

**MFT FACTS
FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM
KENT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE**

1. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY (MFT) AS A PROFESSION

- a. Founded by an interdisciplinary mental health group including psychiatrists, social workers, clergy, psychologists, etc.
- b. Became institutionalized at the national level in 1942 as what would later become the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT, see <http://www.aamft.org>). This organization is active in each state as well. See the Kentucky Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (KAMFT, see <http://www.kamft.org>).
- c. U.S. government first recognized the profession in 1970's through the Department of Education, recognizing MFT as a separate discipline (not a subspecialty of another field) with a separate body of knowledge, etc. Other existing mental health disciplines strongly challenged such recognition, but were never successful in rescinding this recognition.
- d. Additional U.S. recognition came in 1980's and 1990's through recognition by COPA, CORPA, etc. of the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Education (COAMFTE). Other groups strongly opposed this recognition arguing that MFT was only a subspecialty of their professions. All of these attempts have failed.
- e. The National Institute for Mental Health now recognizes MFT as the fifth "core mental health profession," along with psychiatry, psychology, social work and nursing. This recognition came as a result of federally funded projects that showed MFT brought about significant positive outcomes in randomized controlled studies of mental health and substance abuse treatment (lower relapse rates, etc.).
- f. Throughout the 50 states, over 44 currently regulate MFT's through either licensure or certification. Kentucky's MFT certification law was passed in 1993 and a licensure law was passed in 1998.

2. THE FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM AT U OF L

- a. The first MFT courses were taught in the Kent School in the 1970's.
- b. The Family Therapy Program began in 1983 in the Division of Allied Health, School of Medicine to offer a Post-Master's Certificate;
- c. When the Family Therapy Program began, entry-level courses were cross-listed with SW, ED PSYCH and Expressive Therapies. Kent School funded instructors for 1 section of certain courses each semester.

- d. First accredited at the post-master's level in 1990 by the COAMFTE, reaccredited in 1993 and 1998.
- e. Transferred to Kent School in October, 1994 to develop a master's specialization for MSSW students who want to become credentialed in MFT. Candidacy status at the master's level was awarded in 1998. This program is the only master's program to be recognized by the COAMFTE in a school of social work.