

Minnesota Marriage and Family Therapist's Licensure Requirements



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Introduction

This guide will discuss and interpret Minnesota's Marriage and Family Therapist's Code of Ethics (5300.0340). The intention is to present the state's requirements for patients, current and prospective therapists, and licensing officials.

Limitations of this Guide

This guide has not been reviewed by the state of Minnesota and should be used for general reference only. It should not replace a consultation with a lawyer or government official.

These standards are only applicable in the State of Minnesota. This guide does not cover additional standards from other government or private entities. Local governments, private practices, healthcare institutions, and insurance providers may have additional professional requirements.

Summary of the Rule

No one in the state of Minnesota can practice marriage and family therapy without meeting licensure requirements. One also can not advertise marriage and family services or use a title or description that alludes to marriage and family therapy without a license. Marriage and family therapy occurs when an individual preforms marriage and family therapy or is presented as someone who is able to preform those services.

What is Marriage and Family Therapy?

Marriage and family therapy is the process of providing psychotherapy to individuals, couples, and family both singly or in groups. This includes premarital, marital, divorce and family therapy. Generally, the purpose is to resolve emotional and interpersonal conflict.

Education

Prior to licensure, an applicant needs a wealth of training provided by an accredited institution.

What kind of degree do I need to qualify for this licensure?

An applicant must complete a masters or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy program from an accredited educational institution. You can also complete these degrees through a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Age

Is there an age requirement for this licensure?

An applicant must be at least 18 years old in order to qualify for a marriage and family therapy license.

Post-graduate Clinical Experience

Demonstrating your competencies and character in the field are a key part of qualifying for your marriage and family therapist license in

the state of Minnesota. The state requires two years of supervised field experience.

How does the board measure two years?

The supervised field experience must take place over the course of 24 months. It should also be at least 4000 hours.

Are there any specific requirement within 4000 hours?

An applicant must complete 1000 hours of clinical client contact. This should include assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness, and cognitive, emotional, and behavioral disorders. 500 of those hours must be with couples, families, or other relational groups.

What are the requirements for my field experience supervisor?

There must be at least 200 hours of contact between a supervisor and supervisee. 150 of those hours should be face to face. 100 hours of supervision must be in an individual setting.

Good Moral Character

Moral and ethical character is essential to providing safe, quality care to couples and families. To prove good moral character, you must have an endorser attest your character to the board.

Who can be an endorser of my good moral character?

Your endorser must be a licensed marriage and family therapist. They cannot be your employee, client or former client, or related to you in any way.

What if my endorser is a licensed marriage family therapist out of state?

A marriage and family therapist licensed outside of Minnesota can be your endorser. If the

requirements of their jurisdiction meet or exceed Minnesota's requirements.

National and State Examinations

Both the Minnesota State Board of Marriage and Family Therapy and the National Association of Marriage and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards require examinations to assess competency and prior knowledge.

What will these exams assess?

Knowledge of the statutes and rules governing marriage and family therapists, the code of ethics, awareness of your responsibilities to the public, and other practice related areas.

Can I retake the exam?

You can retake the exams up to five times. You must pay an exam fee for each test.

Code of Ethics

The applicant must understand and agree to follow the code of ethics for marriage and family therapists. (See Appendix B)

Fees

See Appendix C for a list of fees associated with licensure. All fees are nonrefundable.

Exemptions

Students and post-graduates completing supervised clinical experience are exempt from the licensure requirement. They can not extend their practice beyond received training and can not use a title that names themselves as a marriage and family therapist or implies that they are a marriage and family therapist.

Appendix A.- Full Text of the Rule

Subpart 1. **License required.** No person, other than those individuals exempt in Minnesota Statutes, sections [148B.32](#), subdivision 2, and [148B.38](#), shall engage in marriage and family therapy practice, advertise the performance of such services, or use a title or description denoting marriage and family therapist without obtaining a license issued under Minnesota Statutes, sections [148B.29](#) to [148B.39](#), and this chapter.

Subp. 2. **Engaging in marriage and family therapy practice, defined.** An individual engages in marriage and family therapy practice if the individual performs or offers to perform marriage and family therapy or if the individual is presented as one who is able to perform such a service.

Statutory Authority: *MS s* [148B.31](#); [148B.37](#); [214.06](#)

History: 15 SR 1782; 41 SR 87

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Appendix B- Code of Ethics

Subpart 1. **Scope.** The code of ethics applies to all providers who practice marriage and family therapy and applies to their conduct during the period of education, training, and employment required for licensure.

Subp. 2. **Purpose.** The code of ethics constitutes the standards by which the professional conduct of a provider of marriage and family therapy is measured.

Subp. 3. **Violations.** A violation of the code of ethics is a sufficient reason for disciplinary action, corrective action, or denial of licensure.

Subp. 3a. **Conflicts.** If the provider's work setting requirements conflict with the marriage and family therapy code of ethics, the provider shall clarify the nature of the conflict, make known the requirement to comply with the marriage and family therapy code of ethics, and seek to resolve the conflict in a manner that results in compliance with the marriage and family therapy code of ethics.

Subp. 4. **Integrity.** A provider of marriage and family therapy must act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity and competence. A therapist must be honest in dealing with clients, students, interns, supervisees, colleagues, and the public.

A. A therapist must limit practice to the professional services for which they have competence or for which they are developing competence. When the therapist is developing a competence in a service, the therapist shall obtain professional education, training, continuing education, consultation, supervision, experience, or a combination thereof necessary to demonstrate competence. If a complaint is submitted alleging a violation of this subpart, the therapist must demonstrate that the elements of competence have reasonably been met.

B. A therapist must not permit a student, intern, or supervisee under the therapist's supervision to perform, nor pretend to be competent to perform, professional services beyond the level of training of the student, intern, or supervisee.

C. A therapist must recognize the potentially influential position the therapist may have with respect to students, interns, employees, and supervisees, and must avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of these persons. A therapist must make every effort to avoid multiple relationships that could impair the therapist's professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. Sexual contact between the therapist and students, employees, interns or supervisees is prohibited for two years after the date that the relationship is terminated, whether or not the party is informed that the relationship is terminated. Sexual contact after two years with a former student, intern, employee, or supervisee is prohibited:

- (1) if the former student, intern, employee, or supervisee was emotionally dependent upon the therapist; or
- (2) if the sexual contact occurred by means of therapeutic deception.

D. A therapist must not engage in sexual contact or other harassment, therapeutic deception, or exploitation of students, supervisees, interns, employees, research subjects, or actual or potential witnesses or complainants in ethical proceedings.

E. A therapist must not use or exploit the professional relationship with a student, supervisee, intern, employee, research subject, or actual or potential witness or complainant in ethical proceedings in any manner for the therapist's emotional, financial, sexual, religious, political, or personal advantage or benefit.

F. A therapist must recognize the limitations to the scope of practice of marriage and family therapy. When the needs of a client appear to be outside this scope, a therapist must inform the client that there are other professional, technical, community, and administrative resources available to the client. The therapist must make referrals to those resources when it is in the best interest of the client to be provided with alternative or complementary services. The therapist must make a reasonably prompt referral when requested to do so by the client, without consideration of limitation of third-party payors.

G. A therapist must not offer, nor accept, payment for referrals.

H. A therapist must not knowingly offer services to a client who is in treatment with another professional without consultation among the parties involved. If a client refuses to allow consultation, the therapist should delay the administration of service until the client gives consent to consultation. The exception to the consultation requirement would be if the client reports ethical violations by the other professional.

I. A therapist must understand the areas of competence of related professions and act with due regard for the need, special competencies and obligations of their colleagues in other allied professions, and must not disparage the qualifications of any colleague.

J. A therapist must seek appropriate professional assistance for the therapist's own personal problems or conflicts that are likely to impair the therapist's work performance and clinical judgment. During any period where the therapist is unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety, the therapist shall either promptly terminate the professional relationship with all clients or shall make arrangements for other health providers to provide services that are needed by a client during the period of impairment.

K. A therapist must not practice under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance not prescribed by a physician.

L. A therapist must not allow an individual or agency that is paying for the professional services of a client to exert undue influence over the therapist's evaluation or treatment of the client.

M. A therapist must file a complaint with the board when the therapist has reason to believe that another therapist is or has been engaged in conduct which violates this part according to Minnesota Statutes, section [148B.07](#), subdivision 4.

N. A therapist must not engage in any conduct likely to deceive or defraud the public or the board.

O. A therapist must not advertise in a way that is false, fraudulent, or misleading to the public.

P. A therapist shall use only academic degrees from regionally accredited institutions that are related to the practice of marriage and family therapy in any situation or circumstance related to the practice of marriage and family therapy. Those therapists holding current Minnesota mental health professional licenses issued by other Minnesota licensing boards may also use degrees and titles directly related to these licenses as permitted by the other boards when the other licensure is cited with the marriage and family licensure.

Q. A therapist must correct, wherever possible, false, misleading, or inaccurate information and representations made by others concerning the therapist's qualifications, services, or products.

R. A therapist must make certain that the qualifications of a person in a therapist's employ, or under the therapist's supervision, are represented in a manner that is not false, misleading, or deceptive.

S. A therapist must pursue knowledge of new developments and maintain competence in marriage and family therapy through education, training, or supervised experience.

T. A therapist shall maintain current knowledge on the use and impacts of technology in providing, documenting, training, and supervising marriage and family therapy, in order to safeguard the welfare of clients, students, interns, and supervisees.

U. A therapist must not engage in any unprofessional conduct. Unprofessional conduct is any conduct violating this part or any conduct that fails to conform to minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing practice that have become established by consensus of the expert opinion of marriage and family therapists as reasonably necessary for the protection of the public interest.

Subp. 5. **Relations to clients.** A therapist's primary professional responsibility is to the client. A therapist must make every reasonable effort to advance the welfare and best interests of families and individuals. A therapist must respect the rights of those persons seeking assistance and make reasonable efforts to ensure that the therapist's services are used appropriately. A therapist is bound by these ethics primarily.

A. Once a client has been accepted into therapy, a therapist must not discriminate on the basis of race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status. A therapist or client may terminate professional services unless prohibited by law or court order. When unable to offer services for any reason, a therapist shall make an appropriate referral.

B. A therapist must recognize the potentially influential position the therapist may have with respect to clients, and must avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of clients. A therapist must make every effort to avoid multiple relationships with clients that could impair the therapist's professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation.

C. A therapist must truthfully represent to clients facts regarding services rendered.

D. A therapist must recognize the importance of clear understandings on financial matters with clients. Arrangements for fees and payments must be made at the beginning of the therapeutic relationship.

E. A therapist must not engage in any sexual behavior with a client. Sexual behavior with a former client is prohibited for two years after termination of services whether informed or not that the relationship is terminated. Sexual behavior after two years with a former client is prohibited:

- (1) if the former client was emotionally dependent upon the therapist; or
- (2) if the sexual behavior occurred by means of therapeutic deception.

F. A therapist must not engage in sexual or other harassment of a client, nor in any verbal or physical behavior that is sexually seductive or sexually demeaning to the client. For purposes of this item, sexual harassment has the meaning given it in Minnesota Statutes, section [363A.03](#), subdivision 43.

G. A therapist must not use or exploit the professional relationship with a client in any manner for the therapist's emotional, financial, sexual, religious, political, or personal advantage or benefit.

H. A therapist must not use any confidence of a client to the client's disadvantage.

I. A therapist must terminate a client relationship when it is reasonably clear that the treatment no longer serves the client's needs or interests.

J. A therapist must not provide services to a client when the therapist's objectivity or effectiveness is impaired. Whenever a therapist's objectivity or effectiveness becomes impaired during a professional relationship with a client, the therapist must notify the client orally and in writing that the therapist can no longer see the client professionally and must assist the client in obtaining services from another professional.

K. A therapist must respect the right of a client to make decisions and must help the client understand the consequences of the decisions. A therapist must advise a client that a decision on marital status is the responsibility of the client.

L. A therapist must inform a client of a divergence of interests, values, attitudes, or biases between a client and the therapist that is sufficient to impair their professional relationship. Either the client or the therapist may terminate the relationship.

M. In the course of professional practice, a therapist must comply with all laws concerning the reporting of abuse or neglect of minors or vulnerable adults.

N. A therapist must display prominently on the premises of the professional practice or make available as a handout the bill of rights of clients, including a statement that consumers of marriage and family therapy services offered by marriage and family therapists licensed by the state of Minnesota have the right:

- (1) to expect that a therapist has met the minimal qualifications of education, training, and experience required by state law;
- (2) to examine public records maintained by the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy that contain the credentials of a therapist;
- (3) to report complaints to the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy;
- (4) to be informed of the cost of professional services before receiving the services;
- (5) to privacy as defined and limited by rule and law;
- (6) to be free from being the object of unlawful discrimination while receiving services;
- (7) to have access to their records as provided in Minnesota Statutes, sections [144.291](#) to [144.298](#), except as otherwise provided by law or prior written agreement; and
- (8) to be free from exploitation for the benefit or advantage of a therapist.

O. A therapist must, upon request from the client, provide information regarding the procedure for filing a complaint with the board.

P. Prior to commencing therapy through electronic means including, but not limited to, telephone and Internet, a therapist must:

- (1) ensure compliance with all relevant laws for the delivery of the services;
- (2) determine that technologically assisted therapy is appropriate for the client, taking into account the client's physical, emotional, and intellectual needs;

- (3) inform the client of the potential risks and benefits associated with technologically assisted therapy including, but not limited to, issues of confidentiality, clinical limitations, transmission difficulties, and ability to respond to emergencies;
- (4) ensure the security of the communication medium; and
- (5) only commence technologically assisted therapy after appropriate education, training, or supervised experience using the relevant technology.

Subp. 6. **Confidentiality and keeping of records.** A therapist must safeguard all private information obtained in the course of professional services. A therapist may disclose client information only as permitted by law and rule.

A. A therapist must not disclose any private information acquired in rendering professional services except as provided by Minnesota law and rule. All other private information may be disclosed only with the informed consent of the client, except disclosure of private information may occur without the consent of the client when disclosure is necessary to protect against a clear and substantial risk of imminent serious harm being inflicted by the client on the client or another individual, including the therapist, or as otherwise provided by law, rule, or court order. In such case, the private information is to be disclosed only to law enforcement agencies, the potential victim, the family of the client, or appropriate third parties in a position to prevent or avert the harm.

B. A therapist must be responsible for informing clients of the limits of confidentiality.

C. For purposes of safeguarding confidentiality, when seeing a couple or a family, a therapist must define who the "client" is as soon as it is possible to determine the client. For example, the therapist must define whether the couple or family, as a unit, is the client or whether the individuals who make up the couple or family are the clients. The therapist must disclose the limitations, if any, to each client's right to privacy.

D. When seeing a couple or a family, a therapist must inform the client, at the beginning of the relationship, what the therapist's procedures are for handling confidences from individual members of the family and for protecting individuals' privacy while safeguarding the integrity of the therapy process.

E. A therapist shall inform a minor client, to the extent that the client can understand, that the law imposes limitations on the right of privacy of the minor with respect to the minor's communications with the therapist.

F. Whenever marriage and family therapy services are requested or paid for by one client for another, the therapist must inform both clients of the therapist's responsibility to treat any information gained in the course of rendering the services as private information.

G. A therapist must limit access to client records and must inform every individual associated with the agency or facility of the therapist, such as a staff member, student, or volunteer, that access to client records must be limited to only the therapist with whom the client has a professional relationship, an individual associated with the agency or facility whose duties require access, and an individual authorized to have access by the informed written consent of the client.

H. A therapist must continue to maintain as private information the records of a client after the professional relationship between the therapist and the client has ceased. The therapist must store and dispose of records in ways that maintain confidentiality.

I. A therapist must disclose to the board and its agents client records as required by Minnesota Statutes, sections [148B.11](#) and [148B.39](#).

J. A therapist must obtain written, informed consent from each client before electronically recording sessions with that client or before permitting third-party observation of their sessions. The consent form should specify the purpose and proposed audience for the recording.

K. A therapist must disguise adequately the identity of a client when using material derived from a counseling relationship for purposes of supervision, training, research, professional meetings, or publications, unless the therapist has obtained a signed release of information.

L. A client who is the recipient of marriage and family therapy services has the right to access and release private information maintained by the therapist, including client records, as provided in Minnesota Statutes, sections [144.291](#) to [144.298](#), provided the records are not classified as confidential under Minnesota Statutes, section [13.84](#), or except as otherwise provided by law or court order. A therapist must maintain an accurate record for each client. Each record must minimally contain:

- (1) a client personal data record which shall include the presenting problem;
- (2) a treatment plan with a diagnosis and treatment goals and any subsequent revision;
- (3) an accurate chronological listing of all client contacts and a summary of each;
- (4) records of any consultation or supervision received in relation to the client;
- (5) a termination statement indicating the date and reason for termination, the client's condition at the time, and any recommendations made to the client;
- (6) copies of all client authorizations for release of information and any other forms pertaining to the client including documentation of informed consent; and
- (7) a chronological listing of all fees or charges for services related to the client and to whom the fees were charged. This record may be kept separate from the client's clinical file.

Subp. 7. **Research.** A therapist must conduct research activities with full respect for the rights and dignity of participants and with full concern for their welfare. A therapist must inform participants of the aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate. A therapist must inform a research participant of the ability to decline participation in or to withdraw from a research study at any time.

Statutory Authority: *MS s [148B.31](#); [148B.37](#); [214.06](#)*

History: *15 SR 1782; 23 SR 1540; L 2005 c 56 s 2; L 2007 c 147 art 10 s 15; 41 SR 87*

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Appendix C- Fees

148B.392 FEES.

Subdivision 1.**Fees; Board of Marriage and Family Therapy.** The board's fees, including late fees, for licenses and renewals are established so that the total fees collected by the board will as closely as possible equal anticipated expenditures during the fiscal biennium, as provided in section [16A.1285](#). Fees must be deposited in the state government special revenue fund.

Subd. 2.**Licensure and application fees.** Licensure and application fees established by the board shall not exceed the following amounts:

- (1) application fee for national examination is \$110;
- (2) application fee for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) state examination is \$110;
- (3) initial LMFT license fee is prorated, but cannot exceed \$125;
- (4) annual renewal fee for LMFT license is \$125;
- (5) late fee for LMFT license renewal is \$50;
- (6) application fee for LMFT licensure by reciprocity is \$220;
- (7) fee for initial Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (LAMFT) license is \$75;
- (8) annual renewal fee for LAMFT license is \$75;
- (9) late fee for LAMFT renewal is \$25;
- (10) fee for reinstatement of license is \$150;
- (11) fee for emeritus status is \$125; and
- (12) fee for temporary license for members of the military is \$100.

Subd. 3.**Other fees.** Other fees charged by the board are as follows:

- (1) sponsor application fee for approval of a continuing education course is \$60;
- (2) fee for license verification by mail is \$10;
- (3) duplicate license fee is \$25;
- (4) duplicate renewal card fee is \$10;
- (5) fee for licensee mailing list is \$60;
- (6) fee for a rule book is \$10; and
- (7) fees as authorized by section [148B.37, subdivision 1](#), paragraph (b), clause (7).

Subd. 4.**Nonrefundable fees.** All fees in this section are nonrefundable.

History: [2019 c 52 s 19](#)