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OF THE
TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY



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for Marriage and Family Therapy

2011 JOURNAL

of the Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Table of Contents

Editorial Advisory Board, Editorial Staff, And TAMFT Board of Trustees.....3

Editor’s Comments.....5

A Non-Systemic Way of Thinking Systems.....6
Alexandra E. Schmidt, BA, Masters Student, Texas Woman’s University

Internship Experience: My Glimpse.....10
Susana Zambrano, BA, Masters Student, Our Lady of the Lake University

Looking Ahead.....13
Quinton T. Jones, MA, Doctoral Student, University of Louisiana Monroe

My Experience on the AAMFT Board of Directors.....16
Natalie Senatore, MS, Doctoral Student, Florida State University

Reflections on the Challenges of Obtaining a License as an MFT in Texas.....23
Jeffrey Emery, MMFT, Abilene, TX

Call for Papers28

Instructions for Authors.....29

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2011 JOURNAL

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Editor's Comments

This volume of the *Journal* is dedicated to Students and Associates, with the focus on such issues as: challenges to becoming licensed as a LMFT; the MFT graduate school experience; gaining the requisite clinical hours (relational hours in particular); securing MFT supervision post graduation; securing a job in the field; as well as other issues. The volume includes three submitted and two invited manuscripts.

Jeff Emery addresses the challenges of obtaining a license as a MFT in Texas. Susana Zambrano offers a glimpse of her internship experience during her master's program. Alexandra Schmidt describes her experience coming to embrace a systemic view during her master's program. In two invited manuscripts, Natalie Senatore offers her reflections on what she learned while serving as the Student/Associate Representative on the AAMFT Board of Directors, while Quinton Jones shares his aspirations as the incoming Student/Associate Representative on the AAMFT Board of Directors.

The Editorial Advisory Board composition remained unchanged for 2011. I extend my continued appreciation to each of them for their service and dedication. I encourage and welcome submissions from all readers. The *Journal* is dedicated to provide a professional development resource for TAMFT members and other interested individuals. The *Journal* publishes articles that address current clinical practice issues, theoretical and empirical research, and those that bridge the clinical and research domains.

James Morris

A NON-SYSTEMIC WAY OF THINKING SYSTEMS

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A NON-SYSTEMIC WAY OF THINKING SYSTEMS

As a first-year student in a Master's in Family Therapy program, I am still relatively new to the concept of thinking in terms of systems. Thinking in this way can be overwhelming. Systems are messy, the options are inexhaustible, and this mind-set goes against most of what our society impresses upon us. Human nature motivates us to categorize people. If you can label your closet and label the nutrition of food boxes, why not label your friends and your family members? Thinking in terms of entire systems requires us to think beyond labels, beyond black and white perceptions, and most importantly, beyond blaming.

Using a systemic lens was a complete paradigm shift for me. I come from a family in which there is a right and a wrong way of doing things. I come from a religious background in which there are well-defined moral guidelines. I come from a society in which we value the individual over the community.

Like many marriage and family therapists, I earned my undergraduate degree in psychology. Looking back on my training, I am thankful for the scientific observation skills that I gained through my psychology-based background. This training proved precise, methodical, and valuable. At the time, it made sense to my rigorous, disciplined mind. Recalling the law of parsimony, I thought it much more beneficial to focus upon the most relevant aspects of a situation, rather than looking at all the extraneous factors that were probably unrelated. "Keep it simple" became my motto in an attempt to make sense of what often seemed like chaos. When trying to explain a problem to myself, I picked one possible explanation and tried it on for size. If that did not seem to explain what I needed to know, I tried another possible explanation. I thought this systematic way of thinking helped me to explore all possibilities.

However, I soon found that I began creating more questions than I was answering. Just looking at one aspect of a person's life did not seem plausible anymore. Slowly but surely, I began to realize that the beauty of the human experience lies in the fact that each of us are interconnected. There is simply no escaping this indisputable detail. Past, present, and future

are woven together in the threads of a single human life. As much as my left brain hemisphere may like to believe it, we simply cannot place life into neat, tidy categories.

Discovering the family systems approach in my first semester of graduate school was like being able to finally breathe deeply after swimming underwater and coming up for air. I no longer felt like I was drowning in a sea of my own unanswerable questions. At first, the concepts seemed strange and foreign. Nonsummativity, circular causality, and homeostasis all seemed like quaint words with elusive meanings (Hanson, 1995). Though I understood the definitions of these terms, I remained apprehensive about whether the systems approach, in all its disarray, could help me to make sense out of my clients' experiences.

As I began to apply these concepts to my own life, I realized that I gradually became more comfortable with the lack of definite truth, the lack of distinct boundaries, and the lack of absolute answers. Like a toddler gleefully discovering finger painting, I marveled at how much I enjoyed the messiness of systems. Life is uncertain, and a systemic perspective has helped me to gain an appreciation for the value of chaos.

In the past year, thinking in terms of interconnected systems has challenged me intellectually, professionally, and personally. I now have more options, more perspectives to consider, and more freedom to think broadly. Whether I am at the grocery store, sitting in class, or discussing a topic with my family members, thinking in terms of systems has heightened my awareness of the subtle influences of everyday life. I no longer single out issues such as families of origin, social roles, economic situations, physical health, and interpersonal relationships; rather, I strive to take into account the complex interplay of various influences. While influencing factors sometimes seem unrelated, personal experience has taught me that countless components fit together to create a family system – the core of human experience.

As a young, ambitious graduate student who has developed a passion for thinking about systems, part of me is eager to convince others to do the same. However, I know that others must discover this new way of thinking and assigning new meanings for themselves. In my opinion, our global system could drastically change if individuals within family systems learned

to tolerate different opinions and to appreciate each other's unique contributions. Far too many individuals fail to accept responsibility for their actions. While it may seem easier to blame others than to accept one's own role in the creation and maintenance of problems, this route impedes self-growth. We cannot expect others to change until we ourselves are willing to address our own responsibilities. In today's ever-changing global society, our families cannot afford to stagnate. Ultimately, it benefits society if we encourage individual growth, as well as find ways to build upon our communal strengths. My personal and professional journey thus far has led me to this point of understanding, and I am looking forward to new insights I will gain as I continue to apply systems thinking in my graduate coursework and clinical practice.

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INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE: MY GLIMPSE

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INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE: MY GLIMPSE

I am in the 3rd year of my graduate program which means internship; it's just me and the client, farewell reflecting team. I was excited and anxious about my internship starting, being by myself not knowing what to expect but feeling like I was ready. As Harlene Anderson once said, "there is a certainty about being uncertain." Choosing an internship site was demanding and exciting, there were so many choices and possibilities for growth, each unique and rewarding. My internship site is Interfaith Community Clinic located in the Woodlands. I am one of two bilingual counselors available for couples, individuals and families. I chose my internship site because I wanted to work with a low income population and I wanted to continue to work with Spanish speaking clients.

Thus far my experience has been incredibly challenging and vital to my growth as a therapist. My internship has definitely been a different experience from what I was used to in practicum, where I was on a reflecting team and had my reflecting team for support. When I first started my internship I can honestly say I missed my reflecting team greatly, I tried channeling my team members thoughts to no avail. Being alone with a client has made me become much more in tune to my own presence in the room and how the relationship with the client develops and forms through mutual understandings. It has given me the opportunity to be more creative and flexible with my thoughts and curiosities. I have also learned how important managing my time and energy is, self care has become vital. It was difficult at first for me to run 45 minute sessions; I always went over and had clients back to back. Learning how much time I needed in between sessions to "shake off" the previous client became important. I have had to learn to focus more on the process of previous sessions with clients, finding and remembering the rhythm the last session ended on, since clients have never come back to me starting where we left off, I try to remember what it felt like being with the client. All of these things I have learned and continue to learn at my internship, nothing has compared to being alone with a couple, family or individual.

I have appreciated my internship experience and look forward to a year of work with new and continuing clients. It has been an enriching experience that does not compare to class. I am always surprised by my clients and their abilities, each unique and incomparable. Overall, my experience has shown me how much more there is to *being with* a client and the possibilities that surround us both. My internship experience has been but a glimpse into the larger field of psychotherapy and working with clients; nevertheless my glimpse has shown me the possibilities.

LOOKING AHEAD

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LOOKING AHEAD

As the student member-elect for the American Association of Marriage and Family (AAMFT) Therapy for the years 2012-2014, the idea of serving on the national board is something that is both exciting and exigent. I cannot express my gratitude for being elected as the student representative; it is truly the greatest honor that I have to date in my professional life. I am also thankful for being the representative for the great state of Texas in this position. It is important, and profitable, for every student/associate member to realize that our field is open, ready, and waiting on the “next big thing”. This “next big thing” can come from anyone in our field, but I believe that the key to the future of our practice is in the hearts of a current students/associates members. I can assure that my efforts through this tenure will be focused and calculated to ensure that each student/associate feels that their opinions and thoughts are being communicated to the board that’s in place to serve.

The primary goal of my tenure is to develop a methodical way of communicating the needs, desires, and issues that affect student members of AAMFT. By establishing this means of communication I hope to serve as a liaison for student and associate members of AAMFT, who are not only the present hope of this organization but the future leaders and professionals of this unique practice.

Another goal is to increase awareness, encourage opportunities for dialogue within the student community, develop forums to engage dialogue between students/associates not only for the AAMFT board, but the respective divisions as well. I also think that it is important for members to educate other helping professionals on the benefits that AAMFT offers to their local communities.

I strongly encourage all students/associates to advocate heavily for our field through many efforts not limited to: political focuses, pursuing licensure, and membership loyalty. I firmly believe that student/associate voices are critical and an essential component that will decisively shape the future of our field. I, through your vote, have become the voice and reason of student aspirations and aim to be a voice that is both heard and understood.

As a practicing professional I have noticed, and addressed, the dire need for families to have a resource available to them for clarity and direction. With a decline in the economy it is also important to learn the importance of having a working relationship with community organizations that assist families in their overall well being. With this idea I think it's equally important to advocate for community involvement, community development, and family growth.

After attending my first national board training, I have gained a deeper appreciation for the field of MFT and how it helps to solidify the structure of a unit. I want to take this time to thank each one of the current board members for sharing knowledge and experiences that has already help me along this journey of becoming a better professional, advocate, and helping to let the voices of thousands be heard with a sense of pride and commitment.

It is with a strong sense of confidence in our practice that I move forward to clear a path for all students/associates to walk proudly with the letters MFT after their name. Not only because they have earned the credentials; but they are proud to be an active participant in the future of our organization. In this position I am a servant for each student/associate, daily I will strive to ensure that students/associates feel that their opinions are important and valued.

MY EXPERIENCE ON THE AAMFT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MY EXPERIENCE ON THE AAMFT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It's December 6th at 11:24pm. I've just finished my last conference call/board of directors meeting for my two-year tenure as the Student/Associate Representative. Obviously I knew my term would end at some point yet I am still profoundly sad. It feels as if there are so many words to say and yet no words at all that can encompass the experiences I've had serving on the AAMFT Board of Directors for the past two years. I think the experience of being on the board at a younger age and stage in my career has been one of the most incredibly challenging and inspiring things I have ever done.

I began my journey in the field of marriage and family therapy by attending the COAMFTE accredited program at Northwestern University. Although I was not that far into my professional career, having gone straight from undergraduate work to my masters program, I felt that I had found my professional home. I was passionate about marriage and family therapy (MFT) and knew it was the place for me. The excellent training and the passionate experience I received in my masters program led me to pursue my PhD in MFT. I've been working on my PhD at the COAMFTE accredited program at Florida State University for the past 3.5 years, 3 of which have been the backdrop to my applying for and becoming the Student/Associate Rep for the AAMFT Board of Directors.

The nomination and election process took up most of my first year of my PhD as I was nominated by a former professor, and then filled out pages of paperwork, and multiple reference phone calls were made to see just who I was and what I might offer to the AAMFT Board. After the vetting process (fancy term I learned by doing this job), I was informed that I had moved on to the next round and the election would be between myself and Tracy, my best friend from my masters program, to be elected by our peers for the role. By the end of August of 2009, I received a phone call I had anticipated and dreaded all at the same time. Dr. Wayne Denton called me and informed me that the student and associate members had elected me to serve on the board. I tried not to freak out too much on that phone call so Dr. Denton wouldn't regret the decision. Wonderfully, Tracy is still my best friend and my conference roomie

whenever we attend the annual conference and Dr. Denton is now my major professor at FSU. First lesson of AAMFT Board Service: The field of AAMFT is small and interconnected like a family. Treat these people well, they are your support and your paths will continue to cross.

A phrase that I have often used when people ask me how things are going for me as a board member or what it's been like to serve in this role is to say that it is "exciting and terrifying". I'd like to share some of those exciting and terrifying highlights with you in the hopes they may encourage you to get involved as well.

The first in person board meeting I attended was in March of 2010. Sitting in a conference room surrounded by 12 other board members, not knowing how thing really worked or what my place was, I got a wake up call. See, I assumed that I was the designated person to talk about student/associate issues or concerns if that type of input was ever needed. Otherwise I figured that I'd sit in the corner and listen politely until my demographic-specific thoughts were needed. Unfortunately the board had other ideas about my participation, more to the tune of being a fully participating member with a full voice on all issues and a full vote for all things of concern to the organization. My perspective went from that of an auxiliary voice to one that represented the needs of a membership over 25,000 strong. I was intimidated by the responsibility and even more freaked out when a fellow board member turned to me and asked my thoughts on an issue we'd been discussing. It wasn't surprising to me that I had thoughts on the issue (I often have lots of opinions) but I was surprised to be sought out and given space to share. That welcoming and inviting attitude was displayed among all my board members and AAMFT staff. My presence, thoughts, and voice were equal in weight and importance to all other board members. After that positive encouragement I have not stopped talking for the past 2 years. Second lesson of AAMFT Board Service: Value your voice and use it. Know that those involved in AAMFT are genuinely good people who already value your voice because of your commitment.

I was also pleasantly surprised by how much the board as a whole is concerned with the needs and experiences of student and associate members. I always maintained a personal

responsibility to address and bring up student/associate perspective or concerns. But many times, before I could open my mouth to share a thought, another board member would jump in and ask what this meant for the demographic or would share an insight about the student/associate experience from their work or conversations they had. Far from being an outlying concern of this organization, please know that the student/associate experience in AAMFT is at the forefront and is continually being looked at and addressed to meet the needs of these groups. One piece of organizational change that I am very excited about is the recent bylaws change that the membership approved. This bylaw change had a shift to allow associate members more voting privileges and more opportunities for board service. Wanting to provide a space for more input and a way to maintain Associate involvement in the organization, the board felt these changes would really help and I wholeheartedly agreed. Third lesson of AAMFT Board Service: Know that student and associate concerns and perspectives are highly valued by this organization.

Now hopefully many of you have already gotten involved in AAMFT at the divisional, chapter, or local level wherever life finds you located. If so, my next experience will not surprise you. But if you are like me, and prior to my board service, had never taken (or known about) the opportunity to really get involved at the local level of the organization, it is incredible the work people are doing on the ground to advance this profession in each state/region. One of the biggest privileges I had was to attend the Annual Leadership Conference which invited division leaders to Washington DC to train, collaborate, and lobby on capitol hill. It was incredible to be in a room with people from every state/region and hear their stories and work about what they're doing to make sure MFT is a viable profession where they live. For no pay and no reward, there are division boards across the nation working so very hard that it was an immense joy to sit and talk with them. On a personal note, the warm reception and genuine interest these leaders showed me during my board service surprised me but perhaps that speaks to a theme of me underestimating the role of the student/associate. Leaders from Illinois, Oregon, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Florida (to name just a few) sought me out, talked with me about my experiences, asked me for my advice and thoughts

about students/associates in their states and then told me if I was ever in their neighborhood they'd help me however they could. And I know they genuinely meant it because when unscheduled dinnertime came around, when these people could've easily escaped me, I was never lacking an invitation to join any of the divisions in their plans. Fourth lesson of AAMFT Board Service: Some of the hardest workers and greatest mentors you could find are working at the divisional level for AAMFT. Get involved at the divisional level not just to help AAMFT but to help yourself as a professional.

On a more basic level, my time serving as Student/Associate Rep has helped me understand the larger context of AAMFT. In my masters program we learned about the history of the field of marriage and family therapy but we did not learn about the history of AAMFT, our professional organization. I'm not saying there should be a course on AAMFT in every masters program but there is a great deal I didn't understand until I served on the board. The biggest revelations came in understanding the examination and licensure process for being a marriage and family therapist. This is obviously an area of great concern for new professionals in the field and I had little to no knowledge about these entities and how they operated. In my newness to the field, I assumed AAMFT, as the professional organization for MFT, was in charge of everything related to MFT (the exam, licensure, insurance inclusion, etc). The truth of the matter is that a completely separate unit (not AAMFT) runs the exams given and the licenses awarded. Although the names are similar, the association of marital and family therapy regulatory boards handles the exam and licensure and is specific for each state in the country. AAMFT has no control over how these state boards operate and, although AAMFT may advocate and make our needs known to these boards, there is no guarantee they will be influenced. Once I understood this piece of information, it was easier to see why these issues have been a struggle for our field, as we can only advocate from the outside, not change things as the ones in control like I once thought. I so strongly believe in MFT and the work we do that it is hard to not be able to have a bigger voice or a stronger influence in our larger mental health and government context. But I think this is an opportunity and not the end of the line. If you have questions about how things work or why they work a certain way, I would encourage

you to seek out a mentor or even the AAMFT staff to get some background. Then, if there's lobbying or volunteer work to be done to advance the concerns you have, I'd encourage you to get involved in those as well. Fifth lesson of AAMFT Board Service: Asking questions regarding my frustrations gets me more results than stewing about my concerns. There is still a long journey for this association and I can be a part that helps it move forward.

Finally, I've experienced some very tough moments in my service to AAMFT. New in my professional development, it was hard to hear when people would get frustrated at the board or accuse us of not doing or being something or working our hardest. Moments like that made me want to hide in a corner or throw the towel in on the whole thing. I've had more heated conversations, more angry emails, and experienced more tension in these 2 years than ever before in my life. Amazingly, I've also seen more understanding and come to more resolutions in these two years than I ever expected at the beginning of some conversations. I think there is so much passion for this field and for the work our members do that this is where conflict comes from. One of the greatest things I was able to experience in my board service was genuine conversation in the midst of very emotional circumstances. The board works its hardest to be understanding, receptive, and responsive and I learned this first hand from the example of my board members when interacting with membership. When I was able to have a conversation with people regarding their concerns or perceptions, and those people listened and took in what I had to say, we typically came to new understanding together. Prior to my service, I would have shied away from any sort of conflict but after great examples of how things can be resolved, I feel much more able to work when faced with differences. Sixth lesson of AAMFT Board Service: No experience, organization, or relationship is ever all rainbows and sunshine so don't expect that, but a hard conversation can be well worth the time and energy.

Yet for every difficult moment, challenging experience, exciting opportunity, and wonderful exchange, I wouldn't change one moment of the past two years of my service on the AAMFT Board of Directors. I would implore my colleagues who are starting their professional career to make time for AAMFT. Get involved at the divisional or national level in

whatever way you can manage. I promise you will not be disappointed with the relationships you form and the knowledge you gain. And if you have any questions or need insight from me, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

I may never have another opportunity to formally declare my thanks, and although this is an inadequate way to express my gratitude, I will attempt it. I am forever grateful to the members of the board with whom I have laughed, cried, and served, to the divisional leaders who taught me so much about what really makes up AAMFT, to the student volunteers at the conference who worked so hard to ensure the conference is a success, to the members at large who were always a pleasure to meet and supportive of me, and to the AAMFT staff who have made it their profession to ensure sure that I can pursue my professional passion. Thank you!

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES OF OBTAINING A LICENSE AS AN MFT IN TEXAS

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REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES OF OBTAINING A LICENSE AS AN MFT IN TEXAS

Upon graduation from the COAMFTE accredited MFT program at Abilene Christian University, I was eager to find a place to begin work on obtaining the necessary hours toward my license. I had previously taken the national exam and passed it, so that was one hurdle down in my journey. In a tight economy, finding a job that paid a salary and allowed me to count what I did toward my license was a challenge. Unlike many of my peers, I was reluctant to move away from Abilene because of family ties; my wife's job and my three children's connection to school and community activities. I applied at all of the conventional mental health services: the local psych hospital, MHMR, to no avail. I was able to take job as a weekend direct care supervisor for a residential treatment center for adolescents, but because it was direct care and not therapeutic in nature, I couldn't count the hours. I lucked into a local non-profit organization that, among other programs, contracted with individual LPCs, LMFTs and LCSWs to provide therapy services. Although I was unable to bill for insurance, I was able to provide a service to the community by offering Family and Individual Therapy on a sliding scale to those who were underinsured or had no insurance. In return, the non-profit was able to attract more clients and advertise the service. As a bonus, the Executive Director was also an approved MFT supervisor and offered to provide supervision! We signed a supervisory agreement to provide services at the non-profit and I started seeing clients.

The obvious challenge for any LMFTA is earning enough money to pay bills while still getting the hours. Because we are unable to get on insurance panels for reimbursement and must advertise ourselves as provisionally licensed counselors, the prospect for attracting clients seems limited. I've learned that most folk don't care about the "a" at the end of your license if you are providing quality services. Due to the reputation and advertising of the non-profit I was located at, I quickly built a case load. Initially, I worked on the weekends at the RTC and tried to build up a case load of clients during the week. I feel that I faced challenges typical to the profession: dealing with no-shows and cancellations, maintaining records, promoting my business, looking for continuing education opportunities. However, doing this part-time was

unsustainable, and I didn't feel confident I could generate the necessary 1500 client-contact hours in the initial 24 month period. I crunched some numbers: 1,500 hours divided by 24 months was 62.5 hours per month needed, or about 16 hours per week. Factoring in holidays, bad weather, conferences and illness, a better estimate is that I needed to *average* 20 hours per week of direct client contact to finish in two years. I knew that previous ACU MFT grads had taken longer and that the rules allow for extending the LMFTa period several times to allow a person to gain all their hours, but I wanted to finish in two years. Financially, I couldn't make it doing private practice for limited fees.

I lucked into a job with another non-profit agency working in a state-wide program that does crisis counseling with at-risk families. It was a full time, salaried position. Although it was not the masters-level salary for which I'd hoped, it was workable. My supervisor, with whom I was already in a contract and supervisory agreement, agreed to supervise me for hours gained at the agency. The agency, having no LMFT supervisor, was happy to allow me the professional development time to attend weekly supervision. Every aspect of the agency job was applicable to my license. Working in a one-on-one setting with the youths counted toward my individual hours, meeting with the parents and families at least once a month (and often more) counted toward my relational hours, and doing all my paperwork and recordkeeping and referral calls counted toward my administrative hours. The agency also provided many opportunities for training and CEUs. I was able to offer about 10 hours per week at the private practice location as well, so getting my 20 hours per week was no longer an issue.

In September of 2011, I tallied my hours, filled out the paperwork and submitted my application for upgrade to the board. I waited several weeks in anticipation of receiving my license so I could start filling out paperwork to apply to insurance panels, but it didn't come. I was checking online to see if the web site that tracks licenses was updated to say: Jeffrey Emery, LMFT instead of: Jeffrey Emery LMFT associate. Finally, I called the licensing board office and was told that a letter had been sent. I informed them that I hadn't received a letter detailing anything, so they said they would re-send it. I finally received it and was disappointed to find out that I'd missed a step two years ago and all of the hours I'd earned at the agency

were being denied. I called the office again to find out how to resolve the issue. The office staff was polite, but firm. I was told that I needed to have a supervisory agreement on record with the board for *every location where services would be provided*. I'd filled one out and submitted it according to the rules for the private practice location, but a month later, when I got hired at the agency, because there was not another supervisor involved, I didn't think to fill out a new supervisory agreement for that location. I checked the forms and found that the supervisory agreement has space for one location where services will be provided. There was nothing to indicate the possibility for more than one service location. I assume that in many circumstances, a separate location might provide their own staff person who is an approved supervisor and then it would make sense to fill out a new agreement for a second supervisor. However, that was not the case for me and so I now faced the possibility that 2410 hours obtained over almost two years of work would be denied. When I questioned the decision, the board office staff directed me to the rule:

Texas Administrative Code, Title 22, Part 35, Chapter 801, Subchapter G, Rule 801.142(D)
"Supervision must be conducted under a supervision contract, which must be submitted to the board on the official form within 60 days of the initiation of supervision. The supervision contract submitted to the board must be approved by the board. Fees charged by a supervisor during the course of supervision, which occurred without a board-approved supervision contract in place and subsequently resulted in the supervised experience hours of the supervisee being denied by the board solely on the basis that there was no board approved supervision contract in place within 60 days of the initiation of supervision, must be reimbursed to the supervisee."

This was confusing to me, because I did have a supervision agreement on file with the board within 60 days of beginning supervision. There was nothing explicit on either the agreement form or in the rule which suggests that I need a separate agreement if I am utilizing the same supervisor. I was told I could appeal the decision, as some have done before when they were in a similar situation. However, I would have to appeal to the Licensing Standards Committee, which was not set to meet again for three more months, as I had just missed the

last meeting date. I asked the board staffer to whom I'd been speaking if this was an uncommon situation. She mentioned that it had been an agenda item at their last meeting, but she didn't know the outcome and it would be a while before the minutes were released. In the meantime, the appeals would be handled on a case by case basis.

So, I am left in a sort of licensing limbo for several months. I was required to submit a fee to extend my associate's license while I waited for the appeal and I went ahead and submitted the required two supervisory agreements so I could continue to work at my jobs and gain hours in case my appeal is also denied. I am apprehensive that, should my appeal be denied, I will be set back almost two years in my goal of obtaining my MFT license and my career plans. I understand that I should have been more diligent in making certain that I had submitted all the necessary paperwork, but I honestly believe that in my case, the requirements weren't as clear as if I'd needed two different supervisors. My supervisor knew he was responsible for both sites. My agency employers knew I was working under his supervision and allowed me to attend supervision during work hours. If an approved supervisor's signature is the verification for all my supervised hours on the final paperwork for my license, it stands to reason that at most, this should take a letter from him verifying his knowledge of his supervision of those hours gained at another site. I guess I'll find out in January.

So in summary, the biggest challenges for becoming a licensed practitioner of Marriage and Family Therapy in the state of Texas for me have been: financial, location to provide services while being supervised, and bureaucratic requirements of the board.

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