Standards for Advertising

1. Introduction

As one of the core mental health professions, marriage and family therapy holds an important interest for the public. Therefore, it is imperative that potential consumers receive appropriate information about the qualified practitioners and services that are available in their respective locations.

In March 2012, pursuant to Article 2, Section 2.01.3 of the Association's Bylaws, the Board of Directors of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) approved a revised AAMFT Code of Ethics to become effective on July 1, 2012. Principle VIII of the Code addresses advertising; an excerpt of Principle VIII has been included in Appendix A of this document. Principle VIII of the Code specifically states that:

"Marriage and family therapists engage in appropriate informational activities, including those that enable the public, referral sources, or others to choose professional services on an informed basis."

In addition to that general policy, the Association hereby promulgates these Standards for Advertising Using AAMFT Designations (hereafter Standards) to ensure appropriate advertising. These Standards are not ethical principles per se nor are they an addition to the Code. These Standards are a set of prescribed guidelines designed to protect the Association’s name and interests, plus ensure the authorized use of AAMFT designations by individuals. As new technologies become available, it is important to remember that regardless of the advertising platform used, these Standards are applicable.

If the Executive Director receives evidence of alleged violations of these Standards, the member and/or non-member will be contacted to cease and desist publication of the material in question. Egregious or persistent violations of these Standards by AAMFT members may be forwarded to the AAMFT Ethics Committee as a potential violation of Principle VIII of the Code. Serious or continuous violations by non-members may be forwarded to AAMFT’s Legal Counsel for appropriate action.

2. Standards for Advertising Using AAMFT Designations

2.1 State Licensing Board:
AAMFT members are also reminded that their state licensing board may have guidelines that govern advertising regulations. AAMFT members may obtain a list of state licensing board addresses and phone numbers through AAMFT’s web site at http://www.aamft.org/iMIS15/Content/Directories/MFT_Licensing_Boards.aspx.

2.2 Membership Termination:
Upon membership termination, former AAMFT Clinical Fellows and Members must cease and desist using the AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Member Logos in all advertisements, brochures and marketing materials.

2.3 Use of Corporate Logo:
AAMFT Members shall not use the AAMFT Corporate Logo.

2.4 Clinical Fellows, Members and Approved Supervisors:
The AAMFT designations of Clinical Fellow, Member and Approved Supervisor may be used in public information or advertising materials only by persons holding such designations. Persons holding such designations may, for example, advertise in the following manner:
• John Doe, Ph.D., a Clinical Fellow of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Alternately, the advertisement could read, John Doe, Ph.D., AAMFT Clinical Fellow.

• Jane Doe, Ph.D., a Member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Alternately, the advertisement could read, Jane Doe, Ph.D., AAMFT Member.

• John Doe, Ph.D., an Approved Supervisor of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Alternately, the advertisement could read, John Doe, Ph.D., AAMFT Approved Supervisor.

2.5 Special Designations:
Special designations awarded to AAMFT members, including but not limited to Emeritus status, may be used in public information or advertising materials only by persons holding such designations. Persons holding such designations may, for example, advertise in the following manner:

• Jane Doe, Ph.D., a Clinical Fellow Emeritus of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Alternately, the advertisement could read, Jane Doe, Ph.D., AAMFT Clinical Fellow Emeritus.

2.6 Multiple Designations:
AAMFT members who hold more than one designation may use all designations in public information or advertising materials in accordance with these Standards.

2.7 Designation is Not Advanced Clinical Status:
Marriage and family therapists who hold the AAMFT Approved Supervisor Designation or Special Designations may not represent those designations as an advanced clinical status.

2.8 Clinical Fellow Advertisements:
Advertisements of AAMFT Clinical Fellows may include the following: the AAMFT Clinical Fellow Logo, the Clinical Fellow's name, degree, license or certificate held when required by applicable law, name of business, address, and telephone number. If a business is listed, it must follow, not precede the Clinical Fellow's name. Such listings may not include AAMFT offices held by the Clinical Fellow. When listing specializations, the Clinical Fellow shall not imply that the specialization has been credentialed by AAMFT (e.g. by listing the specialization under the AAMFT name, Clinical Fellow Logo, and/or the abbreviated initials AAMFT). The Clinical Fellow Logo shall be used in accordance with Section 3 of these Standards.

2.9 Member Advertisements:
Advertisements of AAMFT Members may include the following: the AAMFT Member Logo, the Member’s name, degree, license or certificate held when required by applicable law, name of business, address, and telephone number. If a business is listed, it must follow, not precede the Member’s name. Such listings may not include AAMFT offices held by the Member. When listing specializations, the Member shall not imply that the specialization has been credentialed by AAMFT (e.g. by listing the specialization under the AAMFT name, Member Logo, and/or the abbreviated initials AAMFT). The Member Logo shall be used in accordance with Section 3 of these Standards.

2.10 Membership Categories Prohibited from Advertising Membership Status:
Pre-Clinical Fellows, Associate Members, Student Members and Affiliate Members may not use their AAMFT membership status in marketing materials. Professional resumes are not considered marketing materials. As such, persons holding such membership categories may list their AAMFT membership in a professional affiliation/organization section of a resume so long as they avoid misleading statements and clearly list their appropriate membership category according to the following examples:

• American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (Pre-Clinical Fellow). Alternately, the listing could read, AAMFT - Pre-Clinical Fellow.
• American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (Associate Member). Alternately, the listing could read, AAMFT - Associate Member.

• American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (Student Member). Alternately, the listing could read, AAMFT - Student Member.

• American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (Affiliate Member). Alternately, the listing could read, AAMFT - Affiliate Member.

2.11 Applicants for Membership:
Persons applying for AAMFT membership may not list their application status on any resume or advertisement.

2.12 Use of AAMFT Initials:
Marriage and family therapists may not use the initials AAMFT following their name in the manner of an academic degree or credential.

2.13 AAMFT Members Shall Not Imply that they Represent AAMFT:
Marriage and family therapists may not use the AAMFT name, corporate logo, the abbreviated initials AAMFT, or make any other such representation which would imply that they speak for or represent the Association. The Association is the sole owner of its name, corporate logo, and the abbreviated initials, AAMFT.

2.14 Use of Membership Status:
Marriage and family therapists use their membership in AAMFT only in connection with their clinical and professional activities.

3. Guidelines for Use of the AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Member Logos

3.1 Logo Licensing Agreement:
AAMFT owns the Clinical Fellow Logo and the Member Logo. Clinical Fellows and Members in good standing are hereby granted a limited, revocable, non-exclusive license to use either the Clinical Fellow Logo or the Member Logo, respectively. By purchasing either the Clinical Fellow Logo or the Member Logo, Clinical Fellows and Members agree to use the Logos only in a manner consistent with these Standards. The Clinical Fellow Logo and the Member Logo may be purchased at www.aamft.org/store or by calling (703) 838-9808.

3.2 Non-Exclusive Right to Use Logo:
AAMFT Clinical Fellows and Members may not use the Clinical Fellow Logo or Member Logo in a way that would prohibit, restrict, or limit another member’s same use of the logo.

3.3 Distinctness from Other Logos:
The Clinical Fellow Logo or Member Logo may be used on the same page as other logos, but must not be incorporated with a member’s practice logo or other affiliation logos (e.g., other association memberships, chamber of commerce, etc.).

3.4 Logo Positioning:
The Clinical Fellow Logo or Member Logo must be positioned on marketing materials so that it is clearly associated with the member as an individual and NOT with the member’s practice partners, associates, interns, or supervisors. It must be extremely clear who is a Clinical Fellow or Member in your practice and who is not.
3.5 Size of Logo:
On signs, banners, and large ads designed to be viewed from a distance, the Clinical Fellow Logo or Member Logo may expand in size as necessary to be legible, should be placed next to the Clinical Fellow or Member’s name, and should not exceed twice the height of the Clinical Fellow or Member’s name. The logo should never be placed next to the practice name.

3.6 Logo Color:
The logo must be used in the official logo colors established by AAMFT

3.7 Trimming and Logo Trademark:
The AAMFT Clinical Fellow Logo or Member Logo must be used in its entirety. The symbol that sits to the bottom right of the logos must be utilized at all times and may not be trimmed, as the logos are official trademarks of AAMFT.

3.8 Resale products:
Neither the Clinical Fellow Logo nor the Member Logo may be blown up onto posters, t-shirts or other resale products without the express written permission of the AAMFT.

3.9 Letterhead:
The AAMFT Clinical Fellow Logo or Member Logo may be utilized on a member’s letterhead, but cannot be incorporated into the masthead.

4. Online Advertising Guidelines

4.1 Permitted Use by AAMFT Clinical Fellows, Members and Approved Supervisors:
The AAMFT designations of AAMFT Clinical Fellow, Member and Approved Supervisor may be used in online platforms (e.g. websites, social networking sites, etc.) in accordance with these Standards.

4.2 Permitted Use by other Membership Categories:
Pre-Clinical Fellows, Associate Members, Student Members and Affiliate Members may list their professional affiliation with AAMFT in a biographical or resume section of online platforms (e.g. websites, social networking sites, etc.), consistent with Section 2.10 in these Standards, so long as they are not listing their professional affiliation with AAMFT in a manner that indicates an advanced clinical status.

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Ethical Consultations
All members of AAMFT are eligible for ethical consultations. The next time you are faced with an ethical dilemma, consult with AAMFT’s Staff Attorney BEFORE YOU ACT.

Email: ethics@aamft.org
Phone: 703-838-9808

Violations of these Standards should be submitted in writing to the attention of:
AAMFT Ethics Committee
112 South Alfred Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-838-9808
E-mail: ethics@aamft.org
Appendix A—Excerpt of Principle VIII from AAMFT Code of Ethics (effective July 1, 2012)

Principle VIII
Advertising
Marriage and family therapists engage in appropriate informational activities, including those that enable the public, referral sources, or others to choose professional services on an informed basis.

8.1 Accurate Professional Representation. Marriage and family therapists accurately represent their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice of marriage and family therapy.

8.2 Promotional Materials. Marriage and family therapists ensure that advertisements and publications in any media (such as directories, announcements, business cards, newspapers, radio, television, Internet, and facsimiles) convey information that is necessary for the public to make an appropriate selection of professional services and consistent with applicable law.

8.3 Professional Affiliations. Marriage and family therapists do not use names that could mislead the public concerning the identity, responsibility, source, and status of those practicing under that name, and do not hold themselves out as being partners or associates of a firm if they are not.

8.4 Professional Identification. Marriage and family therapists do not use any professional identification (such as a business card, office sign, letterhead, Internet, or telephone or association directory listing) if it includes a statement or claim that is false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive.

8.5 Educational Credentials. In representing their educational qualifications, marriage and family therapists list and claim as evidence only those earned degrees: (a) from institutions accredited by regional accreditation sources; (b) from institutions recognized by states or provinces that license or certify marriage and family therapists; or (c) from equivalent foreign institutions.

8.6 Correction of Misinformation. Marriage and family therapists correct, wherever possible, false, misleading, or inaccurate information and representations made by others concerning the therapist’s qualifications, services, or products.

8.7 Employee or Supervisee Qualifications. Marriage and family therapists make certain that the qualifications of their employees or supervisees are represented in a manner that is not false, misleading, or deceptive.

8.8 Specialization. Marriage and family therapists do not represent themselves as providing specialized services unless they have the appropriate education, training, or supervised experience.