NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS:

Couple & Family Therapy Program wins President’s Diversity Impact Award for demonstrating a commitment to social justice.

Christi McGeorge, Tom Carlson, Monica Rock, and Tegan Henke publish research in two of the leading journals of the CFT field.

Four CFT students graduate this year.

Emily Coler Hanson selected for Child Advocacy training.

May is Mental Health Month.

CFT Program Wins Diversity Impact Award

The NDSU Couple & Family Therapy program was honored with the President’s 2009 NDSU Diversity Impact Award. The program was recognized at the Tapestry of Diverse Talents ceremony on May 8th.

The faculty of the CFT program received this award based on their ongoing commitment to diversity and social justice. In particular, the program was recognized for its work with the Latino and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender (LGBT) communities. The program and faculty were also recognized for their commitment to focusing its curriculum on feminist and social justice issues and training therapists to address issues of inequality.

The CFT program received a plaque, as well as the opportunity to designate a charity to receive a cash reward of $500, which was given to the new LGBT scholarship at NDSU.

Family Therapy Center - No Wait, Low Fee

The NDSU Family Therapy Center (FTC) is dedicated to providing quality, affordable, and responsive therapy services to the community. The flexibility of the fees, hours of operation, and scheduling at the FTC allows therapists and staff to better assist those in need of therapeutic treatment.

The sliding fee scale, starting at only $5 per session, is based on household income and the ability to pay. Currently, there is no waiting list. New clients can usually be scheduled within a week of their initial call to the Family Therapy Center.

In addition, the FTC is open extended hours to accommodate our clients’ schedules. Appointments can be scheduled from 8:00 am—8:00 pm Monday through Friday.

To refer an individual, couple, or family to the Family Therapy Center, please call (701) 231-8534 and speak to the clinic coordinator.

The clinic coordinator is also available to visit agencies/organizations or to present at staff meetings to inform our community’s service providers about the FTC. To schedule a visit, please call the Family Therapy Center and ask to speak to the clinic coordinator.

For more information, you can also visit our website at www.ndsu.edu/cdfs/family_therapy_center

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Student Profile
- Graduates
- Training
- Student Profile
- Mental Health Month
- Flood Recovery
- Publications
**Student Profile: Karisa Meyhuber**

Currently, Karisa is finishing up her second year in the Couple and Family Therapy program. This year, she began her internship at Drake Counseling Services.

**What do you like best about being a therapist?**

I love working with a wide variety of individuals, couples, and families. The best feeling I get as a therapist is knowing I have made a difference in someone’s life. What I love the most about being a therapist is getting to work with many great people and watching them progress in their lives through our work together.

**What do you find to be most challenging?**

I find it challenging when clients do not accept the progress they have made or do not accept compliments. It is difficult when clients expect to see an abrupt change as it is hard for them to realize that small steps are completely acceptable in order to make a change.

**What are your hopes and plans for when you leave the CFT program?**

When I graduate from the CFT program, I would like to take classes in addiction work in order to pursue my license in addiction counseling. I would like to have a career as a family therapist while taking the classes I need to become a LAC. Eventually, I would like to work at a treatment facility where I am able to work with families who live with a family member who is addicted to alcohol and/or other illicit drugs.

**Why did you decide to become a therapist?**

For my career, I have always wanted to "help people." I have a deep passion to help people who are struggling in order to assist in making their lives more manageable. I also knew I wanted to become a therapist when I completed my field experience credits at the Family Therapy Center as an undergraduate. When I was the field experience student, I developed a desire for the program and knew I wanted to be a therapist in the future.

**As you make your way through the CFT program, what inspirations do/have you had?**

My journey through the CFT program has been very time consuming and demanding. However, it is an excellent program, and I know I am receiving some of the best education and training in this particular field. My life has changed in many ways through my journey in the CFT program, and I have learned a lot about myself as an individual and as a therapist. I am extremely devoted to my education, and I know all of the hard work will only be a benefit in the future.

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**Four CFT Students Graduate**

During the 2008-2009 school year, four Couple and Family Therapy Students received their Master’s degree in the program.

- **Katie Dahlstrom** graduated in December of 2008. Currently, she is working at The Village Family Service Center in Moorhead, conducting in-home therapy.

- **Monica Rock** graduated in December of 2008 and is an in-home therapist for Nystrom and Associates.

- **Dena Wyum** graduated last December, and she is currently teaching Women’s Studies courses at NDSU and plans to teach courses in the Child Development and Family Science Department next fall.

- **Amy Anderson** graduated this May. Amy is working at the Hazelden Treatment Center in Center City, Minnesota.

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**Emily Coler Hanson Accepted for Training**

Couple and Family Therapy student Emily Coler Hanson was accepted to participate in the Young Advocate Leadership Training program that was held in Clinton, Tennessee at the Children’s Defense Fund Haley Farm from March 20-22.

The program, sponsored by the Children’s Defense Fund, was titled “Our Children. Our Hope. Our Future—Today. Tomorrow. Together.” At this training program, Emily was able to develop knowledge and skills in child advocacy, and learn of models and strategies that can be implemented to help children and strengthen families. This program focused on ensuring that health care for pregnant women and children can be provided by the end of 2009.

Coler Hanson felt that this program was a good learning experience and a means to get young people together to work out issues that our country faces and bring new skills back to their own communities.

Coler Hanson feels that this was an excellent opportunity to hear good speakers and amazing people from across the country, and learn ways to interact with people in her community to promote the health care issue and engage them in the project.
May is Mental Health Month

May is Mental Health Month, and the NDSU Family Therapy Center is honoring this month by highlighting two areas that can affect mental health in relationships: stress and relationship equality. Maintaining healthy relationships is an important step in achieving good mental health.

To promote healthy ways to cope with stress in relationships, and steps to take to obtain equality in a relationship, The Family Therapy Center has provided handouts to the NDSU community that provided students with tips on how to work on these two issues in their relationships.

Stress in relationships can lead to more arguments, negative interactions, poor communication, and irritation with the other person. This relational stress can lead to even more individual stress and become a vicious circle of stressors if it is not mitigated.

Relationship equality can be important for mental health and relationships because of the negative feelings and interactions that may come up in unequal relationships. Equality in relationships is important for both people to feel that they are equally part of the relationship.

For more information about relational stress and equality, the handouts can be viewed on our website at www.ndsu.edu/cdfs/family_therapy_center.

Flood Fight & Recovery

During the midst of the flood, CFT students and faculty where pitching in with the rest of the community to build sandbags and protect our city, and our second-year students got themselves involved at their internship sites to help out. Now that the waters have gone down, the Family Therapy Center is still dedicated to helping in the flood recovery process. Through the month of June, the Family Therapy Center will offer 2 free therapy sessions for flood-related needs. Further sessions will be priced based on income and ability to pay. Call (701) 231-8534 for more information.

Student Profile: Amanda Bulat

Amanda Bulat is one of the first-year students in the Couple and Family Therapy Program at NDSU.

What do you like best about being a therapist?

What I like most about being a therapist is being there for clients who are experiencing difficult circumstances. I have always wanted a career that I feel like I am really helping people, and being a source of support and encouragement for individuals, couples, and families is important to me and has been extremely rewarding.

What are your hopes and plans for when you leave the CFT program?

When I leave the CFT program, I hope to work at an agency that helps children and adolescents. These are age groups I have always loved working with because they are going through such a challenging, exciting time.

Why did you decide to become a therapist?

I completed my undergraduate internship at the Family Therapy Center and from that experience I learned that being a therapist is a career that I was meant to do. I feel that working as a therapist is very rewarding and challenging and something I will love to do for the rest of my life.

As you make your way through the CFT program, what inspirations do/have you had?

It is inspiring to see clients make positive changes. To watch a client grow and realize how much potential they have and what they can achieve is really inspiring to me and is very exciting to be a part of.

Amanda Bulat

What do you like best about being a therapist?

Amanda Bulat is one of the first-year students in the Couple and Family Therapy Program at NDSU.
Faculty & Alumni Publish their Research

Three articles written by students and faculty in the Couple and Family Therapy program have been accepted for publication in two journals.

Faculty members Christi McGeorge and Tom Carlson, along with recent graduate Monica Rock, will have their article entitled “Does Affirmative Training Matter?: Assessing CFT Students’ Beliefs about Sexual Orientation and their Level of Affirmative Training” published in the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy (JMFT).

McGeorge and Carlson will have another article in the JMFT journal entitled Deconstructing Heterosexism: Becoming an LGB affirmative heterosexual couple and family therapist.”

Former CFT student Tegan Henke also worked with Carlson and McGeorge on an article, “Homophobia and clinical competency: An exploration of couple and family therapists’ beliefs”, which will be published in the Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy.