

MFT PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 MAY 2005

WELCOME TO THE FIRST MFT NEWSLETTER!

We are excited to announce the arrival of the first MFT Program newsletter. In the following pages, you will find information regarding program changes, faculty research, practicum reflections, and current status of alumni. In

addition, our goal was to highlight student experiences and accomplishments. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to compile this first newsletter, and we welcome your feedback and ideas for upcoming editions. We would like to thank the students and faculty

members that offered their time and interesting contributions.

Enjoy! Best of luck with final exams, graduation, and practicum placements.
-Carol Simpson & Brandina Morrison, Editors

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MFT PROGRAM UPDATE

As the 2004-2005 academic year comes to a conclusion, it is a good time to reflect upon the year and look to the future. My sabbatical in Australia was both professionally and personally rewarding. In addition to learning about a new country and exploring models of collaborative health care supported by the Australian government, I was fortunate to participate in a one-week intensive training in narrative therapy with Michael White at the Dulwich Centre in Adelaide. Although Australia was wonderful, I was thankful to return home and resume my roles as teacher, supervisor, program director, and family therapist. In addition to the comforts of home, the best part of returning to

San Diego was becoming acquainted with the new students and observing the clinical development of the practicum students.

We welcomed three new adjunct faculty members to the program in 2004: Michele Smith, Ph.D., Joseph Scherger, M.D., and Denice Davis, M.A., J.D. Michele is the new Director of Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Family and Preventative Medicine at UCSD. She moved to San Diego from Atlanta, where she served in a similar role at Emory University. Michele is teaching *Family Theories II* and *Treatment of Drug & Alcohol Problems*. Dr. Scherger is teaching *Families, Systems & Health*, a course he originally developed in the mid-90s

prior to assuming the role as Dean of the College of Medicine at Florida State University. He recently returned to San Diego and is now a family physician at UCSD. As a graduate of USD and current Program Specialist, Denice is well known to students and alumni. She is teaching *Law & Ethics*.

This year, we have added three new practicum sites: Nueva Vista Family Services and YMCA Family Stress Counseling Services in Chula Vista, and the Department of Pediatrics at UCSD.

The San Diego Health & Faith Alliance is providing pre-practicum experience in City Heights for two students. The Alliance is a collaboration between USD, the Schools of

Medicine and Pharmacy at UCSD, and the Point Loma School of Nursing. For more information, please visit our website: sandiegohealthandfaith.org. We continue to be thankful to all of our practicum sites and supervisors.

As you can see, there are many changes taking place in the program. At the same time, there remains a great deal of continuity. We continue to have amazing students and faculty members that are committed to providing the best possible training. The strengths of our current students, alumni, and faculty are the reasons we are seeing a record number of applications in 2005. The future is very bright!
-Dr. Todd Edwards,
MFT Program Director

RESEARCH: INTERCHURCH COUPLES

The focus of my research in recent years has been studying and developing interventions for interchurch couples. Studies indicate that a significant number of marriages today are interchurch, that is, marriages in which each spouse belongs to a different Christian church or denomination. It appears that approximately 40% of Catholics are married to Protestants or non-Catholics, and estimates for Protestants marrying Catholics or Protestants of other denominations are even higher. Interchurch couples are an important group not only because of their high number, but because research suggests they are at risk for

poorer marital outcomes.

My most recent efforts in this area have been to develop a free web-based program for interchurch couples entitled *Two Churches, One Marriage*. The program can be viewed at www.sandiego.edu/interchurch. *Two Churches, One Marriage* is designed to help interchurch couples learn tools and strategies for dealing with common problems or challenges that interchurch couples frequently face. *Two Churches, One Marriage* is divided into eight psychoeducational units, which address communication skills, problem-solving skills, managing religious differences, exploring the meaning of marriage, building

a religious and spiritual bond, exploring whether or not to change religious affiliation, the religious upbringing of children, and finding support and acceptance as an interchurch couple.

I am currently designing a study with an MFT graduate, Jamie Banker, to have individuals that frequently work with interchurch couples (e.g., clergy, therapists, family life ministers) review and evaluate the site. We hope to begin data collection using an Internet survey in late May or early June. I also hope to conduct a similar type of study next year among couples that have used the program.

-Dr. Lee Williams, Professor

“INTERCHURCH COUPLES ARE AN IMPORTANT GROUP...RESEARCH SUGGESTS THEY ARE AT RISK FOR POORER MARITAL OUTCOMES.”

CONGRATULATIONS NEW GSA MEMBERS!

Congratulations to the 2005-2006 Graduate Student Association Council!

- **Ashley Bahner, Chair:** Ensures that the Council plans and implements efficient programming.
- **Mary Ann Peralta, Special Events Coordinator:** Organizes and supervises social, professional, and academic events.
- **Alison Do, Communications Director:** Maintains and updates SOE-GSA website.
- **Adan Sanchez, Financial Director:**

Manages accounts and disbursements for Council

- **Program Reps:** Responsible for planning one social, professional, or academic event, and reporting on the activities and proceedings to the students of their programs.
- * **Kristen Erdmann,** Counseling
- * **Aned Muniz Garcia,** Doctoral
- * **Bianca Estrella,** Leadership
- * **Rosalie Simons,** Learning and Teaching
- * **Allegra Peters,** Marital and Family Therapy

Also, thank you to Bindu Khurana for her hard work and dedication this past year as the MFT Program Rep.

For more information about the GSA council, visit: <http://www.sandiego.edu/soe/currstudents/gsa>



Above: First-year MFT students camping with friends

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2005!

Congratulations to the 2005 MFT graduates! Best of luck with your future endeavors.

- Shadia Alame
- Jennifer Althoff
- Michele Bipat
- Alison Bonner
- Heather Ching
- Tricia Cuano
- Drew Davis
- Ana Molina Day
- Elaine Gabayan
- Roula Germain
- Sonia Ghaswala
- Sarah Hunt
- Bindu Khurana
- Trisha Johnson
- Michelle Lee
- Sara Lucchini
- Valerie Lumpkin
- Mandy Macon
- Minon Maier
- Jamae Marcinko
- Jessica Risi
- Rebecca Townsend
- Melissa Vincent
- Leigha Weber
- Medea Wilson
- Talin Yesaie
- Julie Yglecias

GRADUATION REMINDERS:

- **MAY 27**
*GSA GRADUATING STUDENT LUNCH, 11:30 AM—1:30 PM. UC FORUM.
- **MAY 28**
*SOE RECEPTION, 11 AM—12:15 PM. DEGHERI ALUMNI CENTER.
*COMMENCEMENT, 1 PM—3:30 PM, JENNY CRAIG.



Above: Second-year MFT students at a Christmas party

TAKING THE NEXT STEP: POST-GRADUATION REFLECTIONS

I thought it would take me forever to reach 3,000 hours, but as we all know, time flies. As I approach nearly three years since graduation, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and that's pretty exciting. I recently passed the first part of my licensing exam and hope to pass the second one by the end of May. I have been blessed with a wonderful internship experience. Both of my supervisors were graduates of USD, so I have received great attention and guidance. After graduation I worked two jobs

for a while, one in a private practice and another with a community-based organization, Families Forward. I continue to work at Families Forward, which provides intensive Case Management and Wrap-around Services to at-risk youth and their families.

One of the greatest things post-graduation has been the same thing that helped me throughout the program: support from my friends. It seems like yesterday when a group of classmates began the MFT program. Some

students became friends, and then some became colleagues. You have all been through graduations before, so you know that you'll keep in touch with certain people and lose touch with others. Still, supporting one another is so important as we navigate through our development.

Just think of your cohorts who started their practicum in the summer. Hopefully, they will have some advice for those who will start in the fall. The same is true for the process of completing the hours, submitting forms to

the BBS, and finally, the tests! Only your friends and colleagues can truly grasp what a great accomplishment it is to pass. And of course, while your family might console you if you fail, knowing people who have had challenges in passing the exam can help you feel supported and validated in your efforts. Even as I look forward to progressing in my career, I know how important it is to stay connected to my MFT friends.

-Armann Heshmati, '02

PRACTICUM CORNER: CATHOLIC CHARITIES

“COMMUNICATION TROUBLE IS CODE FOR ANYTHING FROM NEEDING A WEEKEND VACATION TO INFIDELITY OR IMMINENT DIVORCE.”

Hector and Lisa (dating three years) told me in their intake session that things were going pretty well in their relationship, other than the fact that they were having trouble communicating (Note to new students: “communication trouble” is code for anything from needing a weekend vacation to infidelity or imminent divorce).

Lisa wanted Hector to “learn how to express his feelings and listen,” so we practiced active listening and other communication skills for a few sessions. But the more we worked toward developing communication skills, the more Hector

looked as if he would rather be someplace—anyplace—other than my office.

“You don’t really like coming to therapy, do you Hector?” I asked one day. (This was really tough because at the time it was still hard for me to make clients feel comfortable in the therapy room. It becomes easier, I suppose, but we all face developmental challenges that can seem like brick walls.)

“Not really,” he replied. “It’s just that I feel like Lisa depends on me way too much, and she’s always asking me to communicate more. If therapy is going to help us communicate more then I’m not sure I want that.”

My supervisor once commented that women sometimes expect their partners to behave just as they do, and get frustrated when it doesn’t happen (and vice versa for men). That’s why women need female friends, too. Since that day, sessions have included finding other support for Lisa and helping Hector act less avoidant towards her, especially when she approaches him for support. Perhaps by working on these aspects of their relationship, they will develop a “quality not quantity” attitude toward communication. Meanwhile, at least they’re relational hours...

-Ana Molina Day, 2nd-year

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STUDENTS WHO BEGAN THIS SPRING!

- NADA ZEIN
- NATE WOODIN
- SANDRA REYNAGA

Below: Second-year MFT students



PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS 2005-2006

Congratulations to all the students who have been recently placed at practicum sites for 2005-2006.

- **Catholic Charities:**
-Kate Kirkpatrick,
Brandina Morrison,
Jill Sempel

- **Children’s Outpatient Psychiatry:**
- **San Diego:** Carol Simpson, Amber Tindall
-**Rancho Bernardo:** Ciara Kim
-**Oceanside:** Cassandra Cassias, Kathy Mattox
- **Harmonium:**
-Tiffany Atalla, Leandra Wills, Elizabeth McKee, Stephanie Rebhan
- **Nueva Vista:**
-Andrea Boylan
- **Phoenix House:**
-Andre Bryant, Joshua Cruz, Lindsey Golde
- **San Diego Hospice:**
-Guenette duVille,
Kellner Ford, Summer Hallum, Allegra Peters, Tristan Young

- **St. Vincent De Paul Village:**
-Alicia Garcia
- **UCSD Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services (CAPS):**
-Molly Downs,
Nona Moore
- **UCSD Family Medicine:**
-Becky Bernard,
Sol D’Urso
- **UCSD Pediatrics:**
-Christian Jordal
- **UCSD Outpatient Psychiatric Services:**
-Caroline Bender,
Leticia Fregosa
- **YMCA Family Stress Clinic:**
-Jordan Erickson

PRACTICUM CORNER: PHOENIX HOUSE

When I was seven years old, I decided to build a clubhouse in my backyard (nevermind that I can't build things and that I didn't have a club). I thought about every detail. The clubhouse would have two floors, a kitchen, a living room with comfy couches, and separate rooms for girls and boys. I had a perfect mental picture of the clubhouse, and it was going to be great! Of course, building it presented a slight problem, but at least I had a blue print.

The first step that I took was to hang a mirror on our backyard fence for decoration. Then, I managed to nail two boards into the grass. And that's about as far as it went. As it turns out, *imagining* is a lot easier than *building* a clubhouse.

I've reflected upon this

experience since I began my practicum. Early on, it was easy for me to get frustrated because I had a specific idea of what doing therapy would be like: I would see families that were excited about beginning therapy and wanted to make changes in their lives. I would be able to join well and give them ideas and advice that would lead to success.

However, like the clubhouse, the imagining turned out to be a lot easier than the actual building. What I actually received in practicum more closely resembled: court-mandated adolescents who were already pre-disposed to dislike me, office policies, and difficult situations that forced therapeutic thoughts to fly right of my head. Instead, all I could think was, "Please sit

down and stop pulling the leaves off my plant!"

Occasionally I still get frustrated that what *is* does not always match up with *what could be*. But even so, I've learned quite a lot in the last year. I've learned that being right doesn't matter nearly as much as just being there. I've learned that success doesn't always look quite the way you think it should. I've learned patience. And above all, I've learned that just because I like building clubhouses, that doesn't mean that my client necessarily does. Perhaps he prefers building bridges — who knows?

Best of luck to those of you who are about to begin practicum. I can't say it's always easy, but it's worth it.
— Michelle Lee, 2nd-year

"I'VE LEARNED
THAT BEING RIGHT
DOESN'T MATTER
NEARLY AS MUCH
AS JUST BEING
THERE."



Above: First-year MFT students and friends

MFT PROGRAM ALUMNI—WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

- **Jamie Banker, '04:** is currently a registered intern, working part-time at Metro Family Physicians, a private practice, providing collaborative care. She also works for UCSD as a research associate in the Psychiatry department.
- **Kristin Conrad-Ewing, '04:** is currently taking time off, and due to have twins, Morgan Elizabeth and Dylan Fredrick, any day now!
- **Christina DeLano, '04:** is a therapist at the Center for Families of Children with Special Needs at USD, empowering family members, addressing needs, and providing support for children with special needs.
- **Diana Gomez, '04:** works for North Carolina Lifeline, as a therapist and leader of parent groups. She is starting a group for court-ordered parents who have abused their children.
- **Rachel Vierra, '04:** is working as an MFT intern with fellow USD graduates at Providence Community Services. She treats a wide range of children, teens, and their families in City Heights.
- **Cheryl Cline, '03:** works as a Bereavement Counselor at San Diego Hospice and Palliative Care, and is developing a project with the City Heights community to bring grief and loss groups to the schools.
- **Grace Colman & Danielle Wolff Ferrigno, '03:** opened *Kokua Mentoring LLC* in Boca Raton, FL, as "Educational Mentors," blending special education and MFT philosophy to help students and their families.
- **Neena Gokli, '03:** works for New Alternatives, Inc., in El Cajon, as a school-based therapist at a middle and an elementary school, providing both individual and group counseling.
- **Julia Smith, '03:** is currently finishing her first year of law school at Willamette University in Oregon. She plans to practice family law.
- **Amanda Gutierrez, '04:** is working on her Psy.D at Azusa Pacific University, and will be doing her practicum at Harbor UCLA Medical Center in the CBT/DBT track.
- **Emily Naughton, '04:** is working as a Residential Social Worker with foster teens at San Pasqual Academy. She is involved with case management, using interventions to help with family visits and teen relationships.
- **Tracy Spano, '04:** works at Adult Protective Services Inc. in San Diego, a non-profit company, doing case management for persistently mentally ill seniors, aged 55 and above.
- **Tammy Runge, '04:** is a site manager with STAR, a socialization program for children with Autism, helping children learn language and mannerisms to enhance peer interaction. She manages eight cases.



Above First-year MFT students at Casa Guadalajara

- **Aysem Karahan, '02:** is a third-year PhD student in Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota, is researching immigrant families, and plans to graduate in May 2006.
- **Karen (Banks) Child, '01:** is the current editor of *News & Views*, the monthly publication of the Orange County Chapter of MFTs. She has applied for licensure, and will work in private practice in Newport Beach.
- **Raymond Cameron:** works with victims and families experiencing family violence, treats perpetrators, and teaches Family Violence courses. He is in private practice with Novell & Novell Counseling, Inc. in Temecula.
- **Maria Elena Escobedo De Cardenas, '01:** pioneered a program with other psychotherapists, PhDs, and psychiatrists at a medical clinic in Tijuana. She participates on a treatment team, and carries a full case load.
- **Samantha Florey, '01:** works for the Children's Bureau of Southern California as a Training Specialist, traveling to Family Resource Centers and training staff on topics such as case management, emotional intelligence, and early childhood development.
- **Kirsti (Cantrell) Senac, '00:** is in private practice in La Jolla and works as a faculty psychotherapist at SDSU in the Counseling and Psychological Services, dealing mostly with alcohol and substance issues with students.
- **Kristina Brown, '99:** is completing coursework for a PhD in MFT at Syracuse University, and is a therapist in the Better Beginnings program at Catholic Charities.
- **Heidi Hojak, '96:** is a therapist at Psychiatric Centers of San Diego, a multidisciplinary team of medical and mental health professionals. She specializes in working with teens.