

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY AND MEDICAL STUDENT COLLABORATIVE TRAINING RESEARCH

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This presentation outlines the development and assessment of an innovative interdisciplinary program for facilitating positive attitudes among medical students toward utilizing the biopsychosocial approach to the practice of primary care medicine. Experience in a training program in family therapy provides third year medical students with the clinical experiences, supervision, and knowledge base to increase positive attitudes toward working with patients and their families regarding psychosocial as well as medical issues.

MUSM medical students in the third year psychiatry clerkship are assigned to a three-week/twelve hour experience in the family therapy educational clinic of MUSM. These medical students have previously received training in years one and two by the marriage and family therapy faculty in family systems concepts. They have been trained to assess families impacted by chronic illness and disability, and interviewed and assessed families during their rural medicine preceptorship. This third year experience is seen as one that builds on their previous training, but extends that training by allowing them to participate as co-therapists in family therapy.

Each medical student is assigned to marriage and family therapy cases that are either being triaged for MFT services, or are participating in MFT on an ongoing basis. The medical student is paired with a student therapist engaged in clinical practicum work in the educational clinic as part of training for their Master in Marriage and Family Therapy degree from NWSM. NWSM is one of only two medical schools providing this degree as part of the medical school offerings. The NWT students will, upon graduation, be qualified to sit for the state board examination for licensure as an NWT and then practice in this field independently. As the MSS and WT student provide co-therapy to the family, the sessions are viewed live and supervised by the MFT faculty. Supervision is facilitated via oneway mirrors and closed-circuit cameras. Following each session, the medical students participate in discussion of the case with their co-therapist and MFT faculty supervisors, as well as other MFT students and medical students. This supervision allows students to present cases, review genograms, learn first-hand about

family system dynamics, and learn about NWT treatment planning. Feedback is given o the students on their therapeutic and evaluative skills.

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