MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY — M.S., D.M.F.T.

The marriage and family therapy profession

Marriage and family therapy is a distinct international mental health profession based on the premise that relationships are fundamental to the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Marriage and family therapists (MFTs) evaluate and treat mental and emotional disorders and other health and behavioral problems; and address a wide array of relationship issues within the context of families and larger systems. The federal government has designated marital and family therapy a core mental health profession—along with psychiatry, psychology, social work, and psychiatric nursing. All fifty states also support and regulate the profession by licensing or certifying marriage and family therapists.

Mission statement

The Ph.D. degree curriculum in marital and family therapy and the D.M.F.T. degree curriculum are consistent with Loma Linda University’s vision of transforming lives through whole-person health care. The mission of these curricula is to bring health, healing, wholeness, and hope to individuals, families, and communities through education, research, clinical training, and community service. The Ph.D. degree curriculum accomplishes this by preparing scientist-practitioners who will advance the body of knowledge through which marital and family therapists promote the health and well-being of individuals, couples, families, and communities. The D.M.F.T. degree curriculum accomplishes this by focusing on developing, evaluating, and administering intervention programs that benefit individuals, couples, families, and communities.

Ongoing program review

The Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy (D.M.F.T.) degree and the Ph.D. degree in marital and family therapy engage in ongoing review of student outcomes and use this information to improve program effectiveness. Data on student outcomes are collected through aggregate scores on the following: quarterly evaluations of clinical competency and results of qualifying examinations and clinical demonstrations, annual student activity reports on clinical and scholarly activities, client session and outcome data, and exit surveys and interviews of students at graduation. Alumni surveys are also conducted every two years to track graduates’ attainment of marital and family therapy licensure, data on employment, and feedback regarding how well the program prepares graduates for their job responsibilities. The program faculty also maintains regular contact with community agencies and educational institutions in the region to obtain input into curriculum planning and improvements in clinical training.

Core ideas guiding the marriage and family therapy doctoral programs

Relational systems: People are best understood within the cultural, spiritual, and relational systems in which they are embedded. Change, therefore, occurs in the context of family, community, and interpersonal relationships. This program focuses on both the structured relational patterns of communication and interaction and on the systems of meaning that define and shape these patterns.

Wholeness: The program encourages wholeness by attending to the physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions of human experience. These dimensions reciprocally interact at every level.

Social forces: The program is guided by a belief that social contexts and processes influence meanings, values, and people’s understandings of self, family, and others. Particular emphasis is placed on:

- research focusing on social forces relevant to the distinctive multicultural mix of families in the Southern California region;
- the interrelationship between faith and family relationships throughout the world, and
- the effects of the changing health-care system and of medical technology; as well as
- collaboration among education, family, work, and legal systems.

Healing power of relationships: As people become more connected to each other and their communities, the potential for growth and healing are enhanced; and the opportunity for making positive contributions is maximized. Students are encouraged to develop their therapeutic relationship and community involvement skills such that they can cocreate an environment of safety, respect, compassion, openness, and community participation.

Diversity: Congruent with an appreciation of the importance of social forces is an interest in and respect for the diverse experiences and perceptions of human beings. Different social contexts—such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and socioeconomic status—result in a wide variety of meanings and behavior patterns in marriages, families, and intimate relationships. The program seeks to create a diverse mix of students and faculty, and to challenge all who are involved to learn from the richness of multiple perspectives.

Empirical process: The program encourages clinical work and theory development grounded in an empirical understanding of human experience. Students are offered the opportunity to develop their capacities to utilize inductive and deductive reasoning; as well as objectivity, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity in therapy, program development and evaluation, and research.

Education and prevention: Connections at family, school, and community levels are important components of resilience. The program emphasizes helping individuals and families access their relational competencies as an important part of prevention, as well as the resolution of their current difficulties.

Spirituality: This program sees spirituality as central to wholeness and healing. Students are encouraged to integrate their practices of faith with their professional work. The program places strong emphasis on active demonstration of moral and ethical principles as exemplified by, but not limited to, Judeo-Christian teachings.

Global focus: The mission of the program reaches beyond the local and national levels to the international community. This includes collaboration and experience with people from other nations and cultures to promote mutual understanding, resolve problems, and strengthen families.

Advanced standing policy

National accreditation and certification processes ensure that degrees are comparable across institutional boundaries. This advanced standing policy recognizes the value of these professional review processes on the part of the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences and facilitates
cooperation in professional training within the marital and family therapy discipline. The policy assures that at least half of all interim master's degree units and 60 percent of doctoral academic credit will be earned at Loma Linda, while enabling cooperative relationships with other accredited programs.

**Guidelines**

Advanced standing may be granted for previous course work equivalent in content and scope to required counseling and family sciences (CFS) courses. This reduces the number of units to be taken at LLU. Determination of advanced standing is based on the following guidelines:

1. **Residency requirements**
   a. Interim master’s degree. Advanced standing may not reduce total units below 45 units for an interim master’s degree earned in combination with a CFS doctoral degree.
   b. Doctoral degree. Advanced standing may not reduce total units below 60 units for a Ph.D. degree in marital and family therapy, Ph.D. degree in family studies, or Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy (D.M.F.T.) degree.

2. **Determination of equivalency**
   a. Courses applied to advanced standing must be graduate-level courses earned at an accredited institution. No credit may be applied for grades lower than B-.
   b. Courses completed in programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marital and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) or certified family life education (CLFE) programs approved by the National Council on Family Relations will be reviewed as a whole in relation to CFS program requirements. It is anticipated that comparable course content from these schools may be divided into different course configurations than that of LLU. Students wishing advanced standing based on units earned at other institutions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with COAMFTE or NCFR standards.
   c. Advanced standing is not granted for religion courses.
   d. Doctoral courses taken more than five years previously may be considered for advanced standing only if the content has been used professionally on a regular basis and the student can demonstrate current knowledge in the field.
   e. Approved prior client contact hours may also be applied. See CFS doctoral handbook for approval process.
   f. A master’s degree in marital and family therapy is a prerequisite for the Ph.D. degree in MFT and the D.M.F.T. degree. Courses earned in completion of this degree are not eligible for advanced standing.

3. **Approval process**

   Students seeking advanced standing should meet with their program director prior to admission or within the first two quarters of study and supply copies of each syllabus of prior course work. Following course review, the program director will write a letter to the School of Behavioral Health that outlines which courses from previous institutions qualify for advanced standing and which equivalent CFS courses will be waived. The letter will specify how many units and client contact hours the student will need to complete the degree. Rather than completing separate academic variances for each course, the student will submit one academic variance accompanied by the program director’s letter outlining the advanced standing.

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**Financial assistance**

Students who are accepted into the Ph.D. or D.M.F.T. degree curriculum in marital and family therapy may apply for work-study and department-funded research, teaching, and administrative assistantships awarded by the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences. Departmental awards are contingent on the availability of funds. Students may also apply for need-based financial aid, such as a loan or other work-study programs on campus. Students accepted into the Ph.D. or D.M.F.T. degree curriculum in marital and family therapy are eligible for and encouraged to apply for the AAMFT minority fellowships. See [http://www.aamft.org/](http://www.aamft.org/) for information.

Students may apply for financial aid by writing to:

Student Financial Aid Office
Student Services
Loma Linda University
Loma Linda, CA 92350
909/558-4509

**Accreditation**

The Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy degree program and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in marital and family therapy are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), 112 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone: 703/838-9808; e-mail: coa@aamft.org.

**Program Requirements**


**Courses**

MFTH 501. Fundamentals of Supervision in Marital and Family Therapy. 3 Units.

Research and theory regarding the supervision of marriage and family therapy trainees and interns. Can be used toward the requirements for certification as an AAMFT-approved supervisor.

MFTH 502. Advanced Supervision in Marital and Family Therapy. 1 Unit.

Mentoring of supervision of MFT trainees and interns in a clinical setting. Hours earned apply toward certification as an AAMFT-approved supervisor. Must complete 30 hours of supervision and 5 hours of supervision mentoring. Prerequisite or Corequisite: MFTH 501.

MFTH 504. Advanced Theory in Marital and Family Therapy. 4 Units.

Provides a metaperspective for analysis and development of the systemic-relational theories guiding the practice of marital and family therapy, with special focus on a relational perspective of the "self" and the consequent implications for research and practice. Students learn to contextualize and deconstruct the philosophical, religious, political, sociological, and ecosystemic notions that have influenced the field, to develop skills that will prepare them to contribute to the ongoing critique and development of MFT theory; and to apply theory to research. Emphasizes the ethical and social-contextual aspects of case conceptualization and implications for recovery-based practice.
MFTH 505. Advanced Family Studies. 4 Units.  
A critical survey of the research and theory growing out of the fields of human development and family studies. Provides students with a background on the social and historical factors that form the context in which families are defined and function. Students apply course material to the practice of family life education and family therapy.

MFTH 506. Foundations of Systemic Practice. 3 Units.  
Explores the philosophical underpinnings of systemic thought and their clinical application to the field of family therapy and the recovery processes in the treatment of mental health issues. Focuses on the role of recursive epistemology as it affects family patterns and provides methods for determining clinical interventions. Ideas critiqued through examination of contextual issues of ethnicity, power, and gender as they relate to the systemic paradigm; and the effects of these issues on family relationships and recovery from mental health symptoms.

Explores postmodern theories and clinical application to the field of family therapy. Focuses on models of therapy influenced by social constructionist thinking, with an emphasis on language and meaning as they relate to a relational understanding of mental health issues. Students learn to present issues in a way that demonstrates a sociocontextual understanding of individual symptoms and relationship concerns. Addresses solution-focused therapy that reflects a paradigm shift from a problem-centered approach to one of resilience. Introduces the narrative metaphor of Michael White and David Epston as a way of facilitating personal empowerment in the face of societal inequities and pathologizing discourses. Concludes with the collaborative language systems approach that emphasizes therapist as partner with clients in developing a resource-based approach to the recovery process. Prerequisite: Admission to a CFS doctoral program or MFAM 564.

MFTH 508. Clinical 3—Larger and Multiple Systems in MFT Practice. 3 Units.  
Examines a multisystemic framework that includes biological, interpersonal, family, community, school, and organizational systems. Emphasizes the influence of contextual issues—such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ethnicity—on emotion, behavior, and relationship patterns related to mental health and family issues in couples and family therapy practice.

MFTH 509. Critical Issues. 3 Units.  
Special topics related to systems/relational practice in marital and family therapy.

MFTH 519. Teaching in Higher Education. 2 Units.  
Discusses theory, techniques, and processes in the teaching of MFT, including an examination of didactic and experiential techniques.

MFTH 520. Practicum in Teaching. 3 Units.  
Provides the bridge between state-of-the-art pedagogical skills and the practical application of those skills in teaching in the classroom and other community settings. With a focus on teaching, students engage in curriculum planning, testing, course delivery in family science, and development of teaching and self-evaluation skills toward continuous quality improvement in the art and science of teaching.

MFTH 521. E-Learning: Construction and Design. 2 Units.  
Responding to movement of universities toward technology-based instruction, prepares doctoral students to design and construct online and distance education curricula. Emphasizes utilization of Blackboard and Desire2Learn applications. Students create online course modules for undergraduate or master’s-level instruction in a family or counseling-related field of study. Prerequisite: Prior teaching or teaching assistance experience. MFTH 519 recommended.

MFTH 522. E-Learning: Delivery and Management. 2 Units.  
Provides students opportunity to manage an online course designed in E-Learning I via Blackboard. Emphasizes mastery of online course delivery and the creation of a virtual class community. Students responsible for all aspects of online course instruction, including maintenance of their course Web site, communicating with students, and assigning grades while under the mentorship of the instructor. Provides students with actual online teaching and virtual community maintenance experience that offers cutting-edge advances in the field of higher education, as well as enhances their marketability.

MFTH 524. Administration in Marital and Family Therapy. 3 Units.  
Using the framework of mission-based management—which addresses the needs of communities and underserved populations—prepares marriage and family therapy doctoral students to manage human-service programs and agencies. Examines strategic planning and continuous quality improvement as methods for maintaining accountability to community stakeholders, creating organizational change, and building morale within the organization.

MFTH 525. Advanced Marital and Family Therapy Assessment and Testing. 3 Units.  
Examines testing, diagnosis, and assessment in the practice of marital and family therapy. Emphasizes development of a comprehensive assessment model that integrates traditional models of mental health assessment with cybernetic, developmental, and interactional perspectives. Case material spans individual, couple, and family assessments in clinical and research settings. Students administer instruments and integrate findings into an overall systemic framework.

MFTH 527. Advanced Legal and Ethical Issues. 3 Units.  
Reviews the AAMFT code of ethics and the California legal codes pertaining to the practice of marriage and family therapy. Develops skills and knowledge that assist student to be an expert witness and family mediator (therapeutic), and that help student understand how to work with the legal system.

MFTH 528. Organizations: Structure, Process, and Behavior. 3 Units.  
Helps students understand how organizations operate and how different contingency factors can affect the choices managers make. Covers essential theories and concepts for managing in the twenty-first century. Treats behavioral processes with reference to organizational structure and design. Larger-systems theory and leadership skills.

MFTH 534. Family Therapy and Medicine. 3 Units.  
Examines the interface of medical practice and family therapy in common medical family therapy settings. Explores understanding of the culture of medicine, including usual medical practices and procedures. Outlines adaptations of the medical model used by family therapists. Offers models for collaboration of medical family therapists with medical practitioners. Addresses behavioral health intervention strategies for families with health and wellness issues.
MFTH 540. Medical Family Therapy. 3 Units.
Provides an overview of medical family therapy and the theoretical models that can be applied to clinical work within medical settings. Addresses contextual issues that impact health of patients and family members. Includes personal and professional aspects of providing ethical, holistic, and collaborative clinical care in medical settings.

MFTH 541. Medical Family Therapy Seminar 1. 1 Unit.
In a workshop format incorporating presentation and discussion with faculty and peers, students develop their expertise in researching specific issues relevant to their practice. Focuses on evidence-based interventions and relevant psychotropic medications. Prerequisite or Concurrent: MFTH 540.

MFTH 542. Medical Family Therapy Seminar 2. 1 Unit.
In a workshop format that incorporates presentation and discussion with faculty and peers, students enhance their professional development. Students learn to market their services to physicians and those in the health-care field, to network professionally, and to prepare for a job search.

MFTH 543. Medical Family Therapy Seminar 3. 1 Unit.
In a workshop format that incorporates presentation and discussion with faculty and peers, students enhance their professional development. Students learn to market their services to physicians and those in the health-care field, to network professionally, and to prepare for a job search.

MFTH 544. Health and Illness in Families. 3 Units.
Examines the biopsychosocial-spiritual aspects of illness and its impact on individuals, couples, and family systems across the lifespan. Reviews common diseases and relevant theories, assessments, and evidence-based interventions. Highlights the impact of contextual illness factors as they pertain to the patient, the family, and health-care team members.

MFTH 545. Research and Practice with Couples and Families. 3 Units.
A scholarly and critical review of the literature in family social science, with application of this literature to the practice of family life education and/or marital and family therapy. Students interact with the material to critically challenge historical approaches and develop new insights and understandings that would shape present and future practice of interventionists who work with families.

MFTH 546. Advances in Family Sciences. 3 Units.
Focuses on current issues, trends, and approaches in the field of family social science; and interacts with newer advances in the field resulting from changes in practice, sociocultural, political, and technological arenas. Presents professional practice as an evolving process for practitioners in the twenty-first century.

MFTH 547. Organizational Assessment. 3 Units.
How to make an assessment of an organizational system. Addresses data collection and analysis, outcome evaluation, and how to present assessment in a systemic manner.

MFTH 557. Organizational Assessment. 3 Units.
How to make an assessment of an organizational system. Addresses data collection and analysis, outcome evaluation, and how to present assessment in a systemic manner.

MFTH 548. Social Context of Health. 3 Units.
Examines the biopsychosocial-spiritual aspects of illness and its impact on individuals, couples, and family systems across the lifespan. Reviews common diseases and relevant theories, assessments, and evidence-based interventions. Highlights the impact of contextual illness factors as they pertain to the patient, the family, and health-care team members.

MFTH 555. Organizational Development and Change. 3 Units.
Helps students understand the application of behavioral and family science knowledge to improve organization performance and organization functioning. Discusses the process of planned change and the change process. Includes interpersonal and group processes such as T-groups, process consultations, and team building. Addresses conflict resolutions, organizational lifespan, leadership skills, and critical-incident stress debriefing.

MFTH 556. Management Consulting and Professional Relations. 3 Units.
Capstone course for the system consultation and professional relations concentration in the doctoral programs in the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences. Students integrate theories, knowledge, and skills from MFTH 528, 555, and 557. Assists students to apply expertise in organizational assessment, behavior, and change to practical and real life.
MFTH 604. Advanced Qualitative Methods. 4 Units.
Prepares doctoral students to conduct and evaluate qualitative research in marital and family therapy and family studies. Introduces students to a social constructionist critique of research and teaches them to think broadly about research paradigms and design—considering questions such as the researcher’s role and relationship to the research process, objectivity, reflexivity, credibility, and the construction of knowledge. Students examine various qualitative methodologies—including grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, narrative and conversation analysis, and participatory-based action research. Students engage in a grounded theory research project relevant to family processes and/or clinical practice.

MFTH 605. Advanced Quantitative Methods. 4 Units.
Fociques on survey research design and data analysis, as well as experimental and quasi-experimental design—and their application to marriage and family therapy/family studies. Topics include questionnaire and item design, measurement, sampling designs, research idea development, relational hypotheses formation, survey planning and management, systemic clinical data measurement, logic of analysis, and problems of statistical interpretation. Critically examines threats to internal and external validity, as well as control of plausible alternative hypotheses.

MFTH 606. Issues in MFT Research. 4 Units.
Addresses current issues in marriage and family therapy (MFT) research as a basis for on-going inquiry and program development in the field. Emphasizes research history, trends in the field, and evidence-based approaches to recovery. Focuses on the process of designing, implementing, and disseminating research to support the field of MFT.

MFTH 607. Scholarly Skills. 1 Unit.
Orients counseling and family sciences doctoral degree students to the use of bibliographic search engines and databases for writing critical literature reviews. Provides instruction regarding search terms unique to specific databases, as well as on the use of the EndNote software program to begin developing a bibliographic database for class projects, qualifying examinations, research papers, DMFT projects, and dissertations. Addresses the organization of a scholarly review paper using APA format and appropriate and effective professional writing style.

MFTH 608. Analysis and Presentation Issues in Research. 3 Units.
Final course in a sequence of three research classes. Builds on the material presented in MFTH 605 and MFTH 606. Focuses on the final stage of the research process by identifying issues such as specifying research questions/problems; using relevant literature; selecting and using appropriate analytical tools; summarizing empirical results; and presenting results for proposals, brief reports, posters, and peer review articles. Focuses on quantitative approaches, and includes discussion of meta analysis and mixed methods approaches in understanding, analyzing, and presenting research in family studies and marriage and family therapy.

MFTH 624. Program Development for Families and Communities. 3 Units.
Examines core components of systemic/relational programs designed to address mental health problems within the context of families and larger systems. Explains the elements of systemic programming that address clinical treatment problems/populations, as well as prevention and intervention issues affecting schools, neighborhoods, and other communities. Using the systemic/relational paradigm of the field, students create programs reflecting their areas of interest.

MFTH 625. Grant Writing. 3 Units.
Study and practice in locating, developing, and responding to great grant opportunities of interest to marriage and family therapists and the mental health populations they serve. Students develop their own systemic/relational program, training, research, or dissertation grant ideas; locate potential funding sources; tailor applications and proposals to each funding source; and critique and refine proposals to meet professional and grantor standards.

MFTH 626. Program Evaluation and Monitoring. 3 Units.
Prepares students to conduct formative and summative evaluations using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method designs. Emphasizes program evaluation and clinical outcomes using the systemic/relational perspective of marriage and family therapy. Develops students’ abilities to collaborate with stakeholders in developing evaluation plans that ensure evaluation reports that meet the intended purposes and are used for program decision making. Evaluation activities include assessment of program need, theory and adherence, process and performance, outcomes, impact, and efficiency.

MFTH 627. Advanced Program Development and Evaluation. 2 Units.
Participants develop D.M.F.T. degree project proposals through intensive literature review, consultation with organization and community stakeholders, discussion with faculty and peers, and refinement resulting from feedback following formal presentations. The D.M.F.T. degree proposal is the expected outcome from this two-quarter class. For D.M.F.T. degree students only. Prerequisite: MFTH 624, MFTH 625, MFTH 626.

MFTH 634. Practicum in Marital and Family Therapy. 3 Units.
A three-quarter practicum series on applications of systems/relational therapy to relational distress and mental health symptoms. Series emphasizes a positive, strengths-based approach to resilience that engages clients in their natural family and community networks. Section 1: addresses gender, culture, socioeconomic, and political aspects of practice. Section 2: focuses on each student’s mode of systemic conceptualization and how to work with in-session process. Section 3: emphasizes religious beliefs and spirituality as client resources, and addresses the moral and ethical imperatives in relationally based practice. Prerequisite: At least 200 clinical hours.

MFTH 637. Special Projects in Health and Illness in Families. 1,3 Unit.
Independent study in which students who have taken MFTH 544 participate in research, program development or evaluation, or clinical activities related to the integration of relational health and wellness. Prerequisite or concurrent: MFTH 544.

MFTH 668. Qualitative Research Practicum. 3 Units.
Gives students the opportunity to continue developing the skills needed to conduct and report the qualitative research begun in MFTH 604. Students expected to engage in a research project, with particular emphasis on analysis and manuscript preparation.

MFTH 694. Doctoral Seminar. 1 Unit.
Ph.D. degree students develop and refine their dissertation proposals in a workshop format through presentation and discussion with faculty and other students.

MFTH 695. Project Research. 1-12 Units.
Required research associated with the capstone project for the D.M.F.T. degree.

MFTH 697. Research. 1-6 Units.
Independent research relating to marital and family therapy or family studies under the direction of a faculty advisor.
MFTH 698. Dissertation Research. 1-10 Units.
Completes independent research contributing to the field of marital and family therapy.

MFTH 785. Professional Clinical Training in MFT. 1.5,3 Unit.
Supervised experience in the practice of marital and family therapy. Hours represent face-to-face direct client contact. May be repeated.

MFTH 785A. Begin Clinical Training in Couple, Marital, and Family Therapy. 0 Units.
Enables students to consult with clinical director to set up and begin supervised clinical practice in the field of couple, marital, and family therapy. Acceptance into a CFS doctoral program.

MFTH 785B. Clinical Training in Couple, Marital, and Family Therapy. 4 Units.
Documents completion of a minimum of 200 hours of direct client contact in the practice of couple, marital, and family therapy—with 40 hours of AAMFT-approved supervision or equivalent. At least half the client hours must be with more than one family member present. Students receive an IP in MFTH 785B for a maximum of five quarters, or until all hours are completed. Students can repeat MFTH 785B a maximum of five times in order to document the minimum program cognate of 1000 hours of clinical training and 200 hours of AAMFT-approved supervision or equivalent. The number of course repeats of MFTH 785B varies, depending on the verification of clinical advanced standing achieved through MFTH 785A. Students pay a course fee instead of unit tuition.

MFTH 786. Professional Development Proposal. 0 Units.
Must be registered for at least one quarter prior to eligibility for 786A. The student’s professional development plan must be formulated and approved by the faculty during this course.

MFTH 786A. Professional Development in Marital and Family Therapy. 1.5-12 Units.
Doctoral-level experience in marital and family therapy under the supervision of a senior-level family therapist/mentor. Must be arranged in advance in the department. A total of 36 units required for graduation. Prerequisite: MFTH 786.

MFTH 786B. Professional Internship in Marital and Family Therapy—Clinical. 2,4 Units.
Supervised client contact (face-to-face hours only) in the practice of marital and family therapy.