

INTEGRATING MFT AND MEDICAL STUDENT FAMILY TRAINING

Melton Strozier, Ph.D., Lee Bowen,, Ph.D. Steve Livingston, Ph.D. Mercer University
School of Medicine Macon, Georgia

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 preceptor experience. This third year experience is seen as one that builds on their previous training. It extends that training by allowing them to participate as co-therapists in family therapy. This provides them with a more in-depth understanding of family systems and clinical applications of 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 WT 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 MUSM. MUSM is one of only two medical schools providing this degree as part of the medical school offerings. The MFT students will, upon graduation, be qualified to sit for the state board examination for licensure as an WT and then practice in this field independently. As the MSS and NWT student provide co-therapy to the family, the sessions are viewed live and supervised by the NWT 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 NWT 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 MFT treatment planning. Feedback is given o the students on their therapeutic and evaluative skills.

Strozier, Melton; Bowen, Lee; and Livingston, Steve. *Integrating MFT and Medical Student Training*. Poster Session for the XIII International Family Therapy Association (IFTA) World Congress, Porto Alegre, Brazil, Nov. 14 - 17, 2001

Abstract published in: Proceedings for the IFTA World Congress