



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
College of Human Sciences

## Couple, Marriage, & Family Therapy

*From the CMFT Program Directors,  
Drs. Stephen Fife and Jaclyn Cravens Pickens*

Welcome to the first edition of the *Couple, Marriage, and Family Therapy* graduate programs' newsletter. Over the past few years, the CMFT programs have attempted to increase communication with our alumni and other communities of interest by sharing information via email and on our social media pages (find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) but recognize that we can continue to improve our communication by sending out an annual newsletter.

As we look back on the 2022 – 2023 academic year, there are many student, faculty, and program updates to share with you. The newsletter provides updates on changes to the program, student and faculty accomplishments, as well as department news. If you have any accomplishments you would like to see featured either in the newsletter or on our social media pages, please reach out and share your news. We love to hear about the excellent work our alumni are doing!

The past year represented the second academic year in which our MS program has admitted students under a changed degree plan. Based on our MS graduates' feedback around elective options and required work in addiction recovery, the program changed the program goal focused on the systemic treatment of addiction to the integration of advanced professional development in their practice of relational/systemic therapy. This allows students to develop a plan for what areas of advanced practice they wish to focus on, while still offering options with the ADRS program to take graduate level course work in addiction recovery. The MS program now allows students to select two electives (previously 1) while continuing to require students take a course in couple/family dynamics in addition.

For both the MS and PhD programs, our TTU CMFT students have more options to learn about and practice Medical Family Therapy. A graduate level course in MedFT is offered every other year to provide all students with the opportunity to take the course before graduating. For our PhD students, they complete their clinical practicum course at our Children's Behavioral Health Clinic, which started in 2020, and as of 2023, this also includes completing rounds with the University Medical Center (UMC) pediatric oncology and offering therapy through the CBHC outpatient services. Over the years the field has shifted to primarily offering third year doctoral internships through Medical Sites and our TTU PhD students have successfully been offered these positions, several of which have turned into permanent positions. The growth of clinical opportunities to practice MedFT will continue to help our PhD students be competitive in securing these positions should this be a fit for their career goals. Additionally, our MS students have opportunities to provide clinical services at medical sites for their externship, including the CBHC and Trustpoint Rehabilitation hospital.

Finally, the CMFT graduate programs will be hiring two positions. We have an open tenure-track Assistant/Associate CMFT Faculty position that will start Fall 2024. Additionally, with the development of a second clinic (CBHC) we have added a new position, FTC Assistant Clinic Director that is currently being finalized and we hope to be able to hire for in the near future. Please share information about these open positions with your network.

For updates over the next academic year, please visit our social media pages for program news. We will send our next newsletter in August of 2024 as we reflect on another academic year. If you come to Lubbock, please stop by the College of Human Sciences and say hello. We would love to show you



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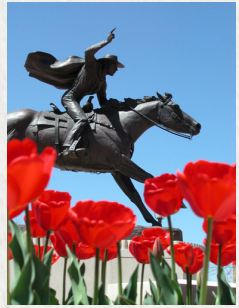
the updates to the Family Therapy Clinic or take you over to see the Children's Behavioral Health Clinic. We also hope to see many of you at conferences this year – the AAMFT Research TIN, NCFR, and TAMFT.

Respectfully,  
Jaclyn and Steve



# C.M.F.T. Newsletter

Program Highlights of Faculty, Student, & Alumni Success



## COHS Stories

**SAMFT.** Students have been active in the Student Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (SAMFT) this past year in a variety of ways. They held monthly meetings with guest speakers on various clinical topics, provided resources and FTC/program information at various department fairs, held a booth at Human Sciences Day, raised over \$300 for the Women's Protective Services of Lubbock, held a supply drive for unhoused people of Lubbock, hosted a gender and sexuality training, and provided discounts for student members on Gottman Level I and II trainings. The torch of SAMFT presidency has recently been given from Mandy Guzman to Wesley O'Quinn for this upcoming school year.



**CMFT in Taiwan.** Kai-Tang Chang, an international doctoral student in the CMFT program, advocated for family therapy in the medical field of his home country. He plans to return to Taiwan after he completes his degree, and he aims to use his new training in professional and educational work to advocate for a family therapy specialty in psychiatry/



**Fellowship in CMFT.** Dr. Fife was selected as one of 32 nationwide for the Faculty Fellowship Program in Israel. The goal of the fellowship was to boost collaboration between Israeli and U.S. institutions. Dr. Fife set out to expand his knowledge of Israeli families' culture and meet Israeli professionals, experts in government, education, media, and more to understand their national and international policies.



**Department Excellence in Teaching Award.** The Community, Family, and Addiction Sciences Department was honored to receive a Department Excellence in Teaching Award (DETA). This is recognition that the department has made significant contributions to the teaching mission of Texas Tech.



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**Expanding Access to Mental Health Care.** The CMFT program collaborated with other departments on campus to expand access to mental health care. Dr. Douglas Smith's focus is on providing mental health series to children and families at the Children's Behavioral Health Clinic (CBHC).

### **The Conference on Addiction Recovery and Families 2023.**

Numerous students participated in the poster competition of this conference at the McKenzie-Merket Alumni Center. CMFT Doctoral students Hitiura Anihia, Iliana Anaya, and Amanda Reed won third place.

## **Student Publications**

**BIPOC Experiences of Racial Trauma on TikTok: A Qualitative Content Analysis.** Authors: Yi-Hsin Huang, A'Lyric Miles, Zachary Trevino, Carissa D'Aniello, Hannah Wood, Avery Bishop & Zihan Monshad. The researchers analyzed content labeled with #racialtrauma on TikTok during significant racial incidents from March 2020 until May 2022.

**#BadTherapist: What TikTok is Saying About Therapy Discontinuation.** Authors: Emily E. Janes, Kristian Villalovos & Carissa D'Aniello. The researchers used inductive qualitative content analysis procedures to analyze video posts with #badtherapist from TikTok.

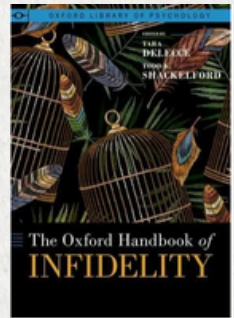
**The Oxford Handbook of Infidelity.** Dr. Jaclyn Craven Pickens published a chapter in this handbook.

**Tenure.** Dr. Carissa D'Aniello was granted tenure and due to family circumstances, she made the difficult decision to relocate to Fairfield University near her family members.



**Not Just Semantics: A Synthesis of Narrative Therapy and Linguistic Relativity as Applied to Spanish-Speaking Bilingual Clients.** Authors: Madeline L. Smith, Rachel Nordfelt, Jennah Daley & Carissa D'Aniello. The researchers synthesize concepts for non-Spanish-speaking clinicians from narrative therapy and linguistic relativity to provide a perspective for conceptualizing cases and therapeutic interventions.

**Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Stigma Towards Therapy: A Clinical Intervention Guideline.** Authors: Hou I. Lau, Ashley Collet, Rachel Nordfelt, Erika M. Hamby, Lauren S. Richardson, and Kosisochi Udozorh. The article addresses how the unique cultural stigmas and beliefs of Asian Americans contribute to the lack of mental health seeking behavior.



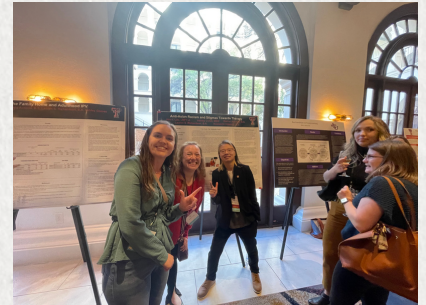
**ARPA.** The CMFT program is participating in the ARPA program. It has helped to create paid externship positions for our students.

**Clinical Guidelines When Addressing Abuse over Telemental Health.** Authors: Lara Hoss, Lauren S. Richardson, Amanda D. Axelrod & Jaclyn Cravens Pickens. This article provides concrete clinical guidelines based on existing literature and professional experience with engaging in Telemental Health (TMH) within the context of Intimate Partner Violence over TMH.



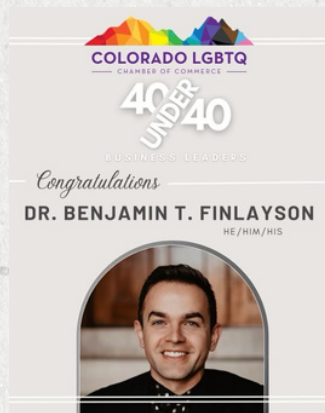
## Students and Faculty at TAMFT

Dr. Brown delivered the keynote address at the Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (TAMFT) conference in Austin, Texas where many students presented posters and/or created workshops. His keynote address was titled “Are we benefitting from a broken system? Ethical responsibilities of systemic professionals and educators.” After the conference, faculty and students celebrated at Arbor Food Park to mark the end of a great conference.



## Student /Alumni Awards

**40 Under 40.** Dr. Benjamin Finlayson, a graduate of the CMFT program, has been recognized by the 2023 Colorado LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce within their 40 Under 40 Business Leaders. He is currently an assistant professor at Regis University. He has published and presented in national and international spaces.



**Dissertation Fellowship.** Doctoral student Zachary Trevino was awarded a \$3,000 dissertation fellowship. He aims to understand the lived experience of Latino men through funding from the Frances Fowler Wallace Memorial Award. He will conduct in-depth interview and engage in other data collection methods.

**Rawls College of Business.** Former student Elise McCay became the new therapist for the Rawls College of Business at the start of the 2022-23 academic year. Her position is dedicated to student success and is the first of its kind as the college within TTU has its own embedded therapist available to students, staff, and faculty.



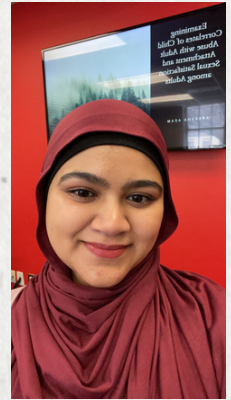


## Successful Defenses

Kate Wagner, CMFT (M.S.) 2023.  
Thesis: Relationships with Physicians: How Work Stress Impacts Physician relationships



Areesha Azam, CMFT (M.S.) 2023. Thesis: Examining Correlates of Child Abuse with Adult Attachment and Sexual Satisfaction among Adults



Katie Swecker, CMFT (M.S.) 2023 Thesis: Fighting the Boss Battle: How Does Gaming Affect Relationships?



Kaitlyn Milstead, CMFT (Ph.D.), 2023. Dissertation: The lived experiences of ethnic minorities and eating disorders: A phenomenological study



Justin Romney, CMFT (Ph.D.) 2023. Dissertation: The Lived Experience of Functionality in Families with a Child Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.



Emily Janes, CMFT (Ph.D.) 2023. Dissertation: How Families Navigate Religious Disaffiliation: A Grounded Theory.



Jared Hawkins, CMFT (Ph.D.) 2023. Dissertation: An Analysis of Emerging Adults' Multiple Senses of Community.



Zachary Trevino, CMFT (Ph.D.) 2023. Dissertation: Understanding the Therapeutic Experiences of Latino Men: An Interpretive Phenomenological Inquiry



We are so proud of all of our students and faculty, and we hope that the 2023-2024 school year will be just as fantastic!