

# Legal, ethical, and professional development in marriage and family therapy



## Personal Philosophy of Ethics

Marriage and Family therapists have to have solid ethics, and a comprehending of all the attributes of our clients, be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations that are defined by AAMFT, state and federal laws. Therapists can identify all distinctive forms of theories and how to practice all the models appropriately and be very good at it, but if they do not comprehend or abide by the code of ethics then the therapists will not flourish in becoming a therapist. We as therapists also have to have an approachable way of thinking and not let our personal ethics get entangled with the client's ethics; the rationale for his is everybody has a dissimilar viewpoint and may not be the same thoughts of the therapist; which would not benefit in the client's relationship with the therapist

## Know and Follow the AAMFT Code of Ethics

Knowing and following the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT) code of ethics is extremely vital for therapists, but it is not the only thing therapists ought to identify. Therapists must recognize the state and federal code of ethics also for the reason that they may possibly not have the same codes as the AAMFT have, even though it is specified that the AAFT code of ethics is distinguished as maintaining a higher standard than state and federal codes of ethics (AAMFT, 2015). Therapists have to make certain that they get the appropriate teaching, interpretation, and perform what they have learned. Therapists have to have high standards of ethics and comprehend all related ascendancies that are set by the AAMFT associations and state and federal laws, the reason for this is both laws and

ethics preside over all procedures of MFT members. MFT's should take the appropriate actions to deal with any variances that may possibly arise and stay within the guiding principle to the completest of the code of ethics whether it is administered by the AAMFT, state or federal laws and ethics. Therapists need to acquire a well-defined awareness of the procedure that is required to be an effective marriage and family therapist that is fitting of the codes.

### Principles Guide your Ethical Decision-Making Process

The principle of ethics is that marriage and family therapists are committed to improving the well-being of families and individuals (AAMFT, 2015). When clients come in for support the sessions can aid them to acquire how to manage their problems but may possibly as well produce controversy within the clients, this is why it is vital as a therapist to distinguish how we elect the path we want to facilitate our clients and diminish conflict or harm that may transpire. We as therapists should take the wisdom that we have learned from our associates; this will aid us with composing the right assessments and use the client's criticism so we can use the right model to create an encouraging result or conceivably find out that we are not a suitable match for the client and direct them to a therapist that would be better matched for their specific problems. We constantly have to consider what is in the best interest of our clients; be receptive, pay attention to all parties; responses that are relevant to the persisting problem(s) before rendering any kind of conclusion in how we will go on to ensure that we have an encouraging conclusion for our clients. Therapists should explicate our actions in a manner that the client will be capable of comprehending; so that all

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individuals participating in the sessions are on the same page; which can have encouraging outcomes for everyone involved. Therapists should keep a receptive approach in the way the information is represented to us since we are liable for our conducts that we convey, this is why it is so vital to pull together a great deal information as imaginable from all participants; and maintain precise notes before generating a determination.

An example would be if a single mother came in with her son who has been extremely disorderly in school and at home, and sometimes out in the community, the mother Katrina is very alarmed about Ethan's eruptions. The mother is wondering what happened because Ethan was never this way before; it started about 6 years ago. As a therapist we have to get the all the facts before we can make a strong conclusion, first, a therapist may ask Ethan what has transformed in his life? And has there been any new problems that have transpired in the last 6 years or sooner? After speaking to Ethan; we will need to speak to his mother and ask her the same questions, this is why we are generating a greater representation of the problems and not just choosing Ethan or the mother's side. The purpose for examining both sides is because we might find out that it may be something that the mother did or something that Ethan had endured that is creating Ethan to be disorderly, or he could be having a medical problem that has not yet been discovered. Therapists should keep an approachable mentality and look at the greater representation before composing any conclusions of how to handle the issue at hand so that the therapist is not leaping into assumptions and is capable to give thorough assistance or direction.

Responsibility to Clients

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Being a marriage and family therapist, we have various obligations, we have to generate a trustworthy basis with the client in order for the therapy progression to be fruitful. We need to deal with numerous circumstances that can transpire during the course of the therapy procedure. Some of the obligations are discrimination, sexual intimacy, multiple relationships (dual), unethical conduct, client autonomy, and treating clients ethically and providing with ethical treatment (AAMFT, 2015). Therapists should make clear of their intents, their payments, and hand out consent forms about confidentiality or any other problems that may surface. It is vital to explain a great deal of information to the clients from the beginning so there are no misinterpretations as therapy continues. It is best to discuss this from the start and answer any questions or apprehensions the client may have this way all participants will be knowledgeable and will hopefully establish a respectable interpretation and trust with all the individuals included. Furthermore, the therapist should respect the rights of people seeking professional assistance and should not “discriminate in regards to race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, and religion”(AAMFT, 2015, p. 2 standards I section 1. 1).

#### Unique Ethical Consideration for Marriage and Family Therapists.

There are numerous unique ethics that we should contemplate throughout our profession as an MFT. We come across apprehensions of confidentiality, privileged communication, susceptibility, informed consent, therapy goals, client unfairness, problem clarity, intentions of the clients; these could be some of the unique considerations that a therapist may encounter

throughout their career as an MFT. A client's intentions could be challenging  
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for a therapist the most common one would be if you have a couple who are in therapy, and one wants to work out their problems but the other one wants a divorce. It is a unique consideration as each person wants something different, and the therapist will have to figure out what is best for them and try to assist the clients in formulating their own conclusion on how they would like the results to be, we essentially have two options 1) they will resolve their marriage and proceed with therapy 2) they will get the divorce. Unique ethical consideration for a therapist is to try to assist the couple in figuring out what is beneficial for them and try to direct them in attaining a conclusion for the best possible outcome for the both of them, this is not a straightforward assignment since we have to try to persuade one of the individuals to alter their mindset; make them recognize that the choice they rendered was their own as a couple, and the therapist is content with the outcome. Through, this progression the therapist does not want to make the choice for the couple but wants to have the couple decide with each other by making their own choices, this way the therapist remains out of harm's way with the couple despite the fact that they may perhaps not get the drift, at least the therapist has steered them in formulating their own choices on how to continue with the problems. There will be various unique considerations that the therapist will have to deal with and to fit into what is the best way to handle the situation when dealing with people and families, each client will have their own unique circumstances and as therapist we have to take this into deliberation and obey the code of ethics that we abide by.

Rights Clients Have

The client's rights are that the conversations that take place among the therapist and client are confidential except if the client signs a release consent form; where the therapist may release the information to those designated parties, and if there is confirmation of physical endangerment, abuse is visible or court ordered. If the therapist chooses to speak to another therapist for supervision for assistance the clients should remain nameless. The client at any time can ask for the therapist's qualifications, such as schooling, licensure, limitations, training, specializations and qualified abilities. The client has the right to articulate how they would like their therapy sessions to progress, what their goals are, and what they would like to achieve in therapy. Clients have the right to hold back information that they think is not pertinent, they also have the right to discontinue, change or conclude any procedure of a therapy session. The clients are coming to therapy for assistance with a problem or a dilemma within themselves, and or other individuals; the client decide how they would like their therapy to go; as therapists we only direct the client in assisting them in fulfilling their wants and needs; it's really up to the client on what they get out of their therapy sessions not the therapist, as the therapist is there to assist the client in their aspirations and their expectations in life.

In conclusion, the personal philosophy of ethics may be very complicated and sometimes baffling, this is why as therapists we have to have a receptive mindset, a comprehension of the code of ethics and the variations that are made on a recurring basis. We need to understand from our mentors, have knowledge of what they are saying and mean; as they have been in the therapy business much longer than we have and have possibly

come across some of these types of circumstances before. Don't be fearful to ask questions when getting in the field. Although, as future therapists, we learn from our books and research papers; the best way to learn is to comprehend the experiences from another professional therapist, if not from your own personal life, but knowing that what worked for you could possibly not work for everyone else. The code of ethics is like a bible, Koran, or any other religious conviction books it should not be taken casually, understand and stay on top of deviations.

## References

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