

Lewis & Clark College
Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy Program
(COVID-19) Contingency Plan for Clinical Training - Student Interns Graduating August 2021

The circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic evolved with rapid speed, and as of March 16, 2020, Lewis & Clark College, ceased all in-person class meetings and moved campus-based classes fully online. In addition, to public health concerns and Governor State Brown's orders for social distancing, student interns were not able to provide services or receive supervision in their usual face-to-face formats at the Lewis & Clark Community Counseling Center (L&C CCC - our interdisciplinary departmental training clinic) or externship sites. Furthermore, on March 19, 2020, the Graduate School implemented a policy that prohibited student interns from providing face-to-face services in their clinical training contexts.

Because the crisis continues to affect the clinical training process of student interns who began their clinical training May 1, 2020, we continue to implement temporary accommodations for these students to attain their clinical hours via telemental health. While the MCFT Program will strongly encourage student interns to reach as close as they can to accruing the standard 500 total client contact hours and 200 relational contact hours, we will reduce the minimum number of required hours as described below.

The purpose of this document is to outline the MCFT Program's contingency plan that has been activated for clinical training related to the COVID-19 impact on our internship and externship activities.

Accommodations and Reduction in Clinical Hours Requirements for Interns Beginning Clinical Practice in May 2020 and Graduating August 2021:

A. Telemental Health Services as Direct Client Contact Hours:

- Student interns will count all telemental health services as direct client contact hours.
- Student interns will use telemental health (phone or video) to provide all individual, couple, and family therapy at both the L&C CCC and their externship sites. Student interns will provide these services remotely or from their training sites if proper social distancing guidelines can be followed.
- **L&C CCC:** Student interns will use phones and HIPAA compliant zoom accounts to provide phone and video services.
- **Externships:** Student interns will defer to the guidance and protocols of their respective externship agencies regarding the platforms they use to conduct telemental health services.
 - o If student interns need assistance or support with identifying or accessing viable platforms, they will contact the MCFT Clinical Coordinator.
 - o If student interns struggle to access a confidential space to provide telemental health services outside of their externship agencies, they will consult with the MCFT Clinical Coordinator.

B. Reduced Clinical Hours Requirement

- For students graduating prior to fall 2021, the MCFT Program will reduce the **minimum required hours of direct client contact with individuals, couples, families, or other systems to 300, at least 100 of which must be relational.** These must occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice.
- **Under this reduced number of clinical contact hours, none of the 300 direct client contact hours described above can be alternative hours.** However, to maximize clinical development, we encourage students to obtain and track as many hours above the minimum required as possible. **Hours above the minimum requirement can include alternative hours. A maximum of 100 alternative hours can be counted.** These additional hours may be important to licensure in other states.
- Prior to graduation, students must demonstrate clinical competency as measured by the supervisee evaluation form. Clinical performance below expectations in two or more areas will require attainment of additional supervised clinical hours.

C. Supervision:

- Supervision will shift from face-to-face to telesupervision formats in all training contexts, or otherwise, in accordance with L&C's placement policy regarding on-site activities.
- MCFT Program will align with COAMFTE's support for temporarily suspending the use of raw observable data required for supervision as well as for face-to-face supervision in the same physical location, within the 100 hours of required supervision, to ensure public safety during the program's modification plan. However, we strongly support supervisors' use of HIPAA compliant zoom accounts to observe video and phone sessions, wherever possible.

D. Plans for Continued Program Monitoring and Revisions to Contingency Plan

- The MCFT Program Director and Clinical Coordinator will maintain close communication with externship partners, supervisors, and student interns to monitor needs and offer consultation about ways to engage families in the continuation of clinical services.
- The MCFT Program Director, Clinical Coordinator, and Program Faculty will make additional revisions to instructional delivery and clinical training, as needed.

E. Technology Requirements:

- Students need to have access to stable, password protected internet in order to conduct telemental health services and receive supervision.
- Students *may* need to use an Ironkey encrypted usb for storing and transferring confidential clinical documents.

F. Returning to On-Site Activity as Reopening Occurs

- Students already physically on-site at their externship (i.e., doing telemental health or onboarding/training), **need to inform the placement office.** This will prompt the

Placement Office to verify that their site is adhering to public health mandates. Then, the placement office will send the student an electronic disclosure form asking them to follow safety protocols at their site.

- Students who are ready/want to be on-site at their externship (i.e., telehealth, onboarding/training, face-to-face) need to email the CPSY placement office. They will send the site a verification statement to confirm that the site is ready to receive the student. Then, the Placement Office will send the student an electronic disclosure asking them to follow safety protocols at their site. Students must wait for approval from the Placement Office before going to their site.
- If students cannot return on-site, but their site is asking them to, they should schedule an appointment with the MCFT Clinical Coordinator to discuss this.
- Students may continue with telemental health if they are not ready to return on-site and their site is not asking them to.