

**DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA
MUNICIPAL
REGULATIONS
for
MARRIAGE
AND FAMILY
THERAPY**

CHAPTER 77 MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

Secs.

7700	General Provisions
7701	Term of License
7702	Educational Requirements
7703	Experiential Requirements
7704	Applicants Educated in Foreign Countries
7705	National Examination
7706	Waiver of Examination and Educational Requirements
7707	Continuing Education Requirement
7708	Approved Continuing Education Programs and Activities
7709	Unapproved Continuing Education Programs and Activities
7710	Continuing Education Credit
7711	Licensure by Endorsement
7712	Practice Of Marriage And Family Therapy By Students, Graduates And First Time Applicants
7713	Standards of Conduct
7799	Definitions

7700 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 7700.1 This chapter shall apply to applicants for and holders of a license to practice marriage and family therapy.
- 7700.2 Chapters 40 (Health Occupations: General Rules) and 41 (Health Occupations: Administrative Procedures) of this title shall supplement this chapter.

7701 TERM OF LICENSE

- 7701.1 Subject to § 7701.2, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of December 31 of each even-numbered year.
- 7701.2 If the Director changes the renewal system pursuant to § 4006.3 of chapter 40 of this title, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of the last day of the month of the birthdate of the holder of the license, or other date established by the Director.

7702 EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- 7702.1 An applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the Board in accordance with § 831(a) of the Act, (D.C. Official Code § 3-1208.31(a) (2004 Supp.)) that the applicant:
- (a) Has successfully completed a master's degree or a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy from a recognized educational institution;
or

- (b) Possesses a graduate degree in an allied field as defined in section 7799, from a recognized educational institution and has successfully completed graduate level course work which is equivalent to a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, as determined by the Board.

7702.2 For the purposes of section 7702.1, qualifying degrees shall consist of at least sixty (60) semester hours or ninety (90) quarter credits in marriage and family therapy from a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) and shall not include on line degree programs.

7702.3 A qualifying graduate degree shall include a total of at least thirty-nine (39) semester hours in the following areas:

- (a) A minimum of three (3) semester hours in family systems theories and their application in working with a wide variety of family structures, which shall include:
 - (1) Studies of families in transition, nontraditional families and blended families; and
 - (2) A diverse range of marriage and family issues presented in a clinical setting;
- (b) A minimum of six (6) semester hours of marriage and family studies, which shall include:
 - (1) Theoretical foundations, history, philosophy, etiology and contemporary conceptual directions of marriage and family therapy or marriage and family counseling; and
 - (2) Preventative approaches, including premarital counseling, parent skill training and relationship enhancement, for working with couples, families, individuals, subsystems and other systems;
- (c) A minimum of nine (9) semester hours of marriage and family therapy, which shall include:
 - (1) The practice of marriage and family therapy related to theory, and a comprehensive survey and substantive understanding of the major models of marriage and family therapy or marriage and family counseling; and

- (2) Interviewing and assessment skills for working with couples, families, individuals, subsystems and other systems, and skills in the appropriate implementation of systematic interventions across a variety of marriage and family issues presented in a clinical setting, including socioeconomic, abuse and addiction issues;
- (d) A minimum of nine (9) semester hours of human development, which shall include:
- (1) Individual development and transitions across the life span;
 - (2) Family, marital and couple life cycle development and family relationships, family of origin and intergenerational influences, cultural influences, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, social and equity issues, and disability;
 - (3) Human sexual development, function and dysfunction, impacts on individuals, couples, and families, and strategies for intervention and resolution; and
 - (4) Issues of violence, abuse, and substance use in a relational context, and strategies for intervention and resolution;
- (e) A minimum of six (6) semester hours of psychological and mental health competency which shall include:
- (1) Psychopathology, including etiology, assessment, evaluation, and treatment of mental disorders, use of the current diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, differential diagnosis, and multiaxial diagnosis;
 - (2) Standard mental health diagnostic assessment methods and instruments, including standardized tests; and
 - (3) Psychotropic medications and the role of referral to and cooperation with other mental health practitioners in treatment planning, and case management skills for working with individuals, couples, and families;
- (f) A minimum of three (3) semester hours of professional ethics and identity, which shall include:
- (1) Professional identity, including professional socialization, professional organizations, training standards, credentialing

bodies, licensure, certification, practice settings, and collaboration with other disciplines;

(2) Ethical and legal issues related to the practice of marriage and family therapy, legal responsibilities of marriage and family therapy and marriage and family counseling practice and research, business aspects, reimbursement, record keeping, family law, confidentiality issues, and the relevant code of ethics, including the code of ethics specified by the Board; and

(3) The interface between therapist responsibility and the professional, social, and political context of treatment; and

(g) A minimum of three (3) semester hours of research, which shall include:

(1) Research in marriage and family therapy or marriage and family counseling and its application to working with couples and families; and

(2) Research methodology, quantitative and qualitative methods, statistics, data analysis, ethics, and legal considerations of conducting research, and evaluation of research.

7703 EXPERIENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

7703.1 An applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the Board that the applicant has completed a minimum of two (2) years of post-graduate work, within five (5) years of graduation, consisting of supervised clinical work experience in marriage and family therapy following completion of the first qualifying graduate degree and practicum required as part of the course of study.

7703.2 Unless good cause is shown, the post-graduate work shall be completed within five (5) years after the day the first qualifying degree was conferred and the practicum completed.

7703.3 Pursuant to section 7703.1, supervision shall be provided by supervisors approved by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) or by the Board.

7703.4 In addition to satisfying the requirements of sections 7703.1 and 7703.2, an applicant shall document successful completion of the following:

(a) A minimum of fifteen hundred (1,500) hours of face-to-face contact

with couples, families and individuals for the purpose of assessment and intervention; and

- (b) A minimum of three hundred (300) hours of supervised marriage and family therapy, with at least one hundred (100) hours being individual supervision. The remaining hours may be group supervision.

7703.5 An applicant who has practiced marriage and family therapy for a period of at least five (5) years prior to the date of submission of the application in a jurisdiction that does not require licensure shall not be required to be supervised pursuant to sections 7703.1, 7703.2, 7703.3, and 7703.4.

7704 APPLICANTS EDUCATED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

7704.1 The Board may grant a license to practice marriage and family therapy to an applicant who completed an educational program in an educational institution in a foreign country, which is not accredited by COAMFTE if the applicant meets the following requirements:

- (a) Meets all requirements of this chapter except for § 7702.1; and
- (b) Demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant's education and training are substantially equivalent to the requirements of this subtitle and the Act in ensuring that the applicant is qualified to practice marriage and family therapy required by § 7704.2.

7704.2 An applicant under this section shall, in lieu of meeting the requirements of § 7702.1, submit with the application a certification from a private education evaluation service approved by the Board that the applicant's foreign education is substantially equivalent to the education provided in an accredited program.

7704.3 The Board may interview an applicant under this section to determine whether the applicant's education or training meets the requirements of the Act and this chapter.

7704.4 If a document required by this chapter is in a language other than English, the applicant shall arrange for its translation into English by a translation service acceptable to the Board and shall submit a translation signed by the translator attesting to its accuracy.

7705 NATIONAL EXAMINATION

7705.1 To qualify for a license, an applicant shall, in addition to meeting the requirements of § 7702 and § 7703, receive a passing score, as determined

by the Board, on the standardized examination sponsored by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards.

7706**WAIVER OF EXAMINATION AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

7706.1

The Board shall waive the examination and education requirements of this chapter for applicants licensed in an allied field who:

- (a) Hold at least a Master's degree in psychology, social work, psychiatry, professional counseling, or other allied field from an institution of higher education which was accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the Secretary of the United States Department of Education or the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, or its successor;
- (b) Prove to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant has completed at least twenty-four (24) hours of family systems theory training with such training being achieved by:
 - (1) Attending an accredited college course in family systems theory for one (1) semester; or
 - (2) Attending Board-approved workshops and seminars; or
 - (3) Being under the immediate supervision of a Board-approved marriage and family therapist while performing the functions of a marriage and family therapist in face-to-face contact with clients for twenty-four (24) hours;
- (c) Submit a sworn statement attesting to the fact that the applicant has been performing the functions of a marriage and family therapist, as defined in section 7799, with at least seven hundred and fifty (750) hours of face-to-face contact with clients per year for at least two (2) years immediately preceding March 1, 2007 and which shall include the:
 - (i) Details of the nature of the practice;
 - (ii) Time period of practice;
 - (iii) Name(s) of supervisor(s) or professional colleagues, as applicable; and
 - (iv) Place(s) where the applicant has performed the functions of a marriage and family therapist;

- (d) Submit two (2) letters of recommendation with one from an immediate supervisor who is currently supervising, or has supervised the applicant's work in marriage and family therapy, and one from a professional colleague, with both letters attesting to the fact that the applicant has been practicing as a marriage and family therapist; and
 - (e) Apply for licensure within two (2) years after July 1, 2007.
- 7706.2 Pursuant to section 7706.1, an applicant for licensure who has been in an independent, private practice full time or substantially full time continuously since March 1, 2005 may substitute two (2) letters of recommendation from professional colleagues in an allied field or in marriage and family therapy in lieu of a letter of recommendation from a supervisor.
- 7706.3 The Board shall waive the examination and education requirements of this chapter for an applicant unlicensed in an allied field in the District of Columbia who:
 - (a) Holds at least a master's degree in psychology, social work, psychiatry, professional counseling, or other allied field from an institution of higher education which was accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the Secretary of the United States Department of Education or the council on Postsecondary Accreditation or its successor, and can prove to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant has been performing the functions of a marriage and family therapist, as defined in section 7799 with at least five hundred (500) hours per year of face-to-face contact with clients for at least five (5) years immediately preceding March 1, 2007, and
 - (b) Applies for licensure within two (2) years after July 1, 2007.
- 7706.4 An applicant unlicensed in an allied field in the District of Columbia shall submit a sworn statement that the applicant has practiced as a marriage and family therapist during the applicable time period through March 1, 2007 including the details of the nature of the practice, time period, name(s) of supervisor(s) and place(s) where the applicant has performed the functions of a marriage and family therapist.
- 7706.5 In addition to the requirements of section 7706.3 and section 7706.4, an applicant unlicensed in an allied field shall submit two (2) letters of recommendation with one from an immediate supervisor who is currently supervising, or has supervised the applicant's work in marriage and family therapy, and one (1) from a professional colleague, with both letters

attesting to the fact that the applicant has been practicing as a marriage and family therapist.

7706.6 An applicant unlicensed in an allied field in the District of Columbia who has been in an independent, private practice full time or substantially full time continuously since March 1, 2002 may substitute two (2) letters of recommendation from professional colleagues in an allied field or in marriage and family therapy in lieu of a letter of recommendation from a supervisor.

7707 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

7707.1 This section shall apply to applicants for the renewal, reactivation, and reinstatement of a license for the term expiring December 31, 2006 and for subsequent terms.

7707.2 This section shall not apply to applicants for an initial license by reciprocity or endorsement.

7707.3 Continuing education credit shall be granted only for programs or activities approved by the Board in accordance with section 7708.

7707.4 An applicant for renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license to practice marriage and family therapy, shall submit proof of having completed thirty (30) hours of approved continuing education during the two-year (2) period preceding the date the license expires or preceding the date of the application for reactivation or reinstatement. The thirty (30) hours of approved continuing education shall include:

(a) A minimum of fifteen (15) of the thirty (30) hours shall be completed in the physical presence of the approved sponsor;

(b) Six (6) hours of the thirty (30) hours shall be in ethics;

(c) The remaining twenty-four (24) hours of continuing education may consist of current and emerging issues in marriage and family therapy such as the study of:

(1) Non-traditional families;

(2) Domestic violence;

(3) HIV;

(4) Aging;

- (5) End-of-life issues;
- (6) Addiction and psychopharmacology; and
- (7) Trauma.

7707.5 To qualify for a license, a person in inactive status within the meaning of section 511 of the Act, (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.11 (2001)), who submits an application to reactivate a license shall submit proof of having met the continuing education requirements for each licensing period that the license was in inactive status.

7707.6 To qualify for a license, an applicant for reinstatement of a license to practice marriage and family therapy pursuant to section 512 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.12 (2001)) shall submit proof of having completed fifteen (15) hours of credit in an approved continuing education program for each year after March 31, 2006 that the applicant was not licensed, up to a maximum of seventy-five (75) hours.

7707.7 An applicant for license renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement under this section shall prove completion of required continuing education credits by submitting with the application the following information with respect to each program:

- (a) The name and address of the sponsor of the program;
- (b) The name of the program, its location, a description of the subject matter covered, and the names of the instructors;
- (c) The dates on which the applicant attended the program;
- (d) The hours of credit claimed; and
- (e) Verification by the sponsor of completion, by signature or stamp.

7707.8 The Board shall accept for continuing education credit any credits or courses sponsored by the following organizations:

- (a) The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT);

- (b) The National Association of Social Workers (NASW);
- (c) The American Psychological Association (APA);
- (d) The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC); or
- (e) Other state Marriage and Family Therapy boards.

7707.9 An applicant for renewal of a license who fails to submit proof of having completed continuing education requirements by the date the license expires may renew the license up to sixty (60) days after expiration by submitting the proof pursuant to section 7707.7 and by paying the required additional late fee.

7707.10 Upon submitting proof and paying the late fee, the applicant shall be deemed to have possessed a valid license during the period between the expiration of the license and the submission of the required documentation and payment of the late fee.

7707.11 If an applicant for renewal of a license fails to submit proof of completion of continuing education requirements or pay the late fee within sixty (60) days after the expiration of the applicant's license, the license shall be deemed to have lapsed on the date of expiration.

7707.12 The Board may, in its discretion, grant an extension of the sixty (60) day period to renew after expiration if the applicant's failure to submit proof of completion was for good cause.

7708 APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

7708.1 The Board may, in its discretion, approve continuing education programs and activities that contribute to the growth of an applicant in professional competence in the practice of marriage and family therapy and that meet the other requirements of this section.

7708.2 The Board may approve the following types of continuing education if the programs or activity meets the requirement of section 7708.1:

- (a) An undergraduate or graduate course given at an accredited college or university;
- (b) A seminar or workshop;

- (c) An educational program given at a conference;
- (d) Engaging in instructional hours while serving as an instructor or speaker at an institution of higher learning, conference, seminar, workshop, or in-service training;
- (e) Professional writing, excluding reprints or republications of previously published materials, published within the two (2) years prior to the license renewal date, which consist of articles or books that meet the following requirements:
 - (1) Journal articles shall be published in professional journals; and
 - (2) Chapters authored in books acceptable under this section;
- (f) Participation in research as a principal investigator or research assistant; and
 - (g) Informal study or a home study program (documented by title, author, name of topic, time spent, written summary, and date(s) completed) carried out individually that is approved by the Board.

7708.3 A continuing education program shall meet all of the following requirements:

- (a) Be current in its subject matter and taught by qualified individuals;
- (b) Be approved by the Board; and
- (c) Meet one of the following requirements:
 - (1) Be administered or approved by a health care organization, accredited health care facility, or accredited college or university; or
 - (2) Be submitted by the program sponsors to the Board for review no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the presentation and be approved by the Board.

7708.4 The Board may issue and update a list of approved continuing education programs or providers.

7709 UNAPPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

7709.1 Continuing education credit shall not be granted for the following:

- (a) Organizational activity such as serving on committees or councils or as an officer in a professional organization;
- (b) Meetings or activities such as in-service programs which are required as part of one's job; and
- (c) Continuing education activity completed before the two (2) year period for which the continuing education credit is submitted.

7710 CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

7710.1 Professional research and writing conducted pursuant to section 7708.2 (e) or (f) shall account for a total of no more than ten (10) of the thirty (30) continuing education units required.

7711 LICENSURE BY ENDORSMENT

7711.1 The Board shall issue a license to a marriage and family therapist who has a valid unrestricted license from another jurisdiction of the United States or Canada if:

- (a) That person, when granted the license, met all requirements contained in section 7702.1 through section 7704.4 and any applicable Board rules; or
- (b) The requirements of the other jurisdiction are, at the time of the application, substantially equivalent to the requirements of this chapter.

7712 PRACTICE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY BY STUDENTS, GRADUATES AND FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS 7712.1

This section shall apply to the following:

- (a) Students enrolled in recognized schools or colleges as candidates for a degree in marriage and family therapy, or enrolled in a college course pertaining to marriage and family therapy;
- (b) Applicants for a license whose application for a license in the District of Columbia is pending; and
- (c) Post graduates who are meeting the experiential requirements of section 7703.

7712.2 A student, graduate or applicant may perform actions which require a license as a marriage and family therapist only in accordance with the Act and this section.

- 7712.3 A first-time applicant for a marriage and family therapy license, student or graduate may practice marriage and family therapy under the general or immediate supervision of a marriage and family therapist licensed in the District of Columbia, or under an AAMFT or Board-approved supervisor, while the initial application is pending.
- 7712.4 A first-time applicant practicing marriage and family therapy pursuant to section 7712.1 (b) who fails the national examination administered by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards shall not thereafter continue to practice marriage and family therapy until such time as a marriage and family therapy license is duly issued to that individual.
- 7712.5 A marriage and family therapist supervising a student, graduate or applicant shall be responsible for the actions performed by the student or applicant during the time of the supervision and is subject to disciplinary action for any violation of the Act or this chapter by the person supervised.
- 7712.6 A supervisor shall review and co-sign any documentation written by a marriage and family student, graduate or applicant for a marriage and family therapy license.
- 7712.7 A supervisor shall not supervise more than five (5) graduates, students, or first-time applicants at any one time.
- 7712.8 The Board may deny an application for a license from an applicant who is found to have violated the Act or this chapter.
- 7712.9 An unlicensed marriage and family therapist shall identify himself or herself as such at all times when practicing marriage and family therapy.
- 7712.10 An unlicensed marriage and family therapist shall not receive compensation of any nature as a marriage and family therapist, either directly or indirectly from a client, except for a salary from an employer based on hours worked under supervision

7713 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- 7713.1 Any holder of a license under this chapter or any person authorized to practice marriage and family therapy under this chapter shall comply with the standards of ethical and professional conduct established by the AAMFT as they may be amended or republished from time to time.
- 7713.2 A marriage and family therapist shall provide an informed consent form, signed by both parties, which shall notify the client of his or her rights and the risks involved during the therapy.
- 7713.3 The following documentation shall be maintained for each session between a marriage and family therapist, student, graduate, or applicant and the client:

- (a) The name of person or persons present;
- (b) The date of the session;
- (c) The times the session began and ended;
- (d) The issues presented (including assessment and history as appropriate);
- (e) The risks presented; and
- (f) The risks assessed.

7799 DEFINITIONS

7799.1 As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed:

Allied Field – academic study in, or performing the professional functions associated with, psychology, social work, psychiatry, professional counseling, or other comparable mental health profession.

Applicant – a person applying for a license to practice marriage and family therapy under this chapter.

Board – the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy, established by section 217 of the Act, as amended by the Marriage and Family Therapy Amendment Act of 2003, effective March 10, 2004 (D.C. Law 15-88; D.C. Official Code § 3-1202.17).

General supervision – supervision in which an approved marriage and family therapist is available to the supervisee either in person or by a communications device.

Good cause – a legally sufficient reason for granting an extension because of:

- (a) Serious or protracted illness of the applicant;
- (b) The death or serious and protracted illness of a member of the applicant's immediate family; or
- (c) Deployment in a combat zone by the military whenever the United States is engaged in active military operations against any foreign power.

Group supervision – supervision in which an approved marriage and family therapist is available in person to between three (3) and five (5) supervisees.

Immediate supervision – face-to-face supervision in which an approved marriage and family therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed independent clinical social worker, licensed professional counselor, or advanced practice nurse is either discussing or observing the supervisee's practice.

Individual supervision – supervision in which an approved marriage and family therapist is available in person to one (1) or two (2) supervisees.

Instructional hours – the amount of time spent in actual presentation excluding preparation hours.

Marriage and family therapist – a person licensed to practice marriage and family therapy under the Act.

Unlicensed marriage and family therapist – a person who has completed the educational requirements for a degree in marriage and family therapy but has not met the clinical requirements for licensure.