

Couple and Family Therapy Practicum

The Couple and Family Therapy Practicum is fully affiliated with [Adler University](#) and includes placements in several community-based partnership sites. Through these placement experiences, externs are expected to approach all aspects of the program with appropriate professional disposition. Examples of appropriate professional dispositions include but are not limited to the following: externs must demonstrate a commitment to personal and professional growth; appropriate self-care; receptivity and application of clinical supervision and feedback; respect, integrity, and honesty in interactions with clients, peers, and supervisors; and adherence to ethical and legal standards of practice and behavior.

Externs offer clinical services at and through community-based partnerships. Externs are assigned to community sites based on their interests, training and educational needs, and abilities. In addition to providing direct relational services, externs receive individual supervision, participate in case disposition meetings, become active members of interprofessional teams, and attend didactic workshops.

Services provided in the community within partner sites may include individual, group, milieu, family, and couples' psychotherapy; support and therapy groups; consultation; partner site staff training; telehealth; and psycho-educational programs.

The externship program offers one (1) to four (4) positions. Placements may be Primary or Supplemental. For ACHS to be a primary placement, a student must be able to commit to 20 hours per week comprised of two (2) clinical days providing services, and four (4) hours total of didactic programming and supervision. For supplemental placement, a student must be able to commit to at least one (1) clinical day, and four (4) hours of total didactic programming and supervision time.

The externship is 12 months, and generally begins on September 1st and ends August 31st.

Extern Time-Off Allowances

- Primary Placement – 10 days
- Supplemental Placement – 10 days

Program Goal

The primary goal of this externship program is to prepare externs for entry-level practice, and readiness for the next phase of their training to become a licensed marriage and family therapist.

Training Model

The Couple and Family Therapy Practicum trains externs in the standards established by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), which include:

- Professional identity as a Marriage and Family Therapy Professional
- Relational/systemic philosophy and ethics as laid out in the AAMFT Code of Ethics
- Multi-culturally informed, globally minded perspective
- Promotion of inclusion, respect for diversity, non-discrimination, and social responsibility from a perspective that

Externs are evaluated on the Student Learning Outcomes established by Adler University's M.A. and Doctoral Programs in Couple and Family Therapy which are:

1. Understand and apply systems, modern, and postmodern Couple and Family Therapy theories.
2. Assess ethical, legal, and professional issues related to clinical practice.
3. Demonstrate cultural competency in practicing Couple and Family Therapy with diverse populations.
4. Display proficiency in clinical skills in the practice of Couple and Family Therapy
5. Demonstrate knowledge of Adlerian principles that can complement systemic work with couples, families, and individuals.
6. Illustrate knowledge and integration of Couple and Family Therapy research.
7. Describe, understand, and identify issues of social justice, social responsibility, and oppression with couples and families.

8. Establish a clear professional identity as a Couple and Family Therapist.

Externship Training Activities

Primary placement externs can expect the following activities in aggregate over the course of their practicum placement:

| Service | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Direct Client Contact Hours (see below for approved activities) | 300 hours total |
| COAMFTE-Approved Relational Hours (see below for approved activities) | 140 hours of the 300-hour total |
| Indirect Services (interprofessional team meetings, psychoeducation programming, charting, etc.) | 450-500 hours total |
| Didactic Training | |
| Therapy Didactic | 1 hour weekly |
| Therapy Case Conference | 1 hour weekly |
| Supervision | |
| Individual Supervision | 1 hour weekly |
| Group Site Supervision | 1 hour weekly |

- Orientation – Introduction to ACHS policies and procedures, documentation, practicum goals and individual training goals and objectives- client populations, competencies/criteria and standards for practicum, supervision, health and safety, ethics and risk management, documentation and electronic health records, site introduction, human rights and dignity, and team building with peers and faculty.
- Direct Client Contact (minimum 300 hours) - Individual, relational (couple and family therapy); group therapy; psychoeducational activities involving clients; intakes and assessments; milieu management involving clients; treatment and aftercare planning involving patients and/or their caregivers; and other clinical services not listed here involving clients/caregivers at the discretion of primary supervisor.
- Relational Hours (minimum 140 hours) - Direct clinical contact hours in which a clinician delivers therapeutic services with two or more individuals conjointly, who share an ongoing relationship beyond that which occurs in the therapeutic experience itself.
 - Examples include family subsystems, intimate couple subsystems, enduring friendship/community support subsystems, and residential, treatment, or situationally connected subsystems.
 - Relational hours also may be counted with relational subsystems that include a person whose only available means to participate in the in-person therapeutic meeting is telephonic or electronic (e.g., incarcerated, deployed or out-of-town subsystem members).
 - Group therapy can be counted as relational hours if those in the group therapy have a relationship outside of (above and beyond) the group itself. Conversely, group therapy sessions of otherwise non-related individuals are not considered as relational hours.
- Practice Environments – Averaging 17-21 hours per week (2-3 days) in the field, including on-site and telehealth service options with ACHS partner organizations.
- Interprofessional Practice - Consultation, team huddles, case conference, and case management with each assigned site and as included on individual training plan.
- Competency Evaluation of Intern Performance - Three (3) times a year (once per semester) includes a final cumulative performance review.
- Practicum Completion - 12-month continuous calendar year practicum experience ends at the 12th month. During this time the expectation is the 300 minimum direct and 140 relational hours will be met. If ACHS serves as the only practicum site, the expectation is all hours will be met with ACHS. If ACHS is a shared site (supplemental or primary) the expectation is all hours will be met across multiple sites. Practicum ends at the practicum contract end date.

Program Outcomes

Upon completion of the externship, externs are expected to demonstrate entry-level competence as a psychologist in the practice of clinical psychology:

- Entry-level performance in the areas of therapeutic relationship, assessment, intervention, consultation, and education.
- Entry-level performance in disciplined inquiry and the integration of research in providing clinical services.
- Entry-level performance of respecting and valuing human dignity and rights in the provision of clinical and professional services.
- Entry-level performance in comprehending and applying key concepts of Adlerian theory and practice to systemic work with couples, families, and individuals.
- Entry-level performance in socially responsible practice.
- Entry-level performance in exercising individual responsibility, collaboration, and the highest standards of professional ethics, lifelong learning, and professional development.
- Commitment to contributing to the greater good of the community.

Supervision

The Couple and Family Therapy Practicum is committed to relational/systemic-oriented supervision. Externs will receive weekly supervision from an AAMFT-approved supervisor or supervisor candidate during weeks in which they are seeing clients. Additional supervision may be provided by AAMFT-approved supervisor equivalents or state approved supervisors. Externs will receive one (1) hour of individual supervision (one supervisor with one or two supervisees) and one (1) hour of group site supervision (one supervisor and eight or fewer therapy externs) with an emphasis on supervision utilizing observable data.

Couple and Family Therapy doctoral students who have completed the AAMFT 30-hour Fundamentals of Supervision course and are under ongoing supervision-of-supervision by a current AAMFT-approved supervisor mentor may be given an opportunity to provide secondary supervision to Master-level Couple and Family Therapy extern(s), if available.