University of Rhode Island

**COUPLE AND FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM MANUAL**

**2018 - 2019**

**INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM GOALS**

The University of Rhode Island (URI) offers a two-year program leading to the Master of Science degree in Human Development and Family Studies with a specialization in Couple and Family Therapy (CFT). This program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE).

The **mission** of the URI Couple and Family Therapy Program is to prepare students to become competent, research-informed, ethical, and culturally-proficient couple and family therapists. In alignment with the service mission of a land-grant university, the program encourages civic engagement to enhance the overall health, well-being, and equity of surrounding communities and beyond.

The program’s **philosophy and values** are grounded on the following principles:

1. Collaboration among students, faculty and students, and trainees and their clients.
2. The development of skills based on an integration of a range of theories.
3. A focus on resources and strengths in clinical and classroom/advisory settings.
4. A commitment to diversity and inclusion in clinical training as well as curriculum and policies.
5. Outcome-informed clinical and teaching practices.

**Program Goals**

Goals of the URI CFT Program are:

1. Provide students with quality instruction in couple and family therapy theories, models, research, and research skills applicable to the field of couple and family therapy.
2. Provide skill-based training to help students become competent and ethical couple and family therapists.
3. Teach and provide opportunities for students to practice culturally-proficient, socially-just couple and family therapy.
4. Prepare students to contribute to communities through the application of best practices in couple and family therapy.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are derived from the program’s mission and goals and align with systemic, multicultural, and ethical components of couple and family therapy education as outlined by the COAMFTE. Student learning outcomes also conform to Department, College, and University expectations of measurement and assessment, including policies of URI’s Student Learning and Outcomes Office (SLOA) and the University Learning Outcomes and Oversight Committee (LOOC). Student learning outcomes are informed by the Principles of the Profession of Marriage and Family Therapy (PPMFT) including:

1. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Core Competencies
2. AAMFT Code of Ethics
3. Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) Examination Domains, Task and Knowledge Statements
4. Rhode Island State Licensing Regulations

**Student Learning Outcomes are:**

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of couple and family therapy theories and their applications across clinical problems and populations.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct a valid, ethical research project that incorporates relevant couple and family therapy research and furthers knowledge in their topic area.
3. Students will demonstrate clinical competence for their experience level in the practice of couple and family therapy.
4. Students will demonstrate awareness of and appropriate responses to ethical concerns in the practice of couple and family therapy.
5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice relevant to the practice of couple and family therapy.
6. Students will demonstrate multicultural proficiency for their experience level in the practice of couple and family therapy.
7. Students will demonstrate responsible conduct in regard to workplace policies and state regulations.
8. Students will demonstrate the ability to collaborate with other service professionals.
9. Students will successfully transition post-graduation to employment using skills they learned in the program.
10. Students will represent the profession as licensed MFTs.

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The program seeks to create an inclusive, challenging, and respectful learning environment in which the diverse identities and life experiences of all are valued. The program is based on the belief that a multiplicity of viewpoints empowers students to become critical thinkers and effective practitioners in a global society.

The program endorses and adheres to the university’s anti-discrimination policies:

<https://web.uri.edu/affirmativeaction/files/All-3-Anti-Discrimination-Policy-Stmts.pdf>

<https://web.uri.edu/affirmativeaction/discrimination/>

These policies apply to recruitment, admission, codes of conduct, hiring, retention or dismissal of faculty, students, and supervisors or other educators.

Student voice is invited and welcomed. There are multiple opportunities to provide feedback to faculty to improve the program (see p. 22 of this manual). Faculty are available to assist with conflict resolution and the construction of solutions to concerns throughout the year. Faculty office hours are posted on all syllabi, and faculty make themselves available by appointment or walk-in based on their schedules. Students who feel they are being discriminated against, or who have a complaint or grievance about any issue, have access to the program’s Grievance Procedure outlined in this manual on page 20.

**FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Faculty members share a commitment to the following:

* Creation of inclusive learning environments that invite and value a multiplicity of viewpoints and life experiences.
* Development of competencies in multicultural education and clinical training.
* Contribution to the profession through various ways: scholarship, research, teaching, supervision, practice, and service.

The **Core Faculty** are tasked with primary instructional responsibility of the MFT curriculum. They demonstrate competence as MFTs and identify professionally primarily as MFTs. This identity includes adopting the AAMFT Code of Ethics as a guide for professional conduct and utilization of Professional Marriage and Family Therapy Principles (PMFTPs), membership in relationally-focused organizations, relational

licenses/certifications, and/or demonstration of relational identities in their work and/or other environments.

Core Faculty members possess the appropriate educational, clinical, and supervisory credentials congruent with program missions and goals. The program utilizes as needed additional faculty whose training and/or expertise is appropriate for courses taught and who demonstrate understanding of the relational orientation of the profession. Additional faculty teach effectively and support the program’s mission, goals, and outcomes.

The **Program Director** is a core faculty member qualified and vested with responsibility for oversight of the curriculum, clinical training program, facilities, services, and the maintenance and enhancement of the program’s quality. The Program Director possesses qualifications enabling him/her to provide leadership for the foundational curriculum and practice component consistent with the program’s clinical training mission. The Program Director must be an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or an AAMFT Supervision Candidate with supervision experience and training. A Program Director who is an AAMFT Supervision Candidate must become an AAMFT Approved Supervisor within three years of assuming this role. The Program Director directs the program throughout the year (12 months).

The duties associated with serving as Program Director are typically the equivalent of one course release per year, in line with similar Program Director positions in the department. In addition to the broad responsibilities noted above, responsibilities may include: 1) working with the Chair to maintain curriculum and faculty course assignments for the program; 2) reviewing applications and making recommendations for program admission; 3) reviewing student records for matriculation and graduation; 4) promoting the program to attract a diverse student body; 5) providing support for students while matriculating; and 5) engaging in assessment.

For more information about Program Faculty, see <https://web.uri.edu/human-development/cft-faculty/>

**ADMISSION POLICIES**

The date by which all completed materials must be received in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDF) is February 1. A completed application consists of a completed University of Rhode Island Application Form, official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate course work completed to date, two letters of recommendation - preferably one from a professor or someone able to judge the quality of the applicant’s academic work and one from a work supervisor or internship supervisor who has seen the person working within a social service setting, and a statement of purpose.

All the applicant’s materials are submitted online through the graduate school web site page. Applicants can review the status of their application and track its course to completion.

Starting in February the CFT faculty begins to review the completed applications. Based on these faculty ratings a candidate could be denied admission, could be invited for interview, or could be held temporarily in a pool for reconsideration.

Criteria for admission are:

1. A cogent statement of purpose clearly identifying a specific interest in Couple and Family Therapy and a clear statement of the decision making process which leads up to this application to the University of Rhode Island (URI) CFT program.
2. A GPA of 3.3 or better for course work to date (applications below 3.3 are considered with exceptional other application components).
3. A background in the behavioral sciences with specific course work in abnormal psychology, developmental theory, family relations and introduction to counseling (processes and procedures in counseling). Students must have courses in these areas or courses that are closely equivalent. The faculty will judge the merit of the courses based on course title and description from the college or university catalog where the course was taken. If there is a doubt the students may be asked to obtain a copy of the course syllabus.
4. Letters of recommendation which clearly address the applicant’s ability to perform well academically in a graduate program. The letter also must delineate the applicant’s potential as a clinician, the professionalism of the applicant, and the referee’s experience with the applicant.

After the applications are reviewed and the decision to invite for interview is made, the candidates are contacted and an interview is scheduled. The interviews are usually conducted on Monday or Friday so candidates from a distance can travel on the weekend and return home by Monday evening. Every effort is made to accommodate the applicant’s schedule. Several optional dates are offered for the interview. An interview is mandatory before an admission decision can be rendered. In special circumstances a live video interview (e.g., Skype) will be made available.

**The Interview**

When the candidates come for their interview, they will meet both faculty members and current graduate students. A group meeting is held and the CFT faculty provide a formal presentation of the program followed by a general question/answer session. The candidates are then interviewed by the faculty in groups of 2-3. The purpose of the interview is to determine whether the applicant possesses the full range of academic qualifications, experiential background, clinical competency, and readiness to be successful in an academically and emotionally demanding clinical preparation program.

Following the conclusions of the interviews the faculty meets to discuss the candidates and rate them along specified criteria. After all the screened candidates have been interviewed the faculty decides which persons will be invited to enter the program. The maximum number that will be offered admission is 12. The prospective students are notified and must reply within 3 weeks stating their intent to attend or not attend and the reasons for not attending. After the responses are received, some of the candidates who have been placed on a waiting list could be offered admission.

**ACADEMIC STANDING**

In order to maintain academic standing as a graduate student all CFT students must meet the requirements specified by the University of Rhode Island Graduate School. These standards as well as other policies which govern graduate students, such as program approval, thesis preparation and approval, etc. are detailed in the Graduate Student Manual (<http://web.uri.edu/graduate-manual/>). CFT students should download copies of this manual from the Graduate School website and be familiar with its contents. Any student who is found deficient in academic standing will have their status reviewed by the CFT program faculty who will make recommendations to the department and Graduate School as necessary.

The entire CFT faculty evaluates the academic progress of each student annually with feedback provided to the student by the student’s faculty advisor. A graduate student who receives a grade of C+ or lower for a course below the 500 level must either retake the course and earn a B- or better in it or take in its place a course approved by his/her advisor.

Students must adhere to responsibilities regarding academic integrity as outlined in sections 8.27.10-8.27.15 of the URI *University Manual* (<https://web.uri.edu/manual/chapter-8/chapter-8-2/>). Instructors have the responsibility to inform students of their expectations regarding academic integrity and have the explicit duty to take action in known cases of cheating or plagiarism. For information on instructor options is cases of academic dishonesty, see Chapter 8 of the URI University Manual (<https://web.uri.edu/manual/chapter-8/chapter-8-2/>).

In certain courses numbered 500 or above grades of C or better shall be credited toward the degree. Any such course in which candidates receive a grade lower than C shall be retaken or replaced by a course approved by their program advisor and by the Dean of the Graduate School.

If a student receives a C/C+ in two courses numbered 500 or above s/he will be placed on probation in the program. CFT faculty will confer on steps needed to remove the probationary status. If the student exceeds the specified number of these grades or receives a grade of D, F, or U, his/her status will be reviewed immediately by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the appropriate members of the department.

To qualify for continuation in degree candidate status and for graduation an average of B in all work taken is required, except for courses specified as entrance deficiencies, approved for no program credit prior to registration for the course, or where they are automatically considered as taken for no program credit as part of the master’s degree. If a degree candidate does not maintain a B average his/her status as a graduate student will be reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the

appropriate faculty member(s) of the department. Such review may result in the student being placed on provisional status, being suspended, or dismissed. Students who are permitted to continue on provisional status must achieve a cumulative average of B or better in graduate level course work during the next semester (9 credits if part-time students). Students failing to achieve the necessary B average will be subject to suspension or dismissal.

As clinicians in training, all CFT students are governed by the AAMFT Code of Ethics. A copy of the AAMFT Code of Ethics is contained in the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic Handbook. All students are responsible for reading and being thoroughly familiar with its contents. A violation of the AAMFT Code of Ethics is considered very serious, automatically results in a review of the student’s status by the program faculty, and may result in dismissal from the program.

**ASSIGNMENT OF ADVISOR AND PROGRAM OF STUDIES**

When a student enters the program he or she is assigned an advisor by the CFT program Director. Graduate students can also request to be assigned to a specific faculty advisor. This advisor assists the student with class scheduling, guidance related to any questions or concerns the student may have, and overall support throughout his or her tenure in the program. Usually new students can register online or in consultation with the instructor if permission is required. A permission code allows a student to register for a restricted course. A course is restricted if it requires specific academic or clinical preparation or is reserved for CFT students only. Several of the CFT courses fit into either or both of these categories.

Students must complete 60 credits of coursework for the degree. The Graduate Student Manual (available online at <https://web.uri.edu/graduate-manual/>) states that all graduate students must submit a Program of Study (POS) to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval. This must be done as soon as is practicable, but not later than the end of the third semester of enrollment as full time students, or by the end of the fourth semester of enrollment as a part-time student. The CFT policy is that the POS is to be submitted by the end of the first semester.

The POS must be signed electronically by the student, the student’s graduate advisor, and the Program Director or the department Chair. The POS is a contract with the Graduate School and specifies what courses a student will take to satisfy the degree requirements of the program, the department, and the Graduate School. If a student wishes to substitute one course for another, then he or she must complete and submit a revised POS. Again, this must be signed by the student, the advisor and Program Director.

At the beginning of their final semester all potential graduates are instructed by the CFT Program Director or their advisor to review their POS. The Graduate School will check its computer record with the Registrar’s Office to see that the students have taken the courses listed on the Program of Studies or is currently enrolled and thus is on target to graduate.

**Sample Program of Study for CFT Student**

Course Title Credits

HDF 501 Developmental Science in Family Contexts 3

HDF 505 Human Sexuality and Counseling 3

HDF 536 Family Dynamics and Health 3

HDF 559 Diversity in Applied Family Settings 3

HDF 563 Marital and Family Therapy I 3

HDF 564 Marital and Family Therapy II 3

HDF 565 Family Therapy Practicum (4 semesters at 3 ea.) 12

HDF 566 Theoretical and Clinical Problems 3

HDF 569 Assessment in Couple and Family Therapy 3

HDF 570 Research in Human Development and Family Studies 3

HDF 578 Ethics and Professional Issues 3

HDF 581 Professional Seminar (capstone) 3

HDF 583 Master’s Internship 6

HDF 584 Master’s Internship 6

Elective 3

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

If a graduate student in the CFT program wishes to seek a leave of absence, the first step is to consult with their faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will help the student decide if he/she meets the criteria for Leave of Absence as outlined in section 4.30 of the Graduate Student Manual. If the faculty advisor and the student agree there is sufficient reason to apply for a leave of absence the student will then confer with the Program Director and he/she will place this item on the next CFT Staff meeting agenda. The student will then document in writing the reason(s)/for requesting leave.

The CFT Graduate Program Director will review the written statement and forward the request to the Dean of the Graduate School.

**PRACTICA POLICY**

Your clinical training at URI goes through a sequence of practicum experiences, which consist of the following:

• Pre-practicum

• On-site Practicum

• Off-site Practicum Internship

1. Criteria for Permission to See Clients at the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic

Graduate students in the Couple and Family Therapy program must be evaluated by the clinical faculty before they are assigned to cases at the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic (CFTC), where the on-site practica are conducted. Below are the criteria used to determine whether a graduate student is ready to assume the responsibilities of a therapist-in-training.

1. The graduate student must have successfully completed the Pre-Practicum with a minimum grade of B. The competencies used to make the judgment on readiness include being able to form strong working alliances with clients, demonstrating familiarity with the policies and procedures in the CFTC Manual systemically conceptualizing observed sessions, and exhibiting appropriate professional skills. Evaluation includes the *First Session Simulation Evaluation* and any additional criteria chosen by the practicum supervisor.
2. The graduate student will have completed successfully or be in good academic standing in clinically relevant theory and therapy courses. These include: HDF 563-Couple and Family Therapy I; and HDF 536-Family Dynamics and Health or HDF 578, Ethics. Successful completion of these courses with a grade or anticipated grade of B or better will serve as proof the graduate student has mastered the material needed to begin case work under supervision at the CFTC.

Failure to meet any of the above criteria will trigger a review of academic status by the

CFT faculty.

1. Program Requirements for Continuing in Practicum
2. You are required to be continuously enrolled in practicum for twelve (12) consecutive months. At URI that means four consecutive practica.
3. Permission to continue in practicum from one semester to another is contingent upon a grade of B or higher as determined by the clinical supervisor (in consultation with clinical faculty when appropriate). Evaluation includes the *Practicum/Internship Evaluation Form* and Student Clinical Self-Assessment any additional criteria chosen by the clinical supervisor. Evaluative criteria will be weighted most heavily for the following domains of professional development:
4. Initial therapeutic engagement that includes the ability to establish and maintain positive therapeutic alliances with clients.
5. Ongoing assessment and treatment planning and the recognition when these need to be modified
6. Therapeutic interventions that are sensitive to the client’s needs and perspectives
7. Professional conduct including adherence to policies and procedures of the practice setting.
8. Demonstrating good judgment regarding ethical/legal dilemmas, including adherence to the AAMFT Code of ethics and active solicitation of supervision when appropriate.
9. The AAMFT Code of Ethics states that couple and family therapists do not abandon their clients. When directed by your supervisor, you will be required to continue work with your clients even though the semester has ended. If this is the case, arrangements will be made for on-going supervision. When directed by your supervisor, you may transfer your case to another therapist who has permission to see clients. Case transfers are directed and monitored by the practicum supervisor from the originating practicum.
10. Off-site Practicum Internship

During the spring semester the process of placing a graduate student in off-site practicum begins. In order to be placed in an off-site practicum each graduate student must meet the following criteria:

* + 1. Successful completion (grade of B or better) of spring practicum in which you are carrying an active case load.
    2. Successful completion (grade of B or better) of the following family theory and therapy courses including: HDF 564, Marital and Family Therapy II, HDF 569, Assessment in Marital and Family Therapy, and HDF 578, Ethical, Legal and Professional Concerns in Family Therapy, as offered.
    3. Interview with cooperating agency and acceptance by the agency.

Continuation in your off-site practicum is not automatic. You will be evaluated by your off-site Supervisor and must successfully meet the criteria as specified in the syllabus.

**OFF-SITE PRACTICUM INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT**

An off-site practicum placement (internship) is part of the second year graduate student’s clinical experience. It usually starts during the late spring following the student’s first year in the program. It entails approximately 20 hours per week, including 10-12 client contact hours, agency staff meetings, and time for paperwork at the agency.

An all-program meeting is held at the beginning of the second semester to acquaint first year students with the current experiences of the second year students in their off-site practica. After this meeting, students begin to apply for and interview at off-site placements. The application process consists of:

* + 1. preparing a resume
    2. getting a list of approved off-site placements from Dr. Sparks
    3. speaking with graduate students who are currently placed at the agency
    4. contacting at least three off-site placements for interview appointments
    5. interviewing at least three potential placement sites.

After your interviews:

1. You will give a list of preferred placements to Dr. Sparks.
2. The off-site supervisors will let Dr. Sparks know their preferences.
3. In assigning students to placements, Dr. Sparks will consider the preferences expressed by students and supervisors and match them as closely as possible.

*NOTE: The process is competitive in that students from this program may compete with each other for spots and may also compete with graduate students from other schools/programs. Placements are made on best fit, taking into account site and student preferences. It is not guaranteed that a student will get their top choice/s.*

Off-site placements are established in accordance with AAMFT regulations, which require that there be an AAMFT-approved Supervisor (or supervisor candidate) on site. Off-site placements are also evaluated for their potential to provide the marital and family cases needed for students to complete their client contact hour requirement. When seeking off-site placements (internships) outside of the program’s network, check with Dr. Sparks to verify supervisory credentials and potential for marital and family cases.

Following are some of the off-site placements currently available for CFT graduate students at URI.

Family Service of Rhode Island – Providence

Ledyard Youth Services – Ledyard, CT

United Community and Family Services (UCFS) – Norwich, CT

North American Family Institute – Providence, RI

Child and Family Agency – Groton, CT

These off-site placements change from time to time based on the needs of the program and the agencies and in accordance with the availability of AAMFT supervisors and/or approved supervisor candidates.

*It is important to remember that second year graduate students will also continue to service clients at the CFTC. The actual number of clients still seen at the CFTC will depend on the needs of the CFTC and the particular internship placement. This will be decided on an individual basis in consultation with the Clinic Director and Clinic Coordinator.*

**RESEARCH PROJECT PROTOCOL AND TIMELINE**

The research project component of the CFT program is your individual obligation in fulfillment of your final master’s project requirement. The project will be due final semester in professional seminar. Your professional seminar instructor will oversee your project to completion. Alternatively, students may seek out a different faculty advisor if they have a specific research interest. The selected faculty advisor will coordinate with the professional seminar instructor through project completion.

The following timeline and due dates should be used to track your progress:

1. *Fulltime* students (2-year track) will take a research methods course (Research in Human Development and Family Studies; HDF 570) in the fall of their first year (or spring of first year depending on instructor availability). *Part time* students will take HDF 570 in the Fall of their second year (or spring of second year, depending on instructor availability. HDF 570 is designed to teach you about the research process. During this course you will become familiar with various methods you will need to perform for your independent project. While you may have an area of interest that you study for your course project, this topic may or may not translate into your final master’s project.
2. Early in the fall semester, students meet with faculty to formulate and refine their research proposals and outlines. Research projects require approval before commencing with IRB proposals (if required) and data collection.
3. For *fulltime* students (2-year track) your IRB proposal is due as early in the second year as possible, depending on IRB fall semester schedule.
4. For *part-time* students (3-year track) your IRB proposal is due as early in your third year as possible, depending on IRB fall semester schedule.
5. After your IRB proposal has been approved, you may begin collecting data.
6. The first draft of your literature review and your data plan will be due on the dates identified by your faculty advisor.
7. Ideally, your data should be collected and ready to analyze and write up at the beginning of your final semester.
8. Your faculty advisor will provide specific dates for completion of the project as well as the process of submitting and revising drafts.
9. The final project is due one week prior to the last scheduled day of HDF 581. If your project is not submitted on time your graduation will be postponed to August.

Below are suggested research projects that are available for qualified students as well as suggestions for projects that utilize our data at our clinic site.

1. 3 and 6-month follow-up

Continuation of our 3 and 6-month follow-up data collection and analysis (1 student). Qualitative study of qualitative client feedback data from follow-up (1 student).

1. Outcome

Review of all outcome data (e.g., % of clients reaching benchmark and/or over clinical cutoff) (1 student). May also coordinate with efficiency project to examine length of stay, etc. with outcome and may also examine alliance data in relation to outcome.

1. Efficiency

Analysis of drop out, no show, length of stay, # of families served, and comparison with older clinical data (1 student).

1. Correlation

Comparison of clinic research instruments with ORS data (1 student).

Additional Project Suggestions:

1. Alliance follow-up

2. Alliance with families

3. Alliance with couples

4. Client satisfaction

5. Change trajectories

6. Alliance and gender

**STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Confidentiality**

Student self-disclosure to faculty during the course of supervision, evaluation, and training is confidential, consistent with the AAMFT Code of Ethics (2015). Student disclosures remain confidential except by written authorization or waiver or when mandated or permitted by law. Because the CFT program works in conjunction with other training agencies as part of the student’s off-site experience, disclosures may be made to supervisors, administrators, or others who share responsibility for training the student. In emergency situations, verbal authorization will be considered sufficient to disclose student confidences.

**Code of Professional Conduct**

All Program members will:

1. Promote cooperation (win-win situations) rather than competition (win-lose situations).
2. Strive to encourage and empower others.
3. Recognize and respect that all individuals have different needs, talents, and areas for growth. However, all are qualified to be in this program.
4. Recognize and respect the diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientations, race, age, cultures, social and economic statuses, physical abilities, religious and ideological beliefs, and other dimensions of diversity of their classmates and faculty.
5. Foster acceptance and positive regard for all individuals in the program.
6. Engage in respectful and, whenever possible, direct, communication.
7. Respect individuals' rights for confidentiality, to the extent possible, in both professional and private affairs.
8. Resolve to handle conflict in ways that lead to trust and cooperation and will attempt to resolve conflict in a mutually acceptable manner. When this is impossible, it is acceptable for members to agree to disagree.
9. Resolve to help each other by sensitively and caringly drawing attention to subtle inappropriate behavior and to challenge each other's attitudes in a spirit of growth. Sexism, racism, or bigotry of any kind, whether overt or subtle, will not be tolerated.
10. Generalize their therapeutic ethical practices to their personal and professional interactions.

**Recommended Procedures for Professional Conduct**

1. In the Classroom:
2. Individuals will be attentive and open to learning something new from all individuals in the classroom.
3. Individuals will be respectful of and professional toward other students and the instructor in the classroom.
4. Individuals will refrain from mocking others verbally or nonverbally while they are speaking or presenting (e.g., rolling eyes, whispering, snickering, making personal or sarcastic comments).
5. Individuals will engage only in constructive discussions of others' comments or presentations (both during and after class).
6. Grades and evaluations are confidential.
   1. Faculty should not discuss students' grades or evaluations with other students. If faculty do so, students should tell faculty that they would prefer faculty not to discuss such matters.
   2. Students should not discuss other individuals' grades or evaluations with other students.
7. Grading and evaluations should be conducted in such a way as to promote the personal growth of the individual.
8. The criteria by which grades or evaluations will be made should be clearly spelled out at the beginning of each class.
9. Feedback should be given promptly and on a regular basis so that an individual has an opportunity to make corrective changes.
10. Feedback should not simply be a global report but should include specific examples to support the evaluation.
11. Feedback should include both areas of strength and areas for improvement.

B. In the Clinic:

1. Supervisors and other therapists should be respectful towards the therapist while observing therapy.

* 1. Behind-the-mirror comments are to be productive. These comments should also be consistent with the feedback during the post-briefing. Persons should refrain from making comments that they would not be willing to share with the therapist in person.
  2. Individuals should refrain from loud talking or laughing behind the mirror.
  3. Observers should have permission from the therapist and/or supervisorbefore viewing a session.

1. Supervisors and other therapists should be respectful towards the family while observing therapy. For example, they should refrain from making derogatory comments about families while behind the mirror.
2. Observers should offer comments to the therapist in a way that is respectful and will maximize the development of the therapist's skills.
   1. Observers should respect the therapist's (and supervisor's) wishes for how and when observations should be shared.
   2. Feedback should not simply be global but should include specific examples to support the evaluation or observation.

4. Supervisors should offer evaluations (e.g., during post sessions, case consultations) to the therapist in a way that will maximize the skills of the therapist.

* 1. Feedback should not simply be global but should include specific examples to support the evaluation.
  2. Feedback should include both areas of strength and areas for improvement.
  3. Feedback should be given promptly and on a regular basis so that an individual has an opportunity to make corrective changes.

1. Individuals will respect individual differences in doing therapy. For example, individuals will seek to gain something valuable from each therapist, regardless of experience.
2. General (All Settings):
3. It will be considered unethical to circulate unsubstantiated, derogatory remarks regarding graduate students and faculty. Concerns regarding the professional practice of colleagues should first be broached with the colleague in question. It is the responsibility of students who hear unsubstantiated, derogatory remarks to notify the speaker that such statements are inappropriate and that rumor spreading simply will not be tolerated. Students will:
   1. Refrain from singling out or labeling individuals in a derogatory manner - each is a unique individual with unique contributions to offer.
   2. Avoid making inappropriate or "off-hand" judgments or comments regarding a person's qualifications for this program.
4. Students and faculty will recognize that all individuals have unique talents and gifts from which others can benefit.
5. An individual's strengths or areas for growth do not need to be continual topics for observation or discussion, except in the appropriate context (e.g., live supervision, feedback evaluations, private discussion between those concerned).
6. Respect the confidentiality of colleagues by protecting both professional (e.g., grades) and personal information. Individuals will refrain from disclosing or discussing information about students or faculty without their knowledge or permission.
7. Faculty evaluation of students should include professional performance in coursework, clinical practice in practica, and progress in research projects. Good feedback should be descriptive and ideally should be done in conjunction with student self-evaluation on the same performance criteria. Criteria are not related to the student's performance should not be included in formal evaluations.
8. A student's workspace and a faculty office are considered private space. Be sure to ask permission prior to borrowing any materials from a student or faculty member.
9. The scheduling of therapy rooms follows an honor system which individuals need to respect. For example, if a 4:00 session is scheduled, do not start a 3:30 session in the same room.
10. Faculty will be aware of and sensitive to the unique stressors of the program for students experiencing financial or family hardships and will strive to provide resources and support to help them succeed.

**CFT Program Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedures**

1. Conflict Resolution Procedures
2. If conflicts arise between students in the program, it is the responsibility of the aggrieved student(s) to initiate communication with the other student(s) and use conflict management and problem solving skills to resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of all involved. This means that aggrieved students are first expected to resolve problems with other students directly and not to solicit involvement of faculty.
3. If a resolution appears to have been reached as a result of this initial contact and subsequently the aggrieved student(s) perceives the trigger situation to continue, then the aggrieved student(s) should initiate a second contact with the other student(s) of their concern and seek further resolution to the issue. That is, aggrieved students are expected to persist in resolving problems with other students directly through a second effort, if at all possible.
4. Should this second effort fail to satisfy the aggrieved student(s) or if the other student(s) refuses to acknowledge the need to work toward resolution of the problem, then the aggrieved student(s) may request that a faculty member act in the capacity of mediator (or arbiter, if both students agree) of the student dispute. It is the responsibility of the aggrieved student(s) to consult with the chosen faculty mediator and the other student(s) in order to arrange for a mediation session. (The faculty member may also assume an advisory role if it is clear that there has been a violation of CFT policies or procedures or a breach of ethical standards).
5. Conflicts between students and faculty should be dealt with as described above. If a neutral faculty member cannot successfully mediate the dispute or chooses not to, the Department Chair may be asked to be the arbiter.
6. There will be some situations in which the faculty may need to become involved directly: 1) When the well-being of clients is in jeopardy, 2) There is evidence that students and/or faculty members have engaged in unethical behavior. Such interventions will be based on discussion at a CFT Faculty Meeting.
7. Grievance Procedures
8. Students should feel comfortable approaching any faculty member, particularly the Program Director, with complaints. Faculty who hear complaints will bring concerns to the Program Director who, in consultation with other faculty, will devise a response to student/s’ concerns. Student/s bringing the complaint will be asked to meet with faculty or Program Director to collaborate on a resolution to the complaint. Every effort will be made to resolve the complaint satisfactorily in a collaborative and fair manner.
9. Documentation of complaints and resolution of complaints are filed in the Program Director’s office and in Faculty Meeting Minutes when applicable.
10. Students should be aware that a more formal grievance procedure exists at higher university levels. Proper inquiry related to these procedures can be made through: 1) Program Director; 2) HDF Chair; 3) Dean of the Graduate School; or 4) Assistant Vice-President for Academic Affairs. More information is located at: <https://web.uri.edu/online/student-complaint-procedures/>

**GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

The graduate students have formed a Graduate Student Organization (GSO) to represent anonymously concerns to the Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) faculty. In addition to the criteria stated bellow, the GSO liaison is invited to bring all general student issues, questions and agenda items to each of CFT All-Program meeting held throughout the year.

The GSO group will elect a liaison bylaws person from its members, who will represent the group to the CFT faculty. The group will also elect an alternate to serve in the absence of the elected liaison.

The liaison person will represent students on issues pertaining only to CFT classes, faculty, and program.

A brief written statement on an issue of concern will be presented to the liaison person for review and discussion between the student(s) and liaison. It will be decided if:

* + - 1. The liaison person will take the concern of the student(s) directly to the faculty, or
      2. After discussing with the liaison person, it could be agreed to bring the concern before the CFT student body for a further discussion of options and alternatives before going to the CFT faculty.

The liaison person’s role in all the above is not to mediate or solve but only to serve as a representative from the CFT student(s) to the CFT faculty.

* + - 1. The liaison’s role is not to serve as an intermediary between student and faculty on routine matters such as class absences, tardiness, and grading.
      2. The liaison’s role is not to interfere with regular student-faculty communication. It is designed for issues where anonymity is desired and/or where the views of the CFT students are more efficiently represented by one person.

The above by-laws may be revised by a 2/3 vote of the CFT student body after a written presentation of the proposed by-law change.

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

The University of Rhode Island offers numerous resources for students. A list of these can be found at <https://web.uri.edu/catalog/student-services/#top>.

In addition to these, students can make use of the following supports and resources:

New Student Program: <https://web.uri.edu/catalog/student-services/#top>

Veterans Support Services: <https://web.uri.edu/ceps/veterans-support-services/>

Rhody Outpost Food Pantry <https://web.uri.edu/rhody-outpost/>

The Writing Center <https://web.uri.edu/aec/writing/>

Media and Technology Services (MTS) <https://web.uri.edu/its/about-its/mts/>

Students also are encouraged to speak with their advisor or any faculty member in the program to help develop a support plan to ensure your successful completion of the program.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND RATING METHODS**

Coursework is carefully aligned and mapped to help students achieve their learning goals and outcomes (see p. 2). Please refer to the CFT curriculum map at <https://web.uri.edu/human-development/cft-curriculum/> for a description of this alignment

During the two years of graduate study in CFT, the faculty and off-site supervisors use numerous evaluation and rating methods to assess various facets of the CFT training program and the student’s progress toward achieving their learning outcomes. CFT graduate students are also asked to provide feedback to the program as well as evaluate faculty and staff effectiveness in the areas of teaching and supervision.

Name of Evaluation/Rating Method Purpose When Used

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1) | IDEA Evaluation & feedback | Students evaluate faculty teaching | Every semester  every course |
| 2) | First Session Simulation Evaluation | Instructor evaluates readiness for practice | Fall semester  1st year |
| 3) | Student Evaluation Form | Faculty review of students | Spring semester |
| 4) | Practicum/Internship Evaluation Form | Feedback to students during On-site and Off-site Practica | Each semester of clinical work |
| 5) | Live Supervision Form | Instructor evaluation of live sessions. | CFTC Practica |
| 6) | Student Evaluation of Practicum  Supervisor | Students give feedback on supervisors skills and behaviors | CFTC & Off-site Practica |
| 7) | Student Clinical Self-Assessment  Report | Student evaluates his/her skill development | CFTC Practica |
| 8) | First Year Student Feedback Survey | Students give feedback on overall program objectives | End of semester 1 or summer |
| 9) | Graduating Student Exit Survey | Students give feedback on overall program objectives | Last semester |
| 10) | CFT Almuni Facebook Page | Feedback from former graduates | Once a year and ongoing |

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND TRAINING**

**Taskstream**

The CFT program collects data on student evaluations and surveys using an online platform called *Taskstream*. Both students and faculty supervisors use *Taskstream* to track progress through the program and to document that specified benchmarks are being met. Students can use *Taskstream* to assemble their own portfolios of achievement based on this outcome data. The Program pays for this application.

**BetterOutcomesNow (BON)**

Students learn and use BON, a web-based outcome management system that tracks and interprets client perceptions of therapy progress and the therapeutic alliance. Use of BON enhances clinical outcomes and student learning and operationalizes program values. While the CFT Clinic absorbs the bulk of this subscription service, students pay a portion, amounting to 150$ over 2 years. This is collected at the beginning of PrePracticum (75$) and the beginning of the fall practicum in the second year (75$).

**Sakai**

Sakai is the online platform used by the University of Rhode Island and is an essential tool for posting course material, grading, messaging, forums, submission of student assignments, and other applications.

**TheraNest**

Intake paperwork, case notes and treatment plans used in our on-site clinic are housed electronically through our electronic medical record application TheraNest ([www.TheraNest.com](http://www.theranest.com)). A detailed description of all TheraNest functions is located in the Clinic Handbook.

**Requirements and Instruction**

Students are expected to own or have regular access to a computer and mobile phone. Instruction in use of technology platforms will be provided in time for the student’s first entry. New students typically self-teach Sakai using instructions provided on the URI Sakai website. Assigned “buddies” and faculty provide additional assistance as requested. Information Technology Services at URI (<https://web.uri.edu/its/>) offers comprehensive support for students, from basic e-campus setup to advanced training and troubleshooting for all technology systems used by the campus community.

Instruction in BON and TheraNest is begun in Pre-Practicum and students should have a working knowledge of the system before they begin seeing clients. Students have access to BON training videos on the BON website (<https://betteroutcomesnow.com/#/>), and the Clinic Handbook contains specific instructions including updates as they become available. Facility with the system occurs over time as students become comfortable using it in actual clinical practice. Practicum supervisors provide ongoing training as needed.

Faculty are responsible to access BON training (available on the BON website) and new BON-related publications to ensure they are providing students with accurate and timely instruction in use of the system.

Clinic procedures use tools such as Google Docs and Google Calendar for smooth operation of the clinic. All clinic technology applications are detailed in the Clinic Handbook, and assistance is offered by Graduate Assistants in the clinic, the Clinic Coordinator, and practicum faculty as needed.

Off-site practicum supervisors are linked via a Sakai project site managed by the internship professor. Internship supervisors also upload student clinical evaluations into Taskstream. Instruction in use of these technologies is the responsibility of the internship professor.

**REMEDIATION AND DISMISSAL**

1. The program adheres to the Graduate School policies regarding scholastic and non-scholastic dismissal (<https://web.uri.edu/graduate-manual/registration/#section490> (also see Academic Standing, p. 7 of this manual). Serious violations of the AAMFT Code of Ethics warrant dismissal (see Academic Standing, p. 9 of this manual). Students can appeal by filing a grievance (<https://web.uri.edu/online/student-complaint-procedures/>). Any violation of the AAMFT Code of Ethics automatically results in a review of the student’s status by the program faculty.
2. Situations involving student conduct (see Students Rights and Responsibilities, p. 16 of this manual) or minor ethical mistakes occurring in a learning context that do not result in harm to clients and that are immediately corrected by the student after supervision can result in a one semester probation and a letter of the incident entered into the student’s file. At that time, the student will meet with his or her advisor to outline and implement a remedial plan. Probationary status is terminated after satisfactory completion of the remedial plan at the end of the probationary period and upon recommendation of the program faculty. Failure to correct the identified conduct or ethical concern will result in dismissal of the student from the program.

**ORIENTATION GUIDELINES FOR FIRST YEAR CFT STUDENTS**

**Where do I park?**

Parking at the Transition Center is restricted to people with staff parking stickers. If you park at the Transition Center without one, you will be ticketed, towed and fined.

You obtain a commuter parking sticker by going on line to: [http://www.uri.edu/parking.](http://www.uri.edu/parking)

**What is pre-practicum?**

At the start of the first semester, first year students participate in a weekly pre- practicum. This hands-on class is focused on becoming familiar with systemic conceptualization, clinic policies and procedures, and formulating therapeutic goals. The class utilizes didactic instruction, experiential exercises, and observations of recorded and live therapy sessions. Since most appointments for the Clinic are made for the evening hours, most of your observations of live therapy will also occur during the evening.

**How will I know what to do when I work in the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic?**

There is a procedural handbook for the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic, which will be made available to you during pre-practicum. In addition, during pre-practicum, you will learn how to operate the recording equipment as well as practice doing the initial assessment interview. During your first live supervision practicum in the spring semester, Clinic procedures become even more familiar as you take responsibility for your own cases. When in doubt, feel free to ask your Supervisor, the Clinic Coordinator, graduate assistant, or any second year CFT student. We've all "been there" and are eager to be of assistance.

**When do we start seeing our own clients? How are cases assigned?**

*Some* first year students may begin to see clients with a second year student or with a supervisor observing toward the end of pre-practicum. Possible inclusion depends on the fit with the needs of clients and clearance to assume clinical responsibilities. As second year students prepare to phase out of the Clinic, they discuss transfer needs and preferences on a case by case basis with their Supervisor. After a mutual decision is made, a first year student is invited to participate.

Most clients call the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic number, 874-5956, to inquire about therapy services.

1. The Clinic Coordinator calls the clients to screen for appropriateness for the CFTC, sets the fee, and checks client availability for appointments.
2. The Coordinator assigns the case-s to a practicum according to client availability (i.e., day of week, time of day/night client can come).and therapist openings indicated on the online calendar.
3. The Coordinator calls or emails the assigned therapist to let her/him know that s/he has a new case and notifies the appropriate supervisor.
4. The intake, with the student's initials and new file, are put in the "New Client" folder.

**How many individual vs. couple/family therapy client contact hours are required?**

To graduate, students must have a minimum of 500 clinical contact hours with individuals, **couples**, **families** and other systems physically present, at least 50% of which must be relational. The 500 hours must occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice. The 500 hours may include a maximum of 100 **alternative hours** or clinical activity (e.g., couple or family groups) that is directly related to the program’s mission, outcomes, and goals.

You keep track of these hours on a "Client Contact Log." Hours are logged separately for clients seen at the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic and clients seen at your internship placement. Every month you submit your updated client contact and supervision logs to the Clinic graduate assistant, who collects them for the internship supervisor. These hours are formally logged on our online Form C.

**What is supervision like?**

It is your responsibility to schedule supervision time.

Supervision time can be arranged by appointment. Co-therapists MUST be present together to obtain supervision for joint cases.

Modalities of supervision include live, recorded, and case report. Emergency supervision is available in accordance with the on-call schedule of clinical faculty posted in the CFTC office. Supervision, when not live, will be oriented around recorded data and client ratings on the outcome management system. It is your responsibility to be prepared with specific questions and needs as well as locations of client data on video and the online outcome management system to help address your concerns.

**What are requirements for supervision?**

Students must receive at least 100 hours of supervision, and must receive supervision from an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or Supervisor Candidate for at least one hour each week in which they are seeing clients. Supervision can be **individua**l (one supervisor with one or two supervisees) or **group** (one supervisor and eight or fewer students) and must include a minimum of 50 hours of supervision utilizing observable data. Supervision may utilize digital technology in which participants are not in the same location as long as the majority of supervision is with supervisor and supervisee physically present in the same location and appropriate mechanisms/precautions are in place to ensure the confidentiality and security of the means of technology delivery.

For every week of direct client contact, you will receive at least one hour of supervision. First year students may need to schedule more frequent supervision.

**What is the summer practicum requirement?**

As the current second year therapists prepare to graduate from the program, first year graduate students are gradually phased into ongoing therapy cases. After Spring semester, you are considered second year students as you start your internships and continue to see clients at the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic. Concurrent with these ongoing clinical experiences, you are required by AAMFT to take HDF 565, an advanced small group practicum, which is held during both summer sessions (a total of ten weeks). This practicum is designed to focus the student’s attention on his/her process as a therapist. This practicum meets once a week at the CFTC for three hours in a cooperative, collaborative atmosphere.

NOTE: Although held during both summer sessions, you only pay for ONE course.

**Is a thesis required? What is the research project?**

In the CFT master’s program at URI, the thesis is optional. Most graduate students in this program do an action research project.

The research project is in the area of couple and family therapy, according to the specific interests of the student(s) involved.

Generally, all students will have taken a graduate course in research, HDF 570, before beginning their project (unless schedule changes warrant 570 to be taught in the spring). The actual research is conducted under the guidance of a CFT faculty person. Students begin the research by the first semester of their second year in the program. It must be completed in late spring of the second semester of the second year. The “Research Protocol and Time Line” information can be found toward the middle of this manual.

**Do we have semester breaks?**

The Couple and Family Therapy Clinic is operational year-round. Many clients experience crises during holiday times and benefit from therapeutic support during this time. Other clients prefer to take a mini-vacation from their therapy. Each therapist is responsible for scheduling his/her clients according to their needs. It is sometimes possible for a therapist to arrange his/her case load so that s/he can get some time off during school breaks. All graduate students working with clients at the CFTC must get approval from their supervisors for any absences. Extended absences need Supervisor approval *1 month* in advance.

**What do graduates do after graduation?**

Most graduates of URI’s CFT program find jobs with counseling agencies, or mental health treatment programs. As agencies have become aware of the value of systemic therapy, graduates from accredited CFT programs are sought after. Licensed CFTs in RI are now third party reimbursable, which makes hiring CFTs even more attractive. Based on known graduate outcomes, the URI CFT Program has nearly a 100% employment of those actively seeking work in the CFT field.

Many graduates stay in-state to pursue a career as a marriage and family therapist. Information about post-graduation requirements for licensure in the state can be found at <http://health.ri.gov/licenses/detail.php?id=228>. If you decide to relocate out-of-state, you will need to visit the professional licensing website or contact the professional licensing office for that state’s post-graduation requirements. Regardless of where you eventually practice, please be sure to keep in touch via our program’s Facebook page. We want to know how you are doing!