

| AAMFT Core Competencies 2004 Draft | DACUM |
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| 1. Admission to Treatment | |
| <i>1.1. Conceptual skills</i> | |
| 1.1.1. Understand systems concepts and theories and techniques that are foundational to the practice of marriage and family therapy | |
| 1.1.2. Understand theories and techniques of individual, marital, family, and group psychotherapy | |
| 1.1.3. Understand the mental health care delivery system | |
| 1.1.4. Understand the risks and benefits of individual, couple, family, and group psychotherapy | |
| <i>1.2. Perceptual skills</i> | |
| 1.2.1. Recognize contextual and systemic issues (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, larger systems, social context) | I-1 Promote culturally competent, ethnically diverse professional services |
| 1.2.2. Consider health status, mental status, other therapy, and systems involved in the clients' lives (e.g., courts, social services) | |
| 1.2.3. Recognize issues that might suggest referral for evaluation, assessment, or specialized care beyond clinical competence | B-14 Establish level of care D-14 Refer clients and family members to self help and peer support services E-14 Determine appropriate level of care G-4 Refer to peer-facilitated support and education groups |
| <i>1.3. Executive skills</i> | |
| 1.3.1. Gather and review intake information | A-2 Record brief description of substance |

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| | abuse / mental health problem B-2 Review client related documentation |
| 1.3.2. Determine who should attend therapy and in what configuration (i.e., individual, couple, family) | B-1 Determine appropriate participants |
| 1.3.3. Decide if, when, and how other professionals and significant others are needed to contribute to the clients' care | B-13 Determine current support services and resources |
| 1.3.4. Facilitate involvement of all necessary participants in treatment | F-5 Identify and involve family members |
| 1.3.5. Explain practice setting rules, fees, rights and responsibilities of each party, including privacy and confidentiality policies, and duty to care | A-1 Verify eligibility criteria A-5 Discuss and complete consent to treat forms |
| 1.3.6. Establish and maintain appropriate and productive therapeutic alliances with the clients | |
| 1.3.7. Solicit and use client feedback throughout the therapeutic process | |
| 1.3.8. Develop and maintain collaborative working relationships with clients, referral resources, and payers | D-13 Attend Individual Education Plan and other school meetings F-4 Participate in case conferences or daily treatment team meetings |
| 1.3.9. Manage session dynamics with multiple persons | |
| 1.3.10 Develop a workable therapeutic contract | |
| <i>1.4. Evaluative skills</i> | |
| 1.4.1. Evaluate case for appropriateness for treatment within professional competence | |
| 1.4.2. Evaluate intake policies and procedures for completeness and contextual relevance | |
| <i>1.5. Professional skills</i> | |
| 1.5.1. Understand the legal requirements | |

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| and limitations for working with minors and vulnerable populations | |
| 1.5.2. Collaborate effectively with clients and allied professionals | F-1 Collaborate with psychiatrist to ensure continuity of care F-2 Collaborate with case managers to ensure continuity of care F-3 Collaborate with specialty mental health services to ensure continuity of care |
| 1.5.3. Complete case documentation in a timely manner and in accordance with relevant laws and policies | D-26 Complete annual financial updates (UMDAPs) H-13 Maintain all required documentation |
| 1.5.4. Develop, establish, and maintain policies for setting and collecting fees | H-15 Monitor MediCal eligibility through MIS H-17 Complete billing procedures and logs |
| 1.5.5. Explain and discuss payment policies and other business procedures with clients, the appropriate subsystem in the family (e.g., parents), and/or payers | A-4 Determine financial status and ability to pay G-1 Provide education to clients about client rights |
| | D-4 Assist in enrollment for financial entitlements |
| | D-5 Provide benefits counseling |
| 2. Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis | |
| <i>2.1. Conceptual skills</i> | |
| 2.1.1. Know a systemic framework for assessment and diagnosis | |
| 2.1.2. Understand principles of human development; human sexuality; gender development; psychopathology; couple processes; family development and processes (e.g., family dynamics, relational dynamics, systemic dynamics); issues related to health and illness; and diversity | |
| 2.1.3. Comprehend the major mental health disorders, including the epidemiology, etiology, the phenomenology, effective treatments, course, and prognosis | |

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| 2.1.4. Understand the clinical needs and implications of persons who suffer from co-occurring disorders (i.e., substance abuse and mental health) | G-17 Educate community about co-occurring and other mental illnesses and recovery |
| 2.1.5. Understand the theoretical concepts related to individual and systemic assessment and diagnostic instruments that pertain to mental health and relational functioning | |
| 2.1.6. Comprehend individual, couple, and family assessment instruments appropriate to presenting problem and practice setting | |
| 2.1.7. Understand the extant models used for assessment and diagnosis of mental health | |
| 2.1.8. Understand the extant models used for assessment and diagnosis of relational functioning | |
| 2.1.9. Understand the limitations of the extant models of assessment and diagnosis, especially as they relate to different cultural and ethnic groups | |
| 2.1.10. Understand the concepts of reliability and validity, their relationship to assessment instruments, and how they influence therapeutic decision making | |
| <i>2.2. Perceptual skills</i> | |
| 2.2.1. Determine who is the client | |
| 2.2.2. Assess each client's engagement in the change process | |
| 2.2.3. Systematically integrate client reports, observations of client behaviors, client relationship patterns, reports from other professionals, and interactions with client to guide the assessment process | B-3 Establish presenting problem |
| 2.2.4. Develop systemic hypotheses | |

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| regarding relationship patterns and their bearing on the presenting problem | |
| 2.2.5. Develop systemic hypotheses about the influence of treatment on extra-therapeutic relationships and other client systems | B-5 Obtain education and employment history |
| 2.2.6. Connect assessment to interventions and expected outcomes | |
| 2.3. <i>Executive skills</i> | |
| 2.3.1. Diagnose and assess client problems systemically and contextually | A-3 Obtain provisional diagnosis |
| 2.3.2. Engage with multiple persons and manage multiple levels of information during the therapeutic process | |
| 2.3.3. <u>Provide assessments and deliver services to children that are developmentally appropriate</u> | C-13 Provide intervention with children that are cognitive and behavioral C-14 Provide non-verbal therapies |
| 2.3.4. Apply effective and systemic interviewing techniques and strategies | |
| 2.3.5. Administer assessment instruments | B-17 Determine the need for psychological testing |
| 2.3.6. Screen and develop adequate safety plans for substance abuse, child and elder maltreatment, domestic violence, physical violence, suicide potential, and dangerousness to self and others | E-3 Perform lethality assessment E-5 Evaluate substance abuse status |
| 2.3.7. Screen for physical/organic problems that can cause emotional/interpersonal symptoms | |
| 2.3.8. Assess family history using genogram | B-4 Obtain family and cultural history |
| 2.3.9. Elicit a relevant and accurate biopsychosocial history to understand the context of the clients' problems | E-2 Perform mental status evaluation |
| 2.3.10. Make appropriate differential diagnoses | |

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| 2.3.11. Identify clients' strengths, resilience, and resources | G-15 Provide education to erase the stigma about mental illness |
| 2.3.12. Elucidate presenting problem from the perspective of each member of the therapeutic system | |
| 2.3.13. Communicate diagnostic information so clients understand its relationship to treatment goals and outcomes | G-5 Provide education to clients about medications |
| 2.4. <i>Evaluative skills</i> | |
| 2.4.1. Evaluate assessment methods for relevance to clients' needs | C-1 Review assessment |
| 2.4.2. Assess ability to view issues and therapeutic processes systemically | |
| 2.4.3. Evaluate the accuracy of differential and relational diagnoses | |
| 2.4.4. Assess clients' acceptance of therapeutic goals and diagnosis | |
| 2.5. <i>Professional skills</i> | |
| 2.5.1. Utilize peer consultation and supervision effectively | E-13 Report to supervisor H-3 Attend staff meetings H-4 Perform weekly supervision I-2 Utilize clinical supervision |
| | D-15 Observe home living environment |
| 3. Treatment Planning and Case Management | |
| 3.1. <i>Conceptual skills</i> | |
| 3.1.1. Know which models, modalities, and/or techniques are most effective for the presenting problem | |
| 3.1.2. Understand the liabilities incurred when billing third parties and the codes necessary for reimbursement | |
| 3.2. <i>Perceptual skills</i> | |
| 3.2.1. Integrate client feedback, assessment, contextual information, and | D-2 Provide cultural facilitation (i.e. |

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| diagnosis with treatment goals and plan | interpreting) for client and/or family members |
| <i>3.3. Executive skills</i> | |
| 3.3.1. Develop measurable outcomes, treatment goals, treatment plans, and after-care plans with clients utilizing a systemic perspective | D-1 Develop a service plan for case management C-3 Develop treatment plan with client driven goals & measurable & observable objectives |
| 3.3.2. Prioritize treatment goals | B-16 Develop treatment plan recommendations |
| 3.3.3. Develop a clear plan of how sessions will be conducted | |
| 3.3.4. Structure treatment to meet clients' needs and to facilitate systemic change | |
| 3.3.5. Manage progression of therapy toward treatment goals | |
| 3.3.6. Manage risks, crises, and emergencies | E-1 Receive a crisis referral |
| 3.3.7. Work collaboratively with other stake holders, including family members and professionals not present | D-17 Coordinate treatment and discharge planning in higher level treatment facilities |
| 3.3.8. Assist clients in dealing with complex systems of care | D-3 Assist clients and family members to understand and navigate the mental health system |
| <i>3.4. Evaluative skills</i> | |
| 3.4.1. Evaluate progress of sessions toward treatment goals | |
| 3.4.2. Recognize when treatment goals and plan require modification | |
| 3.4.3. Evaluate management of risks, crises, and emergencies | |
| 3.4.4. Assess session process for compliance with policies and procedures | |
| 3.4.5. Assess self in terms of therapeutic behavior, relationship with clients, process for explaining procedures and outcomes | |
| <i>3.5. Professional skills</i> | |

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| 3.5.1. Advocate for clients in obtaining quality care, appropriate resources, and services in their community | B-15 Provide brief description of available services E-17 Locate available hospital bed or crisis program |
| 3.5.2. Engage in forensic and legal processes on behalf of clients when appropriate | |
| 3.5.3. Write plans and complete other case documentation in accordance with practice setting policies, professional standards, and state/provincial laws | |
| 3.5.4. Utilize time management skills in therapy sessions and other professional meetings | |
| | D-25 Assist in obtaining and maintaining educational and vocational goals |
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| 4. Therapeutic Interventions | |
| <i>4.1. Conceptual skills</i> | |
| 4.1.1. Comprehend a variety of individual and systemic therapeutic models and their application, including evidence based therapies | C-4 Determine evidence based treatment modality |
| 4.1.2. Recognize strengths, limitations, and contraindications of specific therapy models | |
| 4.1.3. Understand the risk of harm associated with models that incorporate assumptions of family dysfunction or pathogenesis | |
| <i>4.2. Perceptual skills</i> | |
| 4.2.1. Identify treatment most appropriate for presenting clinical problem or diagnosis based on current research and empirical findings | C-15 Provide intensive therapeutic services C-16 Provide milieu therapy H-16 Participate in program development and design |
| 4.2.2. Recognize how different techniques | |

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| impact the treatment process | |
| 4.2.3. Distinguish differences between content and process issues and their impact on therapy | |
| 4.3. <i>Executive skills</i> | |
| 4.3.1. Match treatment to clients' needs, goals, and values | C-2 Engage client in culturally and linguistically relevant treatment |
| 4.3.2. Deliver interventions in a way that is sensitive to unique situations and dynamics (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, larger systems issues of the client) | C-5 Commence mental health treatment |
| 4.3.3. Reframe problems and recursive interaction patterns | |
| 4.3.4. Generate relational questions and reflexive comments in the therapy room | |
| 4.3.5. Engage each family member in the treatment process as appropriate | |
| 4.3.6. Facilitate clients developing and integrating solutions to problems | C-17 Facilitate skills based groups |
| 4.3.7. Defuse intense and chaotic situations appropriately | |
| 4.3.8. Empower clients to establish effective familial organization, familial structures, and relationships with larger systems | G-14 Provide education on parenting skills G-16 Provide education on foster parenting skills |
| 4.3.9. Provide psychoeducation to families with serious mental illness and other disorders | G-3 Provide education to clients and family on mental illness and recovery |
| 4.3.10. Modify interventions that are not working to better fit treatment goals | |
| 4.3.11. Move to constructive termination when treatment goals have been accomplished | C-26 Terminate treatment and discharge |
| 4.3.12. Integrate supervisor/team | |

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| communications into treatment | |
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| <i>4.4. Evaluative skills</i> | |
| 4.4.1. Evaluate interventions for consistency and congruency with model of therapy and theory of change | |
| 4.4.2. Evaluate ability to deliver interventions effectively | |
| 4.4.3. Evaluate treatment outcomes as treatment progresses | |
| 4.4.4. Evaluate clients' reactions or responses to interventions | C-25 Administer client satisfaction surveys |
| 4.4.5. Evaluate self as therapist (e.g., transference, family of origin, current stress level, current life situation) as enhancing or inhibiting effective interventions | |
| <i>4.5. Professional skills</i> | |
| 4.5.1. Respect multiple perspectives (e.g., clients, team, supervisor) | |
| 4.5.2. Set appropriate boundaries and manage issues of triangulation | D-27 Coordinate and participate in client celebratory events |
| 4.5.3. Articulate rationales for interventions related to treatment goals and plan, assessment information, and systemic understanding of clients' context and dynamics | G-2 Educate client to advocate for self |
| 5. Legal Issues, Ethics, and Standards | |
| <i>5.1. Conceptual skills</i> | |
| 5.1.1. Know state, federal, and provincial laws that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy | G-13 Provide education to consumer providers about work in the mental health field |
| 5.1.2. Know professional ethics and standards of practice that apply to the practice of marriage and family therapy | |
| 5.1.3. Know policies and procedures of practice setting | H-1 Adhere to agency policies and procedures |

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| 5.1.4. Understand the process of making an ethical decision | |
| 5.2. <i>Perceptual skills</i> | |
| 5.2.1. Recognize situations in which ethics, laws, professional liability, and standards of practice apply | |
| 5.2.2. Recognize ethical dilemmas in practice setting | |
| 5.2.3. Recognize when a legal consultation is necessary | |
| 5.3. <i>Executive skills</i> | |
| 5.3.1. Monitor issues related to ethics, laws, and professional standards | |
| 5.3.2. Develop policies, procedures, and forms to protect client confidentiality and to comply with relevant laws | |
| 5.3.3. Inform clients of limitations to confidentiality and parameters of mandatory reporting | |
| 5.3.4. Maintain client records with timely, appropriate, and accurate notes | |
| 5.3.5. Develop safety plan for clients who present with potential abuse or violence | E-15 Negotiate a no harm contract |
| 5.3.6. Take appropriate action when ethical and legal dilemmas emerge | E-4 Complete duty to warn if indicated |
| 5.3.7. Report information to appropriate authorities as required by law | E-16 Complete 5150 as required |
| 5.3.8. Practice within defined scope of practice and competence | |
| 5.3.9. Stay current with MFT literature and advances in the field | I-5 Participate in and promote mandatory trainings I-13 Participate in career development opportunities |
| 5.3.10. Maintain license(s) and specialty credentials | I-4 Maintain CEU requirements |
| 5.3.11. Implement a personal | I-3 Practice self care to prevent compassion |

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| program to maintain professional competence | fatigue |
| 5.3.12. Consult with peers and/or supervisors if personal issues threaten to adversely impact clinical work | |
| <i>5.4. Evaluative skills</i> | |
| 5.4.1. Evaluate activities related to ethics, legal issues, and practice standards | |
| 5.4.2. Monitor personal issues and problems to insure they do not impact the therapy process adversely or create vulnerability for misconduct | |
| <i>5.5. Professional skills</i> | |
| 5.5.1. Pursue professional development through self supervision, collegial consultation, professional reading, and continuing educational activities | |
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| 6. Research and Program Evaluation | |
| <i>6.1. Conceptual skills</i> | |
| 6.1.1. Know the extant MFT literature, research, and evidence based practice | |
| 6.1.2. Understand research and program evaluation methodologies relevant to MFT and mental health services | |
| 6.1.3. Understand the application of quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry in the practice of MFT | |
| 6.1.4. Understand the ethical issues involved in the conduct of clinical research and program evaluation | |
| <i>6.2. Perceptual skills</i> | |
| <i>6.3. Executive skills</i> | |
| 6.3.1. Read current MFT and other professional literature | |
| 6.3.2. Use current MFT and other research | |

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| to inform clinical practice | |
| 6.3.3. Critique professional research and assess the quality of research studies and program evaluation in the literature | |
| 6.3.4. Determine the effectiveness of clinical practice and techniques | H-2 Participate in quality assurance |
| <i>6.4. Evaluative skills</i> | |
| 6.4.1. Systematically evaluate self in terms of currency with literature and application | |
| <i>6.5. Professional skills</i> | |
| 6.5.1. Contribute to the development of new knowledge | |
| | H-5 Track productivity levels of staff |
| | H-14 Participate in staff performance evaluations |
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