

**SUBCHAPTER 185-10  
COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD  
REGULATIONS**

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§ 185-10-4701            **Definitions**

For purposes of this Article, the following words and phrases have been defined to mean:

- (1)    **“Accredited or approved school”** means a college or the university that has met the standards as established by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, or by another accrediting or recognized approval agency, including state or Federal approving agencies.
- (2)    **“Family”** means all forms of households that consist of members with emotional bonds and mutual obligations that define themselves as families. “Family” as used here includes, but is not limited to, nuclear families (i.e., once married couples with children), single parent families, non-married couples with children, reconstituted families (remarried couples), and couples without children.
- (3)    **“Family therapy”** means the systematic intervention enabling family members to understand the behavior of individuals in relation to the ongoing operations of the family group. This approach enables family members to generate a wider range of options for coping with problems, and to learn problem solving skills.
  - (a)    **“Individual therapy”** means planned intervention to assist a client in coping more effectively with problems of living.
  - (b)    **“Marriage means”** a socially sanctioned relationship between two (2) adults. Marriage determines specific roles, involving reciprocal obligations and duties, as well as legal rights.
  - (c)    **“Marriage therapy”** means the therapeutic intervention with married couples, non-married couples, or alternative couples to resolve immediate problems and conflicts in their relationship.
  - (d)    **“Therapist”** means a person licensed in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas to practice therapy, as defined in these rules and regulations.
  - (e)    **“Therapy”** means planned intervention to help the client enlarge competencies and increase problem solving skills and coping abilities. Therapy can be used interchangeably with counseling and psychotherapy.
  - (f)    **“Psychotherapy”** means a specialized, formal interaction between an Individual, Marriage and Family Therapist or other Mental Health Professionals, and a client (an individual, couple, family, or group) in which a therapeutic relationship is established to help resolve symptoms of mental disorder, psychosocial stress, relationship problems, and enhance problem solving skills and coping abilities.

§ 185-10-4705            **Licensing**

No person who does not hold a current license shall practice or offer to professional or mental health counseling or use in connection with the person’s name, or otherwise assume, use, or advertise, any title,

initials, or description tending to convey the impression that the person is a professional counselor, mental health counselor, marriage and family therapist, or mental health counselor associate. No partnership, association, or corporation shall advertise or otherwise offer to provide or convey the impression that it is providing professional or mental health counseling unless an individual holding a current license is or will at the appropriate time be rendering professional or mental health counseling to which reference is made.

**§ 185-10-4710 Exemptions from License Requirements**

- (1) These regulations shall apply to all licensed marriage and family therapists in the CNMI except:
  - (a) Students whose activities are conducted within a course of marriage and family therapy counseling;
  - (b) Any person who is a duly recognized member of the clergy; provided that the person functions only within the person's capacity as a member of the clergy; and provided further that the person does not represent himself/herself to be a licensed mental health or professional counselor or mental health counselor associate;
- (2) Any person who is obtaining supervised clinical experience for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist, psychologist or social worker; provided that the person does not represent himself/herself to be a licensed mental health or professional counselor or associate;
- (3) Any qualified members of other professions, including but not limited to nurses, psychologists, social workers, physicians, physician assistants, or attorneys at law, from providing the services of mental health or professional counseling nature consistent with the accepted standards of their respective professions; and provided further that the person does not represent himself/herself to be a licensed marriage and family therapist; and
- (4) The provision of mental health services through the department of human services or juvenile court; provided that the person does not represent him/herself to be a licensed mental health or professional counselor or associate.

**§ 185-10-4715 Requirements for Licensure**

An applicant to practice as a licensed marriage and family therapist must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age is a U.S. citizen or a foreign national lawfully entitled to remain and work in the Commonwealth, and meets the following requirements:

- (1) Have completed a master's or doctoral program in marriage and family therapy from a program accredited by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) or completed a master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy from a regionally accredited educational institution; or earned a master's graduate degree in another mental health field (psychiatry, psychology, clinical social work, psychiatric nursing, etc.) from an accredited counseling program from a college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in counseling and completed a COAMFTE accredited post-graduate degree clinical training program in marriage and family therapy or completed a post-graduate degree clinical training program in marriage and family therapy from a regionally accredited educational institution. An applicant may substitute equivalent post-degree courses to meet the

course of study requirements. The coursework must be verified by the official graduate school transcripts, which specify number of quarter or semester hours. Applicants who have obtained the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) clinical membership status are considered to have met the educational requirements for licensure. If applying through the AAMFT clinical status, verification must be from the AAMFT directly to the department. Of the graduate credit hours required above, at least forty-five (45) credit hours shall be in the following areas:

- (a) Three (3) courses in the analysis of family systems, with one (1) course in each of the following:
  - (i) A supervised clinical practice that includes at least sixty (60) hours of approved supervision and 300 hours of direct client contact with couples, families, and individuals, at least 100 hours of which are relational therapy;
  - (ii) Normal and abnormal personality development which includes individual development across the life span and the family life cycle; and
  - (iii) Psychopathology with emphasis on standard diagnostic manuals, as well as family systems models;
- (b) Courses in couples therapy theory and techniques as follows:
  - (i) One course in diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders in family systems
  - (ii) A comprehensive survey course with substantive overview of the extant major models of family therapy; and
  - (iii) Two (2) additional courses which focus on one (1) or several marriage and family therapy models, or three (3) separate courses, each of which focuses on one (1) or several marriage and family therapy models;
- (c) Courses in couples therapy theory and techniques as follows:
  - (i) A comprehensive survey of extant, major models of couples' therapy;
  - (ii) An intensive study of at least three (3) different models; or
  - (iii) Three (3) separate courses, each of which addresses a separate couples' model;
- (d) One (1) course covering gender and ethnicity as they relate to marriage and family theory and practice, or two (2) separate courses with one (1) focusing on gender issues and the other one (1) on ethnicity;
- (e) One (1) course covering sexual issues in marriage and family therapy, including sexual normality, sexual dysfunction, and sexual orientation; and
- (f) One (1) course in ethical, legal, and professional issues in marriage and family therapy.

**§ 185-10-4720          Supervision: Practicum Experience**

Applicant must complete the supervised counseling work experience required of this section; There must be at least 400 hours of supervised practicum, inclusive of at least 150 face-to-face counseling hours. The practicum may include seventy-five (75) hours of client-centered advocacy; if not, there must be an additional seventy-five (75) hours of face-to-face counseling. Some students will complete more than the minimum supervised hours. The practicum experience shall be completed under the on-site clinical supervision of a person who is a licensed mental health counselor, licensed psychologist, licensed clinical social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed physician with a specialty in psychiatry or other licensed provider approved by the board.

**§ 185-10-4725          Supervision: Post Graduate**

Applicants must complete the following supervised, clinical or counseling work experience after the award of the master's degree, doctoral degree, or its substantial equivalent as determined by the board, of which shall:

- (1) Be a minimum of two (2) years or the equivalent of fulltime, postgraduate supervised clinical or counseling work experience in professional/mental health counseling; and
- (2) Be completed following the practicum, internship, and all graduate coursework, with the exception of the thesis; and
- (3) Be a minimum of 3,000 total hours, including at least 1,000 client contact clock hours of supervised clinical experience at a setting acceptable to the board; and
- (4) Have direct clinical contact with couples and families and must have been supervised a minimum of 200 hours including 100 individual and 100 group hours; and
- (5) The supervisee must meet with the supervisor for a minimum of four (4) hours per month and provide documentation of supervised hours; and
- (6) Have only supervised clinical contact credited for this requirement; and
- (7) Compute part-time employment on a prorated basis for the supervised work experience; and
- (8) Have the background, training, and experience that is appropriate to the functions performed; and
- (9) The documented hours of client service, or post-graduate experience, must be under the on-site supervision of a licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed psychologist, licensed psychiatrist or licensed social worker within the U.S or other qualified licensed provider approved by the Health Care Professions Licensing Board of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. Licensed and qualified supervisors providing telepsychology clinical supervision must be board approved and licensed in the CNMI.
- (10) At the discretion of the Board, may approve tele-supervision.
- (11) Any licensed Marriage and Family Therapist providing tele-supervision from outside the CNMI

must be licensed by the Board and, if providing services for a fee, must have a CNMI business license to conduct business in the CNMI.

**§ 185-10-4730          Written Exam**

The applicant must pass the Marital and Family Therapy National Examination (MFTNE) sponsored by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) or the California LMFT Exam sponsored by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS). To be considered for licensure the applicant must achieve at least the minimum passing score set by the respective exam developer.

**§ 185-10-4735          Licensure by Endorsement**

- (1) The Board may grant a license to a person to practice professional or mental health counseling without examination if:
  - (a) The person holds a valid, active license to practice as a professional or mental health counselor or mental health counselor associate in another jurisdiction; and
  - (b) The person substantially complies with the requirements for licensure in section 185-10-4715; and
  - (c) The requirements in the jurisdiction of licensure are at least as stringent as those under these regulations.
- (2) The Board may deny a license by endorsement to a person to practice as a professional or mental health counselor or mental health counselor associate, if the person has been the subject of an adverse action in which his/her license was suspended, revoked, placed on probation, conditioned, or renewal denied.

**§ 185-10-4740          Application for a licensure**

- (1) An application for a license to practice as a marriage and family therapist shall be made on a form to be provided by the Board accompanied with the following information and documentations as are necessary to establish that the applicant possesses the qualifications as required in these regulations.
- (2) Applicant must also provide:
  - (a) The applicant's full name and all aliases or other names ever used, current address, date and place of birth, and Social Security number; and
  - (b) Applicant's 2x2 photograph taken within six (6) months from date of application; and
  - (c) The appropriate fees, including the application fee which shall not be refunded; and
  - (d) Originals of all documents and credentials, or notarized or certified copies acceptable to the Board of such documents and credentials, including but not limited to:

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- (i) Diploma or certificate showing successful completion of the appropriate degree in professional counseling or mental health counseling from the required educational school or program;
  - (ii) Documents showing proof that applicant has satisfactorily completed all the appropriate required training under § 185-10-4715;
  - (iii) Documents showing proof that applicant has taken and passed the appropriate required examination; or
  - (iv) Documents showing proof that applicant is licensed to practice as a marriage and family therapist in another jurisdiction and meets the licensing requirements in § 185-10-4715, when applicable; and
- (e) A detailed educational history, including places, institutions, dates, and program descriptions of all his or her education beginning with secondary schooling and including all college, pre-professional, professional, and professional postgraduate training;
  - (f) A list of all jurisdictions, U.S. or foreign, in which the applicant is licensed or has ever applied for a license to practice as a marriage and family therapist
  - (g) A list of all jurisdictions, U.S. or foreign, in which the applicant has been denied licensure or voluntarily surrendered a license to practice as marriage and family therapist;
  - (h) A list of all jurisdictions, U.S. or foreign, of all sanctions, judgments, awards, settlements, or convictions against the applicant that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action under the Act or these regulations.
- (3) All documents submitted in a foreign language shall be accompanied by a certified and accurate translation in English.

### **§ 185-10-4745 Continuing Education (CE)**

- (1) For initial licensure, Marriage and Family Therapists are required to take HIV/AIDS seven (7) CE hours and at every renewal, he/she is required to take Law and Ethics and/or cultural competency for a total of six (6) CE hours.
- (2) Each Marriage and Family Therapist licensed to practice in the CNMI is required to complete forty (40) CE hours or four (4) CEU during the twenty-four (24) months prior to the expiration of his or her license as a prerequisite to the renewal of his or her biennial license.
- (3) One (1) hour of credit will be allowed for each clock or contact hour of CE participation. One (1) CEU equals to 10 clock, credit, or contact CE hours. One (1) academic semester hour equals to fifteen (15) CE credit or contact hours. One (1) academic quarter hour equals to ten (10) CE credit or contact hours.
- (4) Approved continuing education activities include, but are not limited to the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), American Mental Health Counselors Association, the American Association of State Counseling Boards, American Psychological Association, the

Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association, and the National Board for Certified Counselors.

- (a) A licensed Marriage and Family Therapist shall take CE/CEU including, but not limited from the following content areas:
  - (i) Counseling Theory/Practice and the Helping Relationship;
  - (ii) Human Growth and Development;
  - (iii) Social and Cultural Foundations;
  - (iv) Group Dynamics, Processing and Counseling;
  - (v) Career Development and Counseling;
  - (vi) Research and Program Evaluation;
  - (vii) Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issues;
  - (viii) Ethics; and
  - (ix) Multiple Sessions/Conferences.
- (5) If a licensee fails to meet the CE requirements for renewal of license because of illness, military service, or other extenuating circumstances, the Board, upon appropriate written explanation, may grant an extension of time to complete same, on an individual basis.
- (6) It shall be the responsibility of the licensee to obtain documentation, satisfactory to the Board, from the organization or institution of his or her participation in the continuing education, and the number of credits earned.
- (7) Licensure renewal shall be denied to any licensee who fails to provide satisfactory evidence of completion of CE requirements or who falsely certifies attendance at or completion of the CE as required herein.

**§ 185-10-4750      Renewal**

- (1) All licenses, except temporary or limited licenses issued by the Board, expire every two (2) years following issuance or renewal and become invalid after that date.
- (2) Each licensee shall be responsible for submitting a completed renewal application at least sixty (60) days before the expiration date. The Board shall send, by mail or email, a notice to every person licensed hereunder giving the date of expiration, the fee, and any additional requirement for the renewal thereof.
- (3) All licensees must submit satisfactory evidence of completion of CE/CEU requirements, as required under section 185-10-4745.



- (4) A late fee of \$25.00 will be charged every 1st of the month after the expiration date.
- (5) Licenses which have expired for failure to renew on or before the date required may be reinstated within one (1) year of the expiration date upon payment of the renewal and late fees for each calendar month until the renewal fee is paid. Each licensee whose license has expired and lapsed for more than one (1) year by failure to renew must file a new application, meet current requirements for licensure, and receive Board approval.
- (6) A licensee whose license has been revoked, suspended, or placed on probation by the licensing authority of another U.S. or foreign jurisdiction, or who has voluntarily or involuntarily surrendered his or her license in consideration of the dismissal or discontinuance of pending or threatened administrative or criminal charges, following the expiration date of his or her license, may be deemed ineligible for renewal of his or her license to practice as a marriage and family therapist in the CNMI. This will not, however, prevent the Board from considering a new application.

**§ 185-10-4755            Grounds for imposition of disciplinary sanctions.**

- (1) After a hearing, the board may impose a disciplinary sanction under § 185-10-1210 on a person licensed under this chapter when the board finds that the person (1) secured a license through deceit, fraud, or intentional misrepresentation; (2) engaged in deceit, fraud, or intentional misrepresentation in the course of providing professional services or engaging in professional activities; (3) advertised professional services in a false or misleading manner; (4) has been convicted of a felony or of another crime that affects the person's ability to practice competently and safely; (5) failed to comply with a provision of this chapter or a regulation adopted under this chapter, or an order of the board; (6) continued to practice after becoming unfit due to (A) professional incompetence; (B) addiction or severe dependency on alcohol or another drug that impairs the person's ability to practice safely; (7) engaged in unethical conduct in connection with the delivery of professional services to clients; (8) engaged in sexual misconduct with a client during the course of therapy, either within or outside the treatment setting, or within two years after therapy or counseling with the client has terminated; in this paragraph, "sexual misconduct" includes sexual contact, as defined in regulations adopted under this chapter, or attempted sexual contact, regardless of the client's or former client's consent or lack of consent.

**§ 185-10-4760            License required if designation used.**

A person who is not licensed under this chapter or whose license is suspended or revoked, or whose license has lapsed, who knowingly uses in connection with the person's name the words or letters "L.M.F.T.," "L.M.F.C.," "Licensed Marital and Family Therapist," "Licensed Marriage and Family Counselor," or other letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is licensed as a marital and family therapist by this state or who in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by implication, knowingly holds out as being licensed by the state as a marital and family therapist in this state is guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

**§ 185-10-4765            Limitation of practice.**

Notwithstanding that a specific act is within the definition of the "practice of marital and family therapy," a person licensed under this chapter may not perform the act if the person lacks the appropriate education, training, and experience related to the act.

§ 185-10-4770 [Reserved]

§ 185-10-4775 Code of Ethics

The Board recognizes the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy's (AAMFT) Code of Ethics and licensed counselors are responsible for ensuring that their behavior adheres to the standards identified in the Code of Ethics.

§ 185-10-4780 Privileged Communication.

Breach of a privileged communication, except as provided for in this Article is considered unprofessional conduct and grounds for revocation or suspension of a license.

§ 185-10-4785 Disciplinary Action

The Board shall have the power to impose administrative penalties and/or reprimands; revoke or suspend; refuse to issue, restore or renew, the license of any person who is found guilty of one or more of the violations enumerated in § 2224 of P. L. 15-105 and sections 185-10-901 through 185-10-1301.