaches to protecting clients from your own potential biases. In this course, you will also address the role of *advocacy* in the development of the profession of marriage and family therapy (MFT).

In response to a growing awareness of the importance of ethical behavior in therapy practice, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) have developed ethical codes to guide the behavior of the marriage and family therapist. In this course, an examination of these codes is integrated into each learning unit. The marriage and family therapist practicing in the United States today must be cognizant of the ethical codes established by these two professional organizations. Although you will not be expected to memorize these ethical codes, you will study them in depth regarding several specific activities and behaviors, and learn to use them as fundamental resources in your practice. This knowledge will also aid you in the supervision and eventual consultation of others.

As you read the studies and participate in the discussions that follow, you will be asked to take into consideration your own values, beliefs, and biases. Keep in mind that ethical dilemmas will be present in various forms and at various levels of severity throughout your professional career. It is unrealistic to think that you will know how to react or solve all ethical dilemmas before they occur, or prior to beginning your career. As this course will prove, it is hugely important for you—as a therapist—to keep an open mind at all times.

Preserving Confidentiality

During this course, you will be asked to examine your own beliefs and analyze your own experiences. You may be asked to discuss events that helped to shape your understanding of ethics in the MFT profession, or use situations you have encountered in your professional experience as examples for discussion. If you share any information regarding real-world events, you are expected to protect the

confidentiality of all individuals involved in the example or situation. Do not provide any identifying information about clients, therapists, or any other individuals. Substitute made-up names for the actual names of people and organizations. You will be expected to conform to the legal and ethical codes that are the subject of this course to preserve the confidentiality of all parties.

SafeAssign

SafeAssign is a source matching tool that supports the development of your skills in preparing your written coursework. When you submit your work to SafeAssign, a report is generated that you can use to ensure that you have used your sources both ethically and effectively. The report will highlight any areas that could be of concern and might be considered plagiarism. SafeAssign does not provide feedback on your overall writing; it is only a tool to determine how well you have used your resources. It is very important that you always submit your work as a draft so that you can make revisions before submitting your final work for a grade.

You can learn more about how to use SafeAssign reports on the [SafeAssign](#) Campus page.

Accreditation Standards

MFT5222 – Professional Ethics in Marriage and Family Therapy

MFT5222 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
<p>1. Apply legal standards that regulate the practice of marriage and family therapy.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u04a1: Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws. • u09a1: Consulting Interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCA 5: Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social <p>SLO–4. Ethics: Understand and apply the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.</p>

MFT5222 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
<p>2. Apply ethical standards of care in the practice of marriage and family therapy.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u04a1: Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws. • u09a1: Consulting Interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCA 5: Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social <p>SLO–4. Ethics: Understand and apply the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.</p>

MFT5222 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
<p>3. Analyze the impact of a clinician's personal value system, culture, and ethnicity on his or her practice and ethical decision making.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u04a1: Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws. • u09a1: Consulting Interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCA 5: Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social • FCA 9: Community Intersections and Collaboration <p>SLO–6. Professional Identity and Social Responsibility: Identify as a marriage and family therapist, aligning systemic clinical practice with state and national standards for the marriage and family therapy discipline, and engaging in community and scholarly activities.</p>

MFT5222 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
<p>4. Define the criteria for licensure for marriage and family therapists in the learner's specific state.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u04a1: Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws. • u09a1: Consulting Interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCA 5: Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social • FCA 9: Community Intersections and Collaboration <p>SLO–6. Professional Identity and Social Responsibility: Identify as a marriage and family therapist, aligning systemic clinical practice with state and national standards for the marriage and family therapy discipline, and engaging in community and scholarly activities.</p>

MFT5222 Course Competencies	Version 12 COAMFTE Standards
<p>5. Analyze the role of advocacy in the development of the marriage and family therapy profession.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u04a1: Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws. • u09a1: Consulting Interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCA 5: Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social <p>SLO–4. Ethics: Understand and apply the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.</p>
<p>6. Communicate effectively through the appropriate application of grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing mechanics, and professional tone, while adhering to current APA formatting and style.</p> <p>Assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u04a1: Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws. • u09a1: Consulting Interview. 	

Course Competencies

(Read Only)

To successfully complete this course, you will be expected to:

- 1 Apply legal standards that regulate the practice of marriage and family therapy.
- 2 Apply ethical standards of care in the practice of marriage and family therapy.
- 3 Analyze the impact of a clinician's personal value system, culture, and ethnicity on his or her practice and ethical decision making.

- 4 Define the criteria for licensure for marriage and family therapists in the learner's specific state.
- 5 Analyze the role of advocacy in the development of the marriage and family therapy profession.
- 6 Communicate effectively through the appropriate application of grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing mechanics, and a professional tone, while adhering to current APA style and formatting.

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisite(s): MFT5008.

Required

The materials listed below are required to complete the learning activities in this course.

Integrated Materials

Many of your required books are available via the VitalSource Bookshelf link in the courseroom, located in your Course Tools. Registered learners in a Resource Kit program can access these materials using the courseroom link on the Friday before the course start date. Some materials are available only in hard-copy format or by using an access code. For these materials, you will receive an email with further instructions for access. Visit the [Course Materials](#) page on Campus for more information.

Book

Caldwell, B. E. (Ed.). (2015). *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*. Alexandria, VA: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. ISBN: 9781514762417.

Wilcoxon, S. A., Remley, T. P., Jr., & Gladding, S. T. (2014). *Ethical, legal, and professional issues in the practice of marriage and family therapy* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 9780133377446.

Library

The following required readings are provided in the Capella University Library or linked directly in this course. To find specific readings by journal or book title, use [Journal and Book Locator](#). Refer to the [Journal and Book Locator library guide](#) to learn how to use this tool.

- American Psychological Association. (2007). [Record keeping guidelines](#). *American Psychologist*, 62(9), 993–1004.
- Ametrano, I. M. (2014). [Teaching ethical decision making: Helping students reconcile personal and professional values](#). *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 92(2), 154–161.
- Aponte, H. J. (1985). [The negotiation of values in therapy](#). *Family Process*, 24(3), 323–338.
- Bass, B. A., & Quimby, J. L. (2006). [Addressing secrets in couples counseling: An alternative approach to informed consent](#). *The Family Journal*, 14(1), 77–80.
- Butler, M. H., & Zamora, J. P. (2013). [Ethical and legal concerns for MFTs in the context of clergy-collaborative care: Is what I share really confidential?](#) *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 41(2), 85–109.

- Charlés, L. L., Thomas, D., & Thornton, M. L. (2005). [Overcoming bias toward same-sex couples: A case study from inside an MFT ethics classroom.](#) *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 31(3), 239–249.
- Coy, J. S. (2013). [Stories of the accused: A transcendental phenomenological inquiry of family therapists and accusations of unprofessional conduct.](#) Alliant International University, pages 1–34.
- Francis, P. C., & Dugger, S. M. (2014). [Professionalism, ethics, and value-based conflicts in counseling: An introduction to the special section.](#) *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 92(2), 131–134.
- Hecker, L. L., & Edwards, A. B. (2014). [The impact of HIPAA and HITECH: New standards for confidentiality, security, and documentation for marriage and family therapists.](#) *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 42(2), 95–113.
- Hendricks, C. B., Bradley, L. J., & Robertson, D. L. (2015). [Implementing multicultural ethics: Issues for family counselors.](#) *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 23(2), 190–193.
- Herlihy, B. J., Hermann, M. A., & Greden, L. R. (2014). [Legal and ethical implications of using religious beliefs as the basis for refusing to counsel certain clients.](#) *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 92(2), 148–153.
- Pompeo, A. M., & Levitt, D. H. (2014). [A path of counselor self-awareness.](#) *Counseling and Values*, 59(1), 80–94.
- Sabin, J. A., Riskind, R. G., & Nosek, B. A. (2015). [Health care providers' implicit and explicit attitudes toward lesbian women and gay men.](#) *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(9), 1831–1841.
- West, C., Hinton, W. J., Grames, H., & Adams, M. A. (2013). [Marriage and family therapy: Examining the impact of licensure on an evolving profession.](#) *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 39(1), 112–126.
- Wulff, D. P., St. George, S. A., & Besthorn, F. H. (2011). [Revisiting confidentiality: Observations from family therapy practice.](#) *Journal of Family Therapy*, 33(2), 199–214.

External Resource

Please note that URLs change frequently. While the URLs were current when this course was designed, some may no longer be valid. If you cannot access a specific link, contact your instructor for an alternative URL. Permissions for the following links have been either granted or deemed appropriate for educational use at the time of course publication.

- AAMFT. (2020). [Federal, state and private payer advocacy.](#) Retrieved from <https://www.aamft.org/Advocacy/Advocacy.aspx>
- AAMFT. (2020). [Find an approved supervisor.](#) Retrieved from https://www.aamft.org/Supervision/Search/Find_a_Supervisor.aspx **Note:** Some optional materials in this course require membership-level access to the AAMFT website. Membership

to this professional organization is not required for this course but will be necessary at some point during your program. Note that a student membership is offered by the AAMFT at a reduced fee.

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. (2020). [Code of ethics](https://www.aamft.org/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx). Retrieved from https://www.aamft.org/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx
- [Association of Marital & Family Therapy Regulatory Boards](https://amftrb.org/). (2020). Retrieved from <https://amftrb.org/>
- Project Implicit. (2011). [Preliminary information](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html). Retrieved from <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- [Project Implicit](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/). (2020). Retrieved from <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- Rowan, S. (2014). [Violating the ultimate therapeutic taboo](https://www.psychotherapynetworker.org/blog/details/399/the-slippery-slope). Retrieved from <https://www.psychotherapynetworker.org/blog/details/399/the-slippery-slope>

Suggested

The following materials are recommended to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course, but they are aligned to course activities and assessments and are highly recommended for your use.

Optional

The following optional materials are offered to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course.

External Resource

Please note that URLs change frequently. While the URLs were current when this course was designed, some may no longer be valid. If you cannot access a specific link, contact your instructor for an alternative URL. Permissions for the following links have been either granted or deemed appropriate for educational use at the time of course publication.

- U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](https://www.ed.gov/). <https://www.ed.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.). [Summary of the HIPAA privacy rule](https://www.hhs.gov/). <https://www.hhs.gov/>

Unit 1 >>

Personal and Professional Values of the Professional Marriage and Family Therapist

Introduction

Value refers to the worth of an object or thing. In the systemic practice of marriage and family therapy, the clinician is seen as a part of the individual, couple, or family unit that he or she is treating. With this in mind, it is imperative for the clinician to understand his or her own values, worldview, and personal ethics; and the effects that they have on his or her psychotherapy practice. Personal values are important to one's veracity and resilience as a therapist. However, personal values alone should not form the basis for interaction with clients.

Personal and professional values: an internal dialogue. Who am I? and What do I do? It is important that we learn from our academic programs, supervision, and mentoring. Professional values held by family therapists typically feature an appreciation for a broad perspective that includes awareness of difference within the therapeutic relationship as well as those beyond the therapeutic relationship (systemic view).

Reference

Bond, T. (2015). *Standards and ethics for counseling in action* (4th ed.). London, England: Sage.

Learning Activities

u01s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 1, "Values as Context for Therapy," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 2–22.
- Read Sabin, Riskind, and Nosek's 2015 article, "[Health Care Providers' Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Toward Lesbian Women and Gay Men](#)," from *American Journal of Public Health*, volume 105, issue 9, pages 1831–1841.
- Read Aponte's 1985 article, "[The Negotiation of Values in Therapy](#)," from *Family Process*, volume 24, issue 3, pages 323–338.
- Read Charles, Thomas, and Thornton's 2005 article, "[Overcoming Bias Toward Same-Sex Couples: A Case Study From Inside an MFT Ethics Classroom](#)," from *Journal of Marital and*

Family Therapy, volume 31, issue 3, pages 239–249.

- Read the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#).

Multimedia

- View the presentation [Ethics Scenario: Meet Andy and Jennifer](#).
 - You will examine and discuss this case with your peers throughout this course.

In addition to your professional association's code of ethics, be sure to investigate your state's licensure code. Remember that each state has its own independent requirements and that behavioral health care providers may have restrictions and obligations in other sections of state law such as public health, education, and criminal or juvenile justice statutes.

u01s2 - Implicit Association Test

Multimedia

- Listen to the audio presentation [Important Introduction to the Implicit Association Test](#).
 - You will use the information presented here in this unit's first discussion.

Project Implicit Self-Evaluation

Project Implicit is a research effort to examine the psychological biases that may exist outside of an individual's conscious awareness or control. The Project Implicit website offers several implicit association demo tests that can help you to assess your conscious and unconscious biases. In preparation for this unit's first discussion, follow the instructions below to complete an implicit association demo test.

Note: Your performance on this test will not be part of your course evaluation, and the results will not be reported to your instructor. The Project Implicit demo tests are simply a means for you to complete a self-evaluation. While it may be necessary for you to provide Project Implicit with some survey information in order to complete a demo test, this information will be kept confidential. The intent of this exercise is to provide you with some new insight into your own biases.

Instructions

1. Click [Project Implicit](#) to go to the website.

2. The initial page presents three options: Click the **Project Implicit Social Attitudes** bar.
3. Read the *IAT Overview*. Then, click **Take a Test** in the top navigation bar.
4. Read the *Preliminary Information* disclaimer. **Note:** Any information you provide will be held confidential.
5. Click **I wish to proceed**.
6. On the *Take a Test* page, scroll through the demo test options and select one that is of interest to you.
7. Read the next page, then select **Click Here to Begin**.
8. Read the test instructions, then click **Continue**.
9. Follow the onscreen instructions to complete the test.

At the end of your demo test, you will receive a result. (At this point, you will also have the option of providing further survey information for the Project Implicit research study.) Look ahead to this unit's first discussion for details about the discussion post you will create based on your result.

u01s3 - Your Online ePortfolio

Online ePortfolios serve two key purposes: 1) to support learning and reflection, and 2) to be used as a showcase tool. Your learning journey can be documented, and ePortfolios contribute to lifelong learning and growth through reflection and sharing. Online ePortfolios can also be shared with employers and peers to present artifacts that demonstrate your accomplishments at Capella.

Using ePortfolio to Prepare for Your Capstone

Your program may culminate in a capstone course. At that time you may be required to show evidence of your learning throughout the program by referring to multiple assessments that you have created. You will be telling a story about your learning throughout the program using artifacts you have collected during many of these courses.

Using ePortfolio to Build Your Career

As you are preparing to tell your story in the professional world, leverage your ePortfolio artifacts to demonstrate the knowledge and competencies you have gained through your program in professional conversations, performance reviews, and interviews.

To do that, reflect on the knowledge and skills you have gained from your courses and the elements you have put in your portfolio, along with how you have already applied these things to your professional life or how you might apply them in the future.

Next, create your story or talking points to tell your professional story.

Saving Your Documents to ePortfolio

You will need a place to store your documents in an organized fashion so that you can access them at a later date. Do not rely on the courseroom to store your assignments for you as you will lose access to the courseroom after you have completed the course. Capella uses a cloud-based portfolio platform to facilitate your organization of the artifacts you create throughout your program.

To make an online portfolio useful, it is essential that it is organized clearly and that important files of any format are accessible. Read the [Online ePortfolio Guidelines \[PDF\]](#) to ensure you set up your online portfolio correctly. For more information on ePortfolio visit the Campus [ePortfolio](#) page.

Privacy Statement

Capella complies with privacy laws designed to protect the privacy of personal information. While you may voluntarily share your own information publicly, you are obligated to protect the personal information of others that may be associated with your academic or professional development. Before sharing information and material in any ePortfolio that is set up to be shared externally to your program at Capella, please consider privacy obligations in relation to protected populations who may be included or referenced in your academic or clinical work. Refer to the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) and/or the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#) if you have specific questions or concerns about your choices.

u01d1 - Implicit Association Test

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how your discussions in this course will be evaluated. **Note:** All discussions in this course require both an initial discussion post and a follow-up peer-response post.

Project Implicit Self-Evaluation

Look back on your implicit association test from this unit's studies, examine your result, and create a discussion post that addresses the following:

- What test did you take? Why did you choose this topic?
- What was the result?
- Describe your reaction to the result. Were you surprised? Did it affirm your thinking?

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. If possible, respond to the post of one peer who chose the same option you did for this discussion, and another peer who chose the other option. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Project Implicit](#)

u01d2 - Your Worldview

Reflect on the implicit association test you completed for this unit's first discussion, and contextualize your current worldview in terms such as gender, ethnicity, race, culture, sexual orientation, and religious affiliations.

For this discussion, describe how participation in these groups may affect your perceptions of ethical and moral issues in therapy. Would this information influence or alter how you would handle the couple that you saw in the multimedia piece?

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference

from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Ethics Scenario: Recognizing and Overcoming Biases](#) | [Transcript](#)

Unit 2 >> Virtue and Principle Ethics in the Treatment of Clients

Introduction

For many of us, as therapists, the big question regarding ethics that we ask ourselves is "What should I do?" or "How should I proceed?" The role of ethics is to provide moral principles. As you begin to immerse yourself in the ethical codes of the marriage and family therapy (MFT) profession, these professional codes assist practitioners in a general direction in the ethical treatment of clients. However, at times, there are no clear-cut prescriptive treatments. Virtue ethics (Who shall I be?) uses historical virtues. It emphasizes the development of individual character. Principle ethics (What should I do?) emphasizes the use of objective, rational standards, rules or universal codes. It focuses on acts and choices in an impartial manner. Principle ethics establishes societal and professional standards.

In this unit, you will be called upon to start thinking critically about applying a professional ethical perspective to treatment conundrums.

Learning Activities

u02s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 2, "Professional Acculturation and the Ecology of Therapy," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 23–40.
- Read Chapter 1, "Standard 1: Responsibilities to Clients," in *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*, on pages 1–20.
- Read Hendricks, Bradley, and Robertson's 2015 article, "[Implementing Multicultural Ethics: Issues for Family Counselors](#)," from *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, volume 23, issue 2, pages 190–193.
- Read Herlihy, Hermann, and Greden's 2014 article, "[Legal and Ethical Implications of Using Religious Beliefs as the Basis for Refusing to Counsel Certain Clients](#)," from *Journal of Counseling and Development*, volume 92, issue 2, pages 148–153.
- Read Ametrano's 2014 article, "[Teaching Ethical Decision Making: Helping Students Reconcile Personal and Professional Values](#)," from *Journal of Counseling and Development*, volume 92, issue 2, pages 154–161.
- Read S. Rowan's 2014 article, "[Violating the Ultimate Therapeutic Taboo](#)," from *Psychotherapy Networker*.

u02s2 - Looking Ahead: Unit 4 Assignment

In Unit 4, you will examine the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#). You will then write a paper discussing various aspects of using this resource when faced with ethical dilemmas in your own practice. Be sure to take some time now to become familiar with the Unit 4 assignment and budget your time over the next few units to work on your paper.

u02d1 - Relationships With Clients

For this discussion, consider the following scenario:

You are seeing Eric, a 27-year-old male, in a private therapy setting. He came to see you six months ago because he was grieving the death of his wife. His grief is affecting his professional life. Eric's performance evaluation was poor following his loss. You have a

very good relationship with him and you are making progress. In the last session you had with Eric, he asked if you would like to join him and a friend at a concert. You accepted this invitation, and now you are worried that you are engaged in an ethical dilemma.

For your initial discussion post, address the following:

- Are you involved in an ethical dilemma? If so, what is it?
- If you are involved in an ethical dilemma, describe some various ways that this therapeutic dilemma could be handled.
- Make sure to support your answer using the AAMFT Code of Ethics.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Code of Ethics](#)

[APA Style and Format](#)

u02d2 - Applying Virtue and Principle Ethics

For this discussion, consider the following scenario:

Sarah has been a marriage and family therapist for five years in the same practice that she joined a year after graduate school. Lily is her 45-year-old female client who has come to therapy to discuss her divorce and her fear of dating. Lily attributes her fear of dating to a time when she was date raped in graduate school before she met her ex-husband. Sarah is a rape survivor herself, so she chose not to refer the client out.

Sarah considered the presenting problem of her client and chose to continue as Lily's therapist. She felt that she was capable of working with Lily and that she would not harm Lily in any way.

For your initial discussion post, address the following:

- What is Sarah's professional responsibility to this client?
- Has Sarah violated any part of the AAMFT Code of Ethics?
- How should the therapist apply virtue ethics to this case? Cite examples.
- What ethical principles are demonstrated in this case?
- Are any ethical principles violated, and if so, which ones?

Explain your answer using the AAMFT Code of Ethics.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Code of Ethics](#)

[APA Style and Format](#)

Unit 3 >> Ethical Models, Due Care, Confidentiality, and Therapeutic Contracts

Introduction

This unit will introduce the tenets of ethical MFT practice as they apply to setting up and delivering treatment. Confidentiality is considered essential to therapy. The therapeutic relationship is intimate

and involves the client revealing information about past and current situations in addition to feelings and opinions (Bond and Mitchels, 2015). Trust is necessary to create between the client and the therapist and for this reason protecting confidentiality is an important ethical precedence. The cornerstones of ethical practice, confidentiality, and therapeutic contracts will be presented. You will examine several models of ethical decision making used to decipher ethical dilemmas in treatment.

References

Bond, T. & Mitchels, B. (2015). *Confidentiality and record keeping in counseling and psychotherapy* (2nd ed.). London, England: Sage.

Bond, T. (2015). *Standards and ethics for counseling in action* (4th ed.). London, England: Sage.

Learning Activities

u03s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 3, "Promoting Ethical Practice: Principles, Traditions, and Considerations," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 42–70.
- Read Chapter 2, "Standard 2: Confidentiality," in *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*, on pages 21–32.
- Read Wulff, St. George, and Besthorn's 2011 article, "[Revisiting Confidentiality: Observations From Family Therapy Practice](#)," from *Journal of Family Therapy*, volume 39, issue 2, pages 199–214.

Multimedia

- View the presentation [Ethics Scenario: Confidentiality](#).

In addition to your professional association's code of ethics, be sure to investigate your state's licensure code. Remember that each state has its own independent requirements and that behavioral health care providers may have restrictions and obligations in other sections of state law such as public health, education, and criminal or juvenile justice statutes.

u03s2 - Looking Ahead: Consulting Interview

In Unit 9, you will conduct a brief interview with a marriage and family therapist, to gain a better idea of how a working practitioner manages ethical issues in the field. You will ask pre-assigned interview questions regarding a specific ethical dilemma he or she has experienced. After you conduct the interview, you will write a 5–7 page paper summarizing the interview and analyzing your own response.

For this assignment, identify a local marriage and family therapy clinician to interview. Please do **not** reach out to your FAF Instructor or any other Capella faculty, as this would create a dual relationship. When you approach the clinician, remember you are asking for his or her valuable time. Do not request more than half an hour. Assure your interviewee that any personal information he or she shares will be kept confidential, and all names will be changed (see Preserving Confidentiality in the Interview, below).

Schedule a time, date, and location for the interview to take place. Be prepared to accommodate last-minute scheduling changes. You are encouraged to schedule the appointment to occur before the end of Unit 4, in case the appointment must be postponed or canceled. Remember that you will also need time to write your paper after the interview occurs.

Read through the Unit 9 assignment, Consulting Interview, to learn more about what your interview should entail, including the pre-assigned interview questions. Also read the Consulting Interview Scoring Guide to learn how this assignment will be evaluated. Refer to [Informational Interviewing](#) page on Campus for tips on conducting an interview.

Preserving Confidentiality in the Interview

Because you will be discussing a real-world event, you must be careful to help preserve the confidentiality of both the clinician and any clients or other individuals involved in the ethical dilemma. Assure your interviewee that you will not divulge any identifying information about him or her, clients, or other individuals involved. Request that your interviewee substitute the actual names of individuals when speaking of them. With your interviewee's cooperation, establish your method for preserving confidentiality either before or at the beginning of the interview.

Your interview questions will be pre-assigned. Be sure to respect any boundaries your interviewee sets.

When you write your paper, be sure that names and other identifying characteristics of all parties are replaced or removed from the content. Do not provide the interviewee's name, address, or

organization. You might describe your interviewee by his or her job title, mention his or her number of years in practice, or indicate the region of the country in which he or she practices, if these features are relevant.

u03d1 - Confidentiality

Refer to the media piece from this unit's Studies, Ethics Scenario: Confidentiality, linked in Resources.

After hearing the voicemail left by Pastor Larry to Shannon, address the following:

- What is the potential ethical issue that arose for Shannon due to Pastor Larry leaving a voicemail message regarding Andy and Jennifer?
- According to the AAMFT Code of Ethics, what obligations do you, as the therapist, have to your clients?

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Ethics Scenario: Confidentiality](#) | [Transcript](#)

[APA Style and Format](#)

[Code of Ethics](#)

u03d2 - Applying the Decision-Making Model

Review the Kitchner Model and the Koocher and Keith-Spiegel Model presented in Chapter 3, "Promoting Ethical Practice: Principles, Traditions, and Considerations," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, from this unit's Studies.

For your initial discussion post, address the following:

- Apply one of these models to the ethical dilemma of Pastor Larry's call.
- Go through each step of the chosen decision-making model and describe what actions and decisions you would make.
- Cite your ethical code, the applicable standards, and sub-standards.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[APA Style and Format](#)

Unit 4 >> Ethics and Systems

Introduction

According to Weiss and Tappen, "Ethics is the part of philosophy that deals with rightness or wrongness of human behavior" (p. 53). Ethics refers to codes to guide behavior. Those ethical codes are rooted on principles that can be used to judge behavior and assist therapists in decision making, because they are the standard for measuring actions. Ethical codes are not restricted to particular behaviors, but act as guides for appropriate behaviors. The ethical codes take into account the situation in which a decision must be made (2015).

Reference

Weiss, S. A. & Tappen, R. M. (2015). *Essentials of nursing leadership and management* (6th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: F. A. Davis Company.

Learning Activities

u04s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 4, "Unique Ethical Considerations in Marriage and Family Therapy: Principal Distinctions," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 71–88.
- Read Chapter 5, "Unique Ethical Considerations in Marriage and Family Therapy: Practice Distinctions," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 89–104.
- Read Chapter 3, "Standard 3: Professional Competency and Integrity," in *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*, on pages 33–45.
- Read Chapter 6, "Standard 6: Technology Assisted Professional Services," in *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*, on pages 71–79.
- Read Butler and Zamora's 2013 article, "[Ethical and Legal Concerns for MFTs in the Context of Clergy-Collaborative Care: Is What I Share Really Confidential?](#)" from *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, volume 41, issue 2, pages 85–109.
- Read Bass and Quimby's 2006 article, "[Addressing Secrets in Couples Counseling: An Alternative Approach to Informed Consent](#)," from *The Family Journal*, volume 14, issue 1, pages 77–80.

u04a1 - Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws

Marriage and family therapists are governed by the statutes of the states in which they practice. The laws, rules, and regulations governing mental health practice are determined by each state. Therapists are also guided by the ethical codes of the primary organization representing their profession: The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). These standards, statutes, and codes help to protect both therapists and clients.

Read the Codes of Ethics and Synopsis of State Laws Scoring Guide to learn how this assignment will be evaluated and to ensure you have addressed the assignment's grading criteria. Refer to the Unit 1 Studies for resources regarding state statutes.

For this assignment, review the following documents:

- The AAMFT Code of Ethics, linked in Resources. This document represents the framework that guides professional relationships of marriage and family therapists.
- The Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) website, linked in Resources, is another potential resource for your state's statutes and rules.
- You may also find links to states' rules and statutes on their official state board websites.

Write a short paper that addresses the following:

1. What is the process you need to follow to obtain licensure in your state?
2. Discuss the state's limits to confidentiality. Discuss what the AAMFT Code of Ethics state about confidentiality based on the licenses that you are obtaining?
3. How could you use the AAMFT Code of Ethics to advocate change for the profession of Marriage and Family Therapy?
4. Using the AAMFT Code of Ethics, evaluate how you see your value system and how it might conflict with what you are ethically bound to do as a therapist.
5. Compare the AAMFT ethical codes with your state's statutes governing the practice of marriage and family therapist; how is privileged communication defined?
6. How is a duty to warn or protect defined by your state, and what are the limitations? How are ethical complaints handled in your state?
7. What is the scope of practice in your state for the LMFT license? That is, what are the limitations of practice for a registered intern or licensed marriage and family therapist in your state?
8. Identify ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted relationships.
9. Organize your paper according to the Unit 4 Assignment scoring guide, making sure to address all Distinguished Criteria.

Refer to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and the statutes governing the practice in your state.

Paper Components

Include the following components in your paper:

1. Title page.
2. Body.
3. Reference list: Cite the codes and state statutes, along with any other resources you incorporate in your paper.

Structural Requirements

- **Written communication:** Writing must be free of errors that detract from the overall message.
- **APA formatting:** Resources and citations must be formatted according to current APA style and formatting.
- **Length of paper:** Be concise. The length of the paper must be limited to 5–7 typed, double-spaced pages.
- **Font:** Times New Roman, 12 point.

SafeAssign

SafeAssign is a source matching tool that supports the development of your skills in preparing your written coursework. When you submit your work to SafeAssign, a report is generated that you can use to ensure that you have used your sources both ethically and effectively. It is very important that you always submit your work as a draft so that you can make revisions before submitting your final work for a grade.

Submission Requirements

You are required to submit your final version of this paper to SafeAssign prior to submitting it for grading. Submit your work as a draft to check for any necessary edits. Once the paper is finalized and all edits have been made, submit the final version to your instructor for grading using the following file naming format: Your_Name_AssignmentNumber_AssignmentTitle (example: Ima_Learner_u03a1_ClientDescription).

Verify you have reviewed your SafeAssign report by providing the following comment in the assignment area: “I verify that I have reviewed the SafeAssign report for this assignment and this work meets academic honesty expectations.”

Note: Your instructor may also use the Writing Feedback Tool to provide feedback on your writing. In the tool, click the linked resources for helpful writing information.

Portfolio Prompt: You may choose to save this learning activity to your ePortfolio.

Course Resources

[APA Style and Format](#)

[Ethics, Standards, and Legal Information for Marriage and Family Therapy](#)

[Code of Ethics](#)

[ePortfolio](#)

[AMFTRB](#)

[Writing Feedback Tool](#)

u04d1 - Personal Life and Professionalism

For this discussion, consider the following scenario:

Amy is a divorced marriage and family therapist who has been in practice for 14 years.

Recently, she went out with her longtime girlfriends. After a few drinks, her group became increasingly loud and Amy started dancing on the table. As she left the bar, Amy ran into a client, Lisa, who had apparently witnessed her wild behavior. Amy first began to work with Lisa when she lost her husband and child in a drunk driving accident. While Amy feels that she is allowed to do what she wants on her time off, she also begins to wonder how this will affect her relationship with her client, Lisa. She begins to think about all of the ethical considerations that would come into play with this client.

While professional codes of ethics may not have specific guidelines for professional behavior, there are issues in this scenario that Amy may want to consider. For your initial discussion post, address the following:

- Responsibility to clients: Is Amy respecting the welfare of Lisa if she chooses to continue to see Lisa? What specific standards in the AAMFT Code pertain to this scenario?

- Professional integrity: Although it may be acceptable to continue to counsel Lisa, is it a good moral decision?

Use the AAMFT Code of Ethics (linked in Resources) to support your answer.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Code of Ethics](#)

Unit 5 >> Diagnosing and Managed Care Technology in Contemporary Practice

Introduction

The ethical guidelines informing psychotherapists (and MFTs, specifically) are limited on many contemporary aspects of practice. Managed health care is rapidly changing. MFTs often struggle to remain legally and ethically compliant in an ever-changing system; or they may opt out of the medical model of diagnosing and treatment altogether. In this unit, you will become familiar with current diagnostic and technological issues that are affecting mental health care practice in general, and MFTs specifically. "Online counseling has grown during the past 10 years and there are professional codes specifically designed to address its ethical concerns" (Houser & Thoma, 2013, p. 158). Another ethical issue becoming prominent is electronic record keeping. Privacy is an ethical concern due to having many client records being placed into online databases.

Reference

Houser, R. A. & Thomas, S. J. (2013). *Ethics in counseling and therapy: Developing an ethical identity*. London, England: Sage.

Learning Activities

u05s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 6, "Intimate Partner Violence and the Ecology of Therapy," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 105–119.
- Read Chapter 7, "Contemporary Ethical Issues: Contextual Matters," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 120–141.
- Read Chapter 6, "Standard VI: Technology-Assisted Professional Services," in *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*, on pages 71–79.

Multimedia

- View the presentation [Ethics Scenario: Recognizing and Overcoming Biases](#).

In addition to your professional association's code of ethics, be sure to investigate your state's licensure code. Remember that each state has its own independent requirements and that behavioral health care providers may have restrictions and obligations in other sections of state law such as public health, education, and criminal or juvenile justice statutes.

u05s2 - Looking Ahead: Consulting Interview

If you have not yet arranged an interview with a licensed marriage and family therapist for the Unit 9 assignment, Consulting Interview, you are encouraged to do so now. If you are having trouble identifying or scheduling with an appropriate interviewee candidate, consult your instructor for assistance.

If you have not done so already, complete the following:

- Refer to the second Unit 3 study, Looking Ahead: Consulting Interview, for instructions on setting up and conducting the interview.
- Refer to the Unit 9 assignment, Consulting Interview, for the pre-assigned interview questions and for instructions on writing the paper.
- Refer to the [Informational Interviewing](#) page on Campus for tips on conducting an interview.
- Refer to the Consulting Interview Scoring Guide to learn how this assignment will be evaluated.

u05d1 - Clinical Diagnostic Issues

Refer to Chapter 7, "Contemporary Ethical Issues: Contextual Matters," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, from this unit's Studies.

For this discussion's initial post, address the following:

A systemically trained MFT diagnosing an individual who is in couples therapy could encounter several ethical dilemmas. Generate at least three examples of potential ethical dilemmas that might emerge in this situation, and briefly discuss them. Describe the justifications you would use to diagnose an individual in each circumstance. Do our ethical codes address this issue? If so, list the relevant codes and subcodes.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[APA Style and Format](#)

u05d2 - Overcoming Biases

Refer to the media piece from this unit's Studies, Ethics Scenario: Recognizing and Overcoming Biases, linked in Resources.

Andy is not welcome at the wedding of Jennifer's religious cousin. Shannon helps the couple talk through their feelings.

For this discussion's initial post, address the following:

- It there an ethical dilemma in discussing religious beliefs? How does Shannon handle her own biases?
- What steps need to be taken when a client's beliefs or values run contrary to the therapist's?
- What does the AAMFT Code of Ethics say about recognizing and overcoming biases?

Justify your positions with support from the unit readings, the ethical code, and other relevant resources. Cite your references in current APA style and format.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[APA Style and Format](#)

[Ethics Scenario: Recognizing and Overcoming Biases](#) | [Transcript](#)

[Code of Ethics](#)

Unit 6 >> Working Within the Legal System

Introduction

It is important to know the law. As MFTs, our main legal obligations are to the following: confidentiality, privileged communication and records, duty to protect, child abuse, and neglect. MFTs are to work within the court system. State, local, and federal laws are significant in therapists' ethical decisions (Houser & Thomas, 2013). It is important that the therapist knows and adheres to the laws specific to the practice of marriage and family in his/her state in addition to professional ethical codes. State law is informed by national and family law.

Reference

Houser, R. A., & Thomas, S. J. (2013). *Ethics in counseling and therapy: Developing an ethical identity*. London, UK: Sage Publications Inc.

Learning Activities

u06s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 10, "The Marriage and Family Therapist: Roles and Responsibilities Within the Legal System," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 200–232.
- Read Chapter 11, "Family Law," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 233–261.

u06d1 - Your State's Legal Guidelines

For this discussion's initial post, address the following:

- Which legal statute in your state governs the practice of marriage and family therapy?
- What other legal statutes affect the practice of psychotherapy (such as child abuse, duty to warn, elder abuse)?
- How would you describe the limits of practice for an MFT in your state?

Be sure to provide the name of your state in the discussion post.

Response Guidelines

Read the posts of your peers and select one from a state other than yours. Respond to the post by comparing the similarities and differences between your state statutes. Invite further discussion with your peer. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u06d2 - Preserving Professional Boundaries

Marriage and family therapist may be called upon to perform various professional duties within the legal system. For example, a court may request the marriage and family therapist to assist in court-appointed parental coordination for his or her clients. A marriage and family therapist might also be asked to testify in a courtroom as an expert witness providing forensic assessment. Or, a marriage family therapist may be required to testify as a material witness in a case involving his or her clients.

A material witness is required to discuss specific information about real events. If a therapist is a material witness in a case involving his or her clients, some of this information may be protected by the boundaries of therapist-client privilege. This can pose a significant ethical and legal challenge for the professional therapist.

For this discussion's initial post, address the following:

- What are the boundaries of therapist-client confidentiality in your state?
- Regarding confidentiality, how do the ethical codes of your professional organization compare with the legal boundaries in your state?
- Find one discrepancy between your state laws and the professional ethical codes for preserving patient confidentiality.
- How might this difference constitute a conflict? Please cite the discrepancy from your state laws and the one from the ethical code.
- How can the marriage and family therapist legally protect the confidentiality of his or her clients, under this circumstance?

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[APA Style and Format](#)

Unit 7 >> State Statutes for Licensing and Credentialing

Introduction

The purpose of state licensure is to help establish professional standards and define the scope of marriage and family therapy (MFT). All fifty states have developed regulations for the legal practice of marriage and family therapy. A practicing MFT must understand and adhere to the licensing criteria specific to his or her state, both prior to and after licensure. It is important for therapists to understand what is legally required of them, each in their own state.

Learning Activities

u07s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 13, "Professional Issues: Identity, Affiliation, Training, and Transitions as a Marriage and Family Therapist," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 290–308.
- Read West, Hinton, Grames, and Adams' 2013 article, "[Marriage and Family Therapy: Examining the Impact of Licensure on an Evolving Profession](#)," from *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, volume 39, issue 1, pages 112–126.

u07d1 - State Licensure Criteria

Licensed marriage and family therapists are regulated in all 50 states. While there is a national licensing exam, there are certain states that administer their own licensing exam. Most states also have a state exam outlining the laws and rules for practicing therapists specific to that state. In your post, list the exams that a marriage and family therapist must take to become licensed. Also, discuss any other state requirements needed to become licensed. Offer the link for your state's licensing board. Discuss in your post when you will take the national licensing exam and, if required, the state's exam.

The Association for the Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) is a good resource to begin your search for information on your state's licensure laws. Remember to cite your resources using current APA style and format.

Response Guidelines

Read the posts of your peers and select two from states other than yours. Respond to the posts by comparing the similarities and differences in obtaining licensure in your states. Invite further discussion with your peer. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable.

u07d2 - Professional Conduct Dilemma

Consider the following case study:

Abby is a marriage and family therapist in a small town who has been practicing for seven years. One night, her husband, who is a police officer, came home from work and told Abby that their mutual friend Samantha, also a psychotherapist, has been arrested after an accident for driving under the influence. Apparently, Samantha was coming home from a party and lost control of her car, driving into an unoccupied restaurant downtown. Samantha suffered only minor injuries, but a breathalyzer test indicated that her blood alcohol content was well over the legal limit. In addition, there was enough damage done to the restaurant that it will have to be closed for several days. Abby is very concerned about her friend and colleague. She immediately begins to think about her responsibility to the profession as well as her desire to help Samantha.

For this discussion's initial post, respond to the following:

- What obligations must you honor when you hear about a colleague practicing in an unethical manner?
- Explain your obligations to the profession of marriage and family therapy, as a colleague of Samantha and to whom would you report Samantha's behavior?
- Cite specific ethical codes and your state statutes, as well as any other relevant resources. Research peer-reviewed articles to support your answers and cite your references. Be sure to mention the state you are referencing.

Use the AAMFT Code of Ethics in shaping your initial post.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[APA Style and Format](#)

[Code of Ethics](#)

Unit 8 >> Case Management, Documentation, Mandated Reporting, and HIPAA

Introduction

Marriage and family therapists are expected (and mandated) to carry out their professional responsibilities in a legally competent and responsible manner. Keeping case notes is a widely recognized as an ethical requirement for good practice. In this unit, we will analyze the legal responsibilities that are built into the practice of psychotherapy.

Learning Activities

u08s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 12, "Legal Considerations," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 262–288.
- Read Hecker and Edwards' 2014 article, "[The Impact of HIPAA and HITECH: New Standards for Confidentiality, Security, and Documentation for Marriage and Family Therapists](#)," from *American Journal of Family Therapy*, volume 42, issue 2, pages 95–113.
- Read the 2007 article, "[Record Keeping Guidelines](#)," from *American Psychologist*, volume 62, issue 9, pages 993–1004.

Multimedia

- View the presentation [Ethics Scenario: Technology Assisted Therapy](#).

u08d1 - Suicide or Maintaining Appropriate Documentation and Case Notes

Please respond to **one** of the vignettes.

Vignette 1: Suicide

Consider the following scenario:

Currently you are working with a man going through a divorce. He came to you because he was depressed but has been thinking clearly about his future goals, especially his co-parenting plan. Recently he discloses that he has begun to drink heavily and feels like his entire world is coming to an end. He continues to tell you, "Most days I just feel like dying." When you ask him what has brought on this change, he tells you that while snooping through his wife's cell phone records, he came across a man's telephone number. He reports that they have been talking daily. When you ask him to elaborate, he tells you that he has access to a firearm and he "know[s] how to use it."

For your initial post to this vignette, address the following:

- What might be some assessment questions you would ask to assess for suicidality and/or homicidality?
- Describe the statute in your state for mental health professionals to initiate involuntary hospitalization of clients for suicidal or homicidal tendencies.

- What is the threshold—or what are the criteria—for involuntary hospitalization in your state? Who do you contact in your county or state to transport a suicidal client? Draft a short case note (see details below) in this discussion describing the legal and ethical responsibilities taken.

Vignette 2: Child Abuse/Neglect

Your client Sara is overwhelmed with her parenting responsibilities after her husband Carl has left their relationship. She is raising three children, and her oldest son, 12, began to curse at her and she told you she "just lost it" and found herself beating him with a broom. She said that in her culture, good moms beat their kids when they get out of line.

What assessment questions might you ask to determine if this fits criteria for child abuse/neglect in your state? To whom would you report child abuse (list the phone number in your county or state)? List the state's statute and the ethical standard that applies to this scenario. Draft a short case note (see details below) in this discussion describing the legal and ethical responsibilities taken.

Maintaining Appropriate Documentation and Case Notes

There is a saying among therapists: "If it is not in the case notes, it did not happen!" In the above vignettes, you will explore the importance of accurate case documentation in the practice of therapy.

Refer to the Record Keeping Guidelines reading for this unit (linked in Resources), the professional ethical standards, and your state's statutes regarding this topic.

- What must your case notes include in order to satisfy ethical and legal requirements?
- What issues, if any, should a therapist avoid documenting?
- Document any actions in regard to duty to warn or protect or child abuse/neglect (and cite relevant laws).

Limit your case note to fewer than 200 words. Do not include any information on therapy or treatment plans. Rather, document any details needed to cover every legal and ethical requirement. Feel free to make up any details about your session to ensure you have addressed all required documentation.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

u08d2 - Technology and Therapy

Refer to the media piece from this unit's Studies, *Ethics Scenario: Technology Assisted Therapy*, linked in Resources.

Andy and Jennifer planned a trip but do not want to miss their session. They asked Shannon to conduct a therapy session via Skype.

For this discussion's initial post, address the following:

- It there an ethical dilemma in conducting therapy online?
- What are the steps that need to be taken to protect the client and the therapist if you are doing therapy online?
- What do the AAMFT codes say about doing therapy online?

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Unit 9 >> Professional Affiliations and Advocacy

Introduction

Marriage and family therapy (MFT) is a dynamic profession. It is a relatively new addition to the psychotherapeutic community, in comparison with other psychotherapeutic practices like mental health counseling, clinical social work, and clinical psychology. MFTs have fought hard—and continue to fight—for parity with these more established branches of psychotherapy. This unit will present the history of, and current challenges to, the profession of marriage and family therapy.

Learning Activities

u09s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 13, "Professional Issues: Identity, Affiliation, Training and Transitions as a Marriage and Family Therapist," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 290–308.

u09a1 - Consulting Interview

Interview

For this assignment, you are to identify a local marriage and family therapy clinician to interview. Please do **not** reach out to your FAF Instructor or any other Capella faculty, as this would create a dual relationship. When you approach the clinician, remember you are asking for his or her valuable time. Assure your interviewee that any personal information he or she shares will be kept confidential, and all names will be changed (see Preserving Confidentiality in the Interview, below).

Interview a licensed marriage and family therapist to gain an idea of how an ethical dilemma was handled in a real practice. The interview should be brief (schedule for no more than an hour), focusing on the questions below.

Address the following questions to the marriage and family therapist in your interview (it is not necessary to present them word for word, and do not email them in lieu of a face-to-face or phone interview):

1. What steps did you take to become a licensed marriage and family therapist in your state?
2. What kinds of ethical dilemmas have you encountered in your practice as a marriage and family therapist? How do you handle the rise in technology (such as Facebook or technology-assisted services) in your ethical practice?
3. What steps did you take to handle this ethical dilemma?
4. What kinds of legal dilemmas have you encountered in your practice as a marriage and family therapist? Specifically, describe issues involving family law (such as divorce, custody, reunification, and parenting).
5. What steps did you take to handle this legal dilemma?
6. Looking back at the situation, would you do the same thing or would you do something different?
7. Did you consult the AAMFT Code of Ethics? If not, which personal values guided you?
8. As a therapist, how were you trained to deal with ethical dilemmas? Do you feel your training was adequate?
9. How does your personal value system, culture, and ethnicity impact your clinical practice with clients?
10. If you needed assistance in handling an ethical question or concern, what would be your likely course of action?
11. How have you been involved in advocacy for policies, programs, and services that are equitable and responsive to the unique needs of couples and families in your professional organization, state, and community? If you have not been involved, what areas of advocacy do you see are needed in the field of marriage and family therapy?
12. How do you incorporate technology in your practice? How does ethics play a role in using technology while doing therapy?

Review the Grading Rubric/Scoring Guide and follow the Distinguished criteria when writing this paper. Be sure you utilize and cite the ethical codes and laws you have been studying. Remember to preserve the confidentiality of both the therapist and any clients or other individuals involved in the ethical dilemma. Refer to the second study in Unit 3, Looking Ahead: Consulting Interview, for further instructions on preserving confidentiality.

Paper

Write a 5–7 page reflection of the interview.

Summarize the dialogue that took place and explore an ethical dilemma your interviewee described. Be sure that names and other identifying characteristics of all parties involved in any real-life dilemmas are replaced or removed from the content of your paper. Do not provide the interviewee's name, address, or organization. You might describe your interviewee by his or her job title, mention his or her number of years in practice, or indicate the region of the country in which he or she practices, if these features are relevant. Remember to address all of the questions asked during the interview in your summary. If your interviewee has not been involved with advocacy, address this in your reflection and discuss how a therapist might be involved in advocacy.

As you describe your reactions to your interviewee's answers, consider the following:

- What was your impression of the interviewee's response to a given ethical dilemma? Were you surprised by anything?
- Would you have handled the situation differently? If so, how?
- Do you think that following a code of ethics makes a person a better therapist—or could the code be limiting to the therapist's work with the client?

Confidentiality Requirements

- Remove or replace names and other identifying characteristics of all parties involved in any real-life dilemmas from the content of the paper.
- Do not provide the interviewee's name, address, or organization.

Review the Consulting Interview Scoring Guide to learn how this assignment will be evaluated and ensure you have addressed the assignment's grading criteria. Submit your paper in the assignment area.

SafeAssign

SafeAssign is a source matching tool that supports the development of your skills in preparing your written coursework. When you submit your work to SafeAssign, a report is generated that you can use to ensure that you have used your sources both ethically and effectively. It is very important that you always submit your work as a draft so that you can make revisions before submitting your final work for a grade.

Submission Requirements

You are required to submit your final version of this paper to SafeAssign prior to submitting it for grading. Submit your work as a draft to check for any necessary edits. Once the paper is finalized and all edits have been made, submit the final version to your instructor for grading using the following file naming format: Your_Name_AssignmentNumber_AssignmentTitle (example: Ima_Learner_u03a1_ClientDescription).

Verify you have reviewed your SafeAssign report by providing the following comment in the assignment area: “I verify that I have reviewed the SafeAssign report for this assignment and this work meets academic honesty expectations.”

Note: Your instructor may also use the Writing Feedback Tool to provide feedback on your writing. In the tool, click the linked resources for helpful writing information.

Portfolio Prompt: You may choose to save this learning activity to your ePortfolio.

Course Resources

[APA Style and Format](#)

[Writing Feedback Tool](#)

[Informational Interviewing](#)

[Code of Ethics](#)

[ePortfolio](#)

[SafeAssign](#)

u09d1 - Connecting With Professional Organizations

One goal of the professional organizations representing therapists is to advance the policies and standards of the practice. At any given time, the AAMFT is planning and promoting many initiatives for new policies and legislation relevant to the field.

Research and examine the current policy initiatives of the AAMFT. You may conduct your own Internet search for articles and information about these topics or use the link in Resources to go to the relevant content on the Federal, State and Private Payer Advocacy page of the AAMFT website.

Note: You will not be able to access all content linked in the AAMFT's Federal, State, and Private Payer Advocacy page without an AAMFT membership. You are not required to purchase this membership for the purposes of this discussion—but you are strongly encouraged to purchase an

AAMFT student membership during this program, and will be required to do so when you begin your fieldwork. It is expected that you will become a member of the AAMFT as a student member.

Select one current AAMFT initiative to read in depth.

For this discussion's initial post, briefly summarize the initiative and address the following:

- Do you believe the proposed changes will have an impact on the practice of marriage and family therapy? Why or why not?
- Discuss how these proposed changes will be equitably responsive to the unique needs of couples and families.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Federal, State and Private Payer Advocacy](#)

Unit 10 >> Continuing Ethical, Legal, and Professional Practice

Introduction

The practice of marriage and family therapy is an ongoing and dynamic process. This unit presents methods for obtaining the ongoing educational and professional development required of the licensed marriage and family therapist. You will also learn how to avoid some potential professional pitfalls.

Learning Activities

u10s1 - Studies

Readings

Complete the following:

- Read Chapter 14, "Professional Issues: Supervision, Licensure, and Professional Development as a Marriage and Family Therapist," in *Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*, on pages 309–328.
- Read Chapter 7, "Standard VII: Professional Evaluations," in *User's Guide to the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics*, on pages 82–94.

Use the Capella University Library and the Internet to complete the following:

- Read Francis and Dugger's 2014 article, "[Professionalism, Ethics, and Value-Based Conflicts in Counseling: An Introduction to the Special Section](#)," from *Journal of Counseling and Development*, volume 92, issue 2, pages 131–134.
- Read Pompeo and Levitt's 2014 article, "[A Path of Counselor Self-Awareness](#)," from *Counseling and Values*, volume 59, issue 1, pages 80–94.
- Read Coy's 2013 article, "[Stories of the Accused: A Transcendental Phenomenological Inquiry of Family Therapists and Accusations of Unprofessional Conduct](#)," from *Alliant International University*, pages 1–34.

Multimedia

- View the presentation [Ethics Scenario: Evaluating Your Biases](#).

u10d1 - Seeking Out Supervision and Evaluating Your Biases

Refer to the media piece from this unit's Studies, *Ethics Scenario: Evaluating Your Biases*, linked in Resources.

You have observed Shannon meet with her supervisor and discuss the case. Shannon also shared her experiences working with this couple.

For this discussion's initial post, address the following:

- What behaviors or statements indicate how Shannon has demonstrated growth as a therapist?
- Identify Shannon's biases and discuss the ways these biases affected her beginning efforts with the clients.
- In what ways did Shannon change from her beginning experiences with this couple to the termination of her therapeutic relationship?
- In what ways have you identified your biases during this quarter?

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least two of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. To demonstrate that you have completed your studies for this unit, include at least one relevant reference from the readings. Cite your references using current APA style and formatting. Make sure that your responses are also in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

[Ethics Scenario: Evaluating Your Biases](#) | [Transcript](#)

[Find an Approved Supervisor](#)

u10d2 - Professional and Personal Reflection

For the final course discussion, write a post of at least 250 words addressing the following:

- How have you grown, personally and professionally, through your work and your studies in this course?
- What insights about your own qualities as a professional marriage and family therapist have you gained?
- What have you learned about how your status in various dimensions of culture (for example, gender, race, religion and spirituality, sexual orientation) influences your ethical decision-

making process?

- What ethical or legal issues have the potential to interfere with your ability to fulfill your professional obligations?
- What steps can you proactively take to expand your connection with a group of your professional peers?

Note: This is a graded discussion. However, you are not required to use references in this discussion.

Response Guidelines

Respond to the posts of at least one of your peers. You are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, respectfully debate points, and present additional information, as applicable. You are not required to use references, but make sure that your responses are in accordance with any of the established faculty expectations.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide