



*Photos By Helen Montano*



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# WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER

HELPING CLIENTS STICK TO NEW  
YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

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# TAMFT PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CARLOS PEREZ, PH.D., LPC, LMFT-S  
+ THIS ISSUE'S GUEST EDITOR!

To all TAMFT members:



Yes, it's that time again. I know, it's a little overhyped, maybe even over-commercialized. It's flooded my TikTok feed (I know, I know... I'm on TikTok). Influencers are everywhere, telling us how to make realistic resolutions and how to choose the "right" ones - what exactly are the wrong ones?

Of course, we see the classics: losing weight, starting a new diet, quitting soda. Lately, I've even seen people resolve to stop being angry, to be more polite, or to think more positively about others. So many of us make New Year's resolutions, and just as many of us roll our eyes at them.

I don't actually think there's anything wrong with New Year's resolutions, even if the whole idea feels a little cheesy. I've always liked the notion of newness: a fresh start, turning the page, leaving last year behind. I can't tell you how many people I've talked with who've said things like, "Forget 2025," or "That was the worst year of my life, I just need the new year to come." There's something about the turning of a calendar year that naturally invites a shift in mindset.

That mindset often includes letting go of the past, or at least loosening our grip on the difficult things the year carried. It's hopeful. It imagines something better, something different, something worth looking forward to. And that hope turns inward, where we begin wanting better things for ourselves: healthier habits, more balance, more connection, more peace...fill in the blank.

If you think about it, New Year's resolutions actually sound a lot like Solution-Focused Brief Therapy.

With a new year, we aren't dwelling on problems; we're orienting toward solutions. We're looking for change, forward movement, and positive momentum. Even the push to make "achievable" resolutions echoes familiar language: small steps, meaningful change. We focus on what we want, not on what's wrong. We take stock of our resources. We imagine what life might look like if things were just a little better. It's hard not to hear the Miracle Question in all of this.

Seen through that lens, resolutions start to feel much less cheesy to me.

CONTINUED...



I've always believed that therapists should practice what they preach—live what we invite others to do. That's part of what makes a good therapist. From that perspective, making New Year's resolutions fits squarely within our professional identity. We believe in people's capacity for change. We help them imagine better futures. We walk alongside them as they take steps, sometimes small, sometimes messy, but those steps are toward those goals. In many ways, these so-called "cheesy" resolutions are exactly what we help our clients do every day. So maybe this is something worth embracing. As therapists, as people who genuinely care about others, and as a profession grounded in hope and possibility, the new year gives us a natural moment to lean into what we already do well. As we step into a new year, let's do so with our training in mind, our compassion at the forefront, and our practiced ability to see the good and potential in others and ourselves.

Cheers,

Carlos Perez, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT-S

*President, 2025 TAMFT Board of Directors*

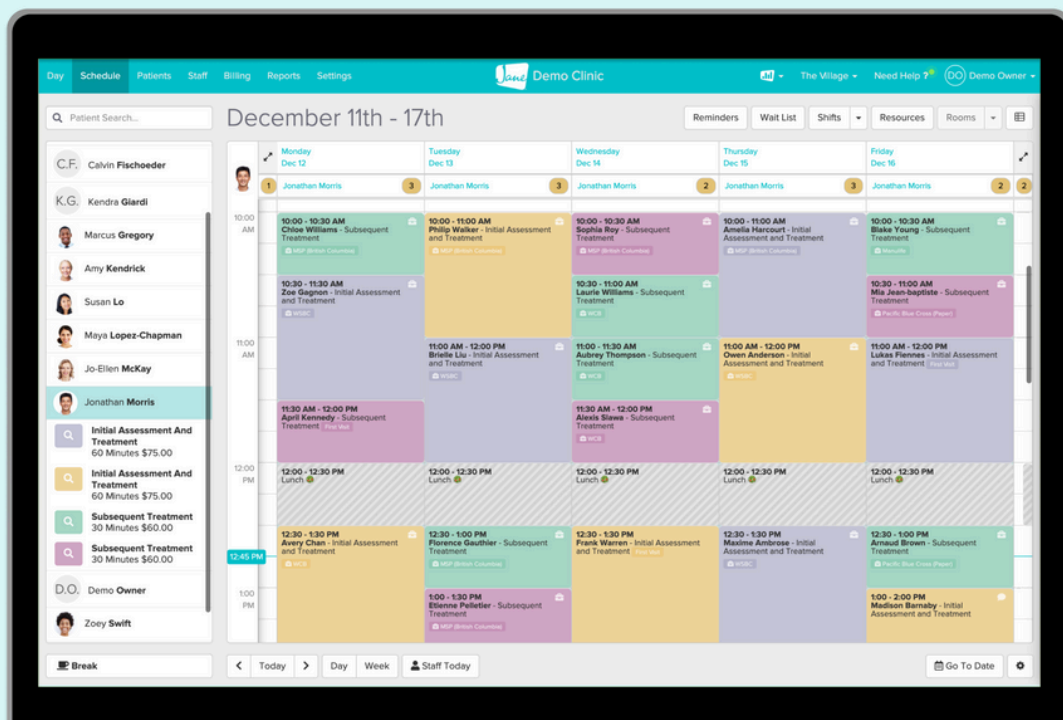
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# STARTING THE YEAR WITH INTENTION: NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS THROUGH A BOWEN FAMILY SYSTEMS LENS

Federico Mendez, LMFT, Ph.D. Candidate

As therapists, we often see clients enter the new year with a sense of renewal. A hope that “this year will be different.” Whether they want to establish healthier routines, create boundaries, or strengthen relationships, resolutions become a symbolic anchor for personal growth. Yet through the lens of Bowen Family Systems Theory, resolutions are far more than individual commitments. They reflect a person’s ongoing effort to clarify the Self within the context of their larger emotional systems.

## WHAT MAKES RESOLUTIONS MATTER FROM A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

Bowen Theory teaches that individuals are not separate from their families or social environments. Our behaviors, beliefs, and anxieties are shaped in part by the systems we belong to. When a person sets a resolution, they’re trying to shift the position of their emotional field. This is why resolutions can feel both exciting and uncomfortable: growth always disrupts the status quo.

Differentiation of self becomes central here. When a person clarifies an “I-Position,” they ground their resolution in principle rather than an anxious impulse to fix, please, or react to others. The clearer the position, the greater the likelihood of meaningful, sustained follow-through.

## WHAT MAKES RESOLUTIONS FAIL

As therapists, we know resolutions rarely fail because someone is “lazy” or “unmotivated.” They fail because systems resist change.

In many families, patterns of functioning are deeply ingrained. If a client has long been the emotional caretaker, the peacemaker, the over-functioner, or the cutoff, then any attempt to shift their position disrupts the system's homeostasis. The system pushes back, not out of malice, but out of predictability.

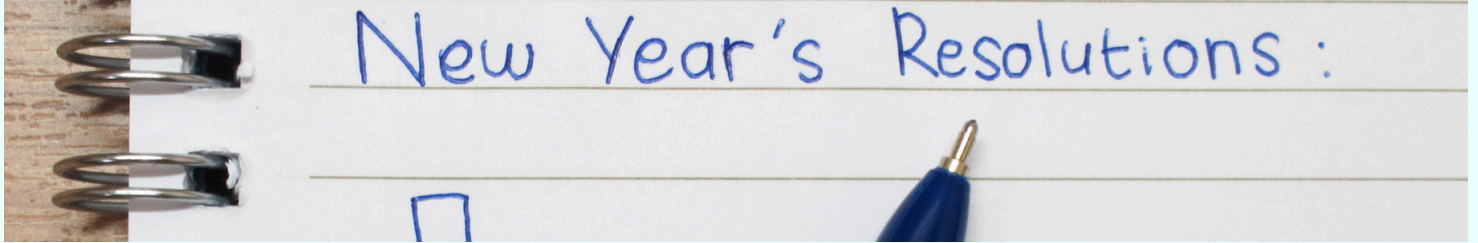
For example, a client may resolve to set healthier boundaries. Yet when they begin saying “no,” they may receive criticism, guilt-inducing comments, or passive resistance from significant others. The system reacts because a familiar pattern is being altered.

Recognizing these emotional pressures helps clients understand that the discomfort surrounding change is systemic, not a personal failure.

**CONTINUED...**

## HOW TO HELP CLIENTS KEEP RESOLUTIONS (AND HELP OURSELVES). CLARIFY THE “SELF” BEHIND THE RESOLUTION.

Invite clients to articulate not just what they want to change, but also what is driving them to implement that change. When the resolution aligns with their core values rather than others' expectations, it becomes an expression of a defined Self.



1. Map relational patterns that may influence success.
2. Explore how extended family, partners, work systems, or cultural expectations might reinforce old behaviors. A small family diagram reflection can help clients anticipate where resistance will emerge.
3. Normalize systemic anxiety.
4. Any shift in functioning increases free-flowing anxiety within a family unit or system. Coach clients to view emotional reactivity from others as information, not a signal to conform to the status quo.
5. Encourage small, principle-driven steps.
6. Rather than drastic overhauls, coach clients toward steady, intentional behaviors. Sustainable change grows out of thoughtful self-regulation, not reactivity.
7. Invite reflective observation.
8. Bowen emphasized observing oneself in the system. Invite clients into curiosity, such as:
  - “How does the system react when I move differently?”
  - “What emotional processes get activated as I try this change?”
  - "Who in the system reacts most strongly to my shift, and how do I respond?"
  - This transforms the resolution into a curious process rather than a cause-and-effect relationship.
  - A Resolution for the New Year.
  - Ultimately, resolutions grounded in principles invite greater clarity, emotional maturity, and thoughtful engagement with the systems we live in. They remind us that change is relational, not isolated.
  - As MFTs, we can support clients in approaching resolutions not as quick fixes but as opportunities to increase self-differentiation, regulate free-flowing anxiety, and shift long-standing multigenerational patterns with steady, meaningful conviction.
  - Here's to a year of grounded change, for our clients and for ourselves.

**CONTINUED...**





In the past two decades, I have re-invented myself as a system's clinician ten times over. I love the complexity of family systems, understanding power in relationships, working with different alliances, and how one can disrupt emotional systems and restructure relationships to create positive change. You can apply family systems to anything. And I must admit, once you see it work, it's hard to stop and see the world in any other way.

In addition to understanding and deconstructing complex systems, one of my favorite things about family systems is the true value and appreciation for human connection and relationships. If you think about it, every important decision we make in our lives is somehow linked to a relationship. I owe so much of my career success to my upbringing and my education. We are the sum of our experiences, the choices we make, and who we choose to influence us.



**Federico Mendez**

LMFT, Ph.D. Candidate

# CHECK OUT TAMFT MERCHANDISE



## T-SHIRTS, TANKS, MUGS & MORE!



# JOIN TAMFT TODAY!

By joining TAMFT, you show your commitment to advancing marriage and family therapy in Texas

### Other member benefits include:

- Involvement in legislation that directly impacts your career
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- Discounts on conferences, online courses, tuition/services and more
- Networking with like-minded individuals



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# COMMITTEE UPDATES

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

**Members:** Anna Thomison, co-Chair; Hannah McKinnies co-Chair; Kristin Warren, Secretary; Lisa Salazar, Sofia Georgiadou

### YOU WOULD BE A GREAT FIT FOR THIS COMMITTEE IF YOU ARE:

- Passionate about your professional identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist and interested in connecting to other MFTs by building a state-wide, inclusive professional community.
- Desirous of expanding TAMFT's membership base within each membership category.
- Proficient with writing and/or developing social media content to engage our membership body in new and creative ways.

**JOIN OUR  
TEAM**



### Newsletter Staff:

Would you like to help out with behind-the-scenes work for our quarterly newsletters? From selecting themes to interviewing MFTs in the field and highlighting their accomplishments to helping with other creative tasks, please click the link below to apply. This is not only a great way to give back to your community but also looks great on resumes and is a fun team to volunteer with.

[LEARN MORE](#)



As we all know, a part of the membership committee's yearly task is to survey the TAMFT membership. We do this to gauge interest, needs, wants, and to get a bird's-eye view of the state of the membership. We take the survey and your ideas and feedback seriously. A frequent piece of feedback we've received is the need for a Mentorship Program. We're proud to say that the TAMFT board has officially decided to start one!

We've been discussing a **MENTORSHIP PROGRAM** for a couple of years, and it's finally getting off the ground. This entails seasoned TAMFT members who will be willing to mentor a newer member, student, or associate. More details will be announced on other platforms - our website, the upcoming conference, and of course on our social media. Be on the lookout for ways to sign up for this unique opportunity within our organization.

**MENTORSHIP PROGRAM  
MATCHING QUESTIONNAIRE**

[CLICK HERE](#)

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

**Members:** *Angela Hayes, Chair, Board Liaison; Carlos Perez; Sofia Georgiadou*

As we prepare for our annual conference, we find ourselves in a season of momentum and intentional growth. Following a successful legislative session and the onboarding of new board members, the organization is shifting focus to professional development, conference planning, and strategic sustainability. We have several new opportunities for our members, making this coming year one of our most ambitious and inclusive to date. As we continue our work in governance, advocacy, and education, our priorities remain rooted in access, ethics, and, of course, our membership. We plan to roll out new initiatives across the entire organization, and hopefully beyond. We look forward to seeing you soon.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

**Members:** *Alycia DeGraff, co-Chair; Chris McClung co-Chair; Leila Anderson, Secretary; Federico Mendez, Board Liaison; Michael Argumaniz-Hardin; Karishma Arya; Taryn Durham*

The Education Committee is committed to providing valuable monthly education to our members, totaling 26 CEUs every two years. Attending training is a great way to continue education, learn from colleagues, and feel connected to the field.

The Education Committee is working hard to plan webinars for 2026. In January, Dr. Jude Austin will present "Holding Complexity: Navigating Political Differences in Couples and Families." In this webinar, Dr. Austin will explore how marriage and family therapists can remain grounded, ethical, and relationally attuned amid political polarization. Rather than offering judgment or prescriptive rules, this conversation invites clinicians to deepen their reflection on our values, ethical responsibilities, and our role in helping families bridge divides during one of the most polarized eras in American life.

This past October, the Education Committee hosted a multidisciplinary panel on Neurodiversity Across Disciplines: A Systemic Conversation, in which panelists discussed how relational therapy, daily living supports, and behavioral strategies can intersect while centering neurodivergent voices and lived experiences. Be sure to look out for our upcoming webinars on high-conflict couples and the ethics of AI and telehealth therapy platforms.



LEARN MORE



# National EXAM PREP

TAMFT offers a suite of resources to help students prepare for the national licensure exam, including recordings of our Exam Prep Workshop, a Practice Exam & Answer Explanations, and an MFT Terms Glossary.



## CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Members: Hannah McKinnies, Chair, Board Liaison; Brandon Gardenhire, Neli Morris, Adam Jones

The event will be held at the Tremont House in Galveston, Texas. Visit the conference page for details on booking your stay at this beautiful and historic hotel.

We're thrilled to share that our speaker lineup is finalized, and we're excited about the CEUs and learning opportunities we have planned. There's truly something for everyone. We're also adding fun and engaging elements to enhance your experience—more opportunities to connect, network, and enjoy your time at the conference.

We can't wait to see you there.

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Now is a fantastic time to become a sponsor! We have big plans in motion, and your support can help bring them to life. If you or someone you know would benefit from sponsoring our organization, we'd love to connect: [info@tamft.org](mailto:info@tamft.org).



## ETHICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Members: Angela Hayes, Chair; Deanna Barrett; Paula Boros; Michael (Charles) Flynn; Aaron Maleare; Felicia Holloway; JoAngeli Kasper

The ESJ committee is pleased to announce our first ESJ Video Essay Ethics Competition. The criteria are a 3 to 5-minute-long video answering one of our 3 ethics prompts. Video production should be simple with a clean background and can be vertical or horizontal. Responses should be professional, use the AAMFT code of ethics and any other credible sources, such as peer-reviewed articles and research, to support your answer, and should address both the ethical decision-making process and the action recommended by that process. Sources will be submitted along with your video essay. We will have three prizes. The winner will receive a free conference registration for the 2026 TAMFT Conference! The 1st runner-up will receive a collection of ethics and social justice books selected by the ESJ Committee, and the crowd favorite (by total number of likes on TAMFT's social media) will receive a gift card towards TAMFT merch. Submissions will open mid-January and remain open until the end of February, so keep an eye out for that email from TAMFT in the next couple of weeks. In the meantime and without further ado, select from the following ethical prompts and consider what you would do to resolve the ethical dilemma as a clinician:

- Option #1: What are the ethical considerations when a client or client's parent asks for something that goes against evidence-based practice, for example, conversion therapy? Evidence-based practice, supported by major medical and mental health organizations worldwide, concludes that conversion therapy is not effective and is actively harmful, increasing the risk of depression and suicidal ideation.
- Option #2: What are the ethical considerations when a client is making flirtatious sexual jokes in session?
- Option #3: What are the ethical considerations when a client's values and beliefs that they are bringing to therapy conflict with your values or are triggering for you?

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Members: Tim White, PAC Chairman; Hannah McKinnies; Mercedes Burk; Wen-Mei Chou, Board Liaison to BHEC; Karen Diliberti; Kristi Phillips; Leila Anderson; JoAngeli Kasper; Marion Vickerman; Chase O'Neal (Liaison to the Austin Association)

## 89TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION + INTERIM DEVELOPMENTS (NOVEMBER 2025)

### SESSION OVERVIEW

The 89th Texas Legislature was one of the most polarized in recent memory. The Senate pushed an aggressive conservative agenda while the House fractured over internal leadership fights, slowing many bipartisan efforts.

For mental health advocates, including TAMFT, this meant defensive work: protecting funding, preventing harmful licensure changes, and advancing realistic workforce solutions. Despite the environment, TAMFT secured several meaningful wins for clinicians, students, and supervisors.

### MAJOR WINS FOR LMFTS

#### 1. Full BHEC Funding Secured

a. SB 1 – State Budget (2026–27) includes:

- Continued baseline funding for BHEC
- 6 new FTEs to support licensing and enforcement
- Funding for a Texas-developed psychology exam
- Support for a Spanish-language LMSW exam, improving access for bilingual providers
- NPDB fee coverage

◦ **Impact:** Greater administrative stability, more timely licensing, and continued protection of the LMFT scope.

#### 2. Expanded Mental Health Loan Repayment (SB 646)

- Repayment caps increased to \$60k (master's) / \$100k (doctoral)
- New bonuses: \$10k rural service, \$5k language fluency
- \$1M for program marketing

◦ **Impact:** Meaningful financial relief for early-career LMFTs and increased incentives for rural and bilingual practice.

#### 3. New Mental Health Workforce Pipeline Program (SB 1401)

- Creates transfer pathways from community colleges into LMFT, LPC, and social work graduate programs.

◦ **Impact:** Strengthens long-term workforce development and recruitment into the MFT profession.

#### 4. Telehealth Coverage Protected (HB 1052)

- Insurance plans must cover telehealth when either the client or therapist is temporarily out of state, so long as:
  - The client is a Texas resident
  - The provider has a Texas license and office

◦ **Impact:** Ends long-standing claim denials affecting military families, students, and traveling clients/providers.

#### 5. Texas Commission on Marriage and Family (HB 3284)

- Establishes a state body to study marriage, family policy, and relationship health.

◦ **Impact:** Opens the door for future marriage and family therapy initiatives, research funding, and recognition of LMFT expertise.

### IMPORTANT MEASURES THAT FAILED

1. Licensure portability/reciprocity bills (HB 4721, SB 51) – No hearings.
2. Medicaid reimbursement for associates (HB 1716, SB 469) – Passed House but died in Senate.
3. Licensure compacts (LPC, Social Work, Cosmetology) – Stalled; the Governor signaled resistance to all compacts.
4. BHEC authority clarification (HB 5421) – Failed in committee.

**Takeaway:** Portability and associate Medicaid billing remain top priorities for 2027.

**CONTINUED...**



## NEW BHEC & TSBEMFT RULES (EFFECTIVE NOV. 9, 2025)

- **BHEC**

- § 882.1 & § 882.2 – Application Process: Clearer standards, documentation requirements, and communication expectations.
- § 882.21 – License Statuses: Stronger definitions for active/inactive/expired and streamlined reinstatement procedures.

- **TSBEMFT**

- § 801.44 – Client Relationships: Reinforced boundaries and dual-relationship prohibitions.
- § 801.142 – Supervised Clinical Experience: Updated definitions of qualifying hours and documentation.
- § 801.143 – Supervisor Requirements: Modernized qualifications and record-keeping expectations.

- **Impact:** More clarity for applicants, associates, supervisors, and enforcement processes.

## ELECTION & POLITICAL LANDSCAPE (2026 CYCLE)

1. Significant turnover expected in both chambers:
2. Texas House: 13 members not returning
3. Texas Senate: Multiple retirements + vacancies

**Why it matters:** New committee members will shape behavioral-health legislation, making early outreach essential.

## INTERIM CHARGES LIKELY IN 2026

### Expected committee work may focus on:

- Workforce development (supervision costs, Medicaid billing parity)
- Licensure modernization & portability barriers
- HHSC & BHEC oversight (possible Sunset topics)
- Strengthening behavioral-health education pipelines

### Strategic Recommendations for TAMFT Members

- Engage early with your local legislators—especially incoming freshmen.
- Participate in rulemaking for SB 912 (CE Tracking), SB 646, and SB 1401.
- Support coalition-building with rural health, veterans' services, and higher education partners.
- Watch for BHEC meeting notices and public-comment opportunities.
- Prepare for 2027 session priorities: portability, Medicaid parity for associates, licensure streamlining.



**DONATE NOW**

# IN ORDER TO CHANGE, GO SLOW: A RESOLUTION TO SUSTAIN TEXAS MFTS

Sofia Georgiadou, PhD, LMFT-S

January invites fresh starts, but for us Texas MFTs, the most powerful resolutions rarely come from pushing harder. They come from aligning our practice with our values in a world that often rewards speed over depth, volume over human connection, and compliance over sustainability. If our work is relational, our resolutions can be relational too: agreements we make with ourselves, our practices, our families, and our professional community.

A strong place to begin is one simple question: what is worth remembering from the past year? What are the moments that carried meaning? Maybe that was a repair after rupture, a couple's first softening, a supervision conversation that changed the way we conceptualized a case, a boundary that protected our nervous system (and our ethics).

## REMEMBERING WHAT MATTERED FOR US IN 2025

- What moments in session reminded us why we chose this profession?
- What “small” moments turned out to matter most: a reframe, a repair, a clear boundary, a brave (but uncomfortable) conversation?

## FOLLOWING OUR ENERGY, NOT THE NOISE

Experiencing joy is data. So is experiencing depletion. When we think back on 2025:

- When did we feel most grounded and effective in our work?
- What gave us energy: a population, modality, pace, team culture, or setting?
- What drained us: unsuitable referrals (we may not have control over), constant crisis interventions, administrative load, low reimbursements, or blurred boundaries?
- What single change in our caseload, schedule, or policies would make our best work repeatable?

## NAMING OUR RESILIENCE

- What seemed impossible this year, yet we handled it anyway?
- What hard moment did we face directly? Think about moments like an ethical dilemma, a safety decision, a needed confrontation, a repair after missing the mark with a client or colleague.
- What did that moment teach us about what we can tolerate and how we can transform?

**CONTINUED...**





## **CHOOSING ONE HABIT AND MAKING IT CONSISTENT**

Sustainable change is often one small practice done regularly.

- What habit, if done consistently, would improve our therapy outcomes and reduce burnout? Maybe for you this would be better structuring your session openings; encouraging end-of-session feedback; joining a peer consultation group; deliberate practice of skills, or a power-down ritual at day's end.
- What does consistency look like on your calendar?

## **RELEASING WHAT WE CANNOT CONTROL, STRENGTHENING WHAT WE CAN**

- What did we try to control that was outside our control? Think about other people's reactions, client pace, and systemic barriers.
- What can we control instead? Think about your boundaries, fee policies, documentation style, referral criteria, and consultation supports.

## **DESIGNING OUR DAYS ON PURPOSE**

- If we repeated our current typical workday for 100 days, would our lives be better or worse?
- If someone observed our actions for a week, what would they conclude our priorities are?
- Are we spending our attention on antelope (big, important problems) or field mice (small, urgent problems)?
- How can we do less but better in 2026?

***CONTINUED...***

## A CLOSING RESOLUTION

In 2026, think about how you would fill the following gaps in this sentence: I build a practice that protects \_\_\_\_\_ and strengthens \_\_\_\_\_.

Then choose one boundary and one behavior that make this sentence true for you.

Slowing down is not falling behind; it restores our energy, helps us notice what we missed, and makes our actions more deliberate. Our clients benefit when our work is sustainable, and our profession strengthens when we practice in ways we can keep.

### **References**

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Dunn, J. (2025, December 26). 7 reflection questions to ask yourself for a happier new year. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/26/well/family/new-year-reflection-questions.html>

### **AI Transparency**

This article began as an AI-assisted first draft. All interpretations, examples, and final phrasing were selected and refined by me. References were sourced from material read by me. The final text was curated and edited by me to reflect my lived professional experiences.



**Sofia Georgiadou**

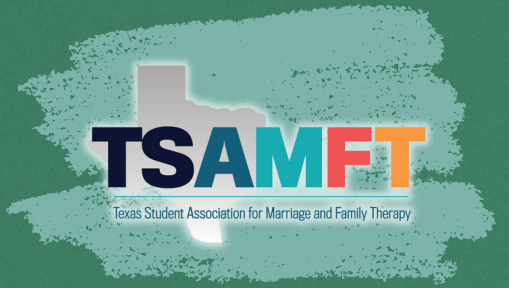
PhD, LMFT-S



# STUDENT CORNER

## MEMBERS

JoAngeli Kasper, President; Mia Maples, President-Elect;  
Rae Morris, Social Media Representative; Emily Saldivar, Secretary;  
Deanna Barrett, Ethics & Social Justice Chair, University Liaison



## Hello, future MFTs!

As we kick off the spring semester, TSAMFT has some exciting events lined up to support your journey. Whether you're navigating coursework, clinical hours, or just need to connect with fellow students who get it—we've got you covered.

## Upcoming Events

As we kick off the spring semester, TSAMFT has some exciting events lined up to support your journey. Whether you're navigating coursework, clinical hours, or just need to connect with fellow students who get it—we've got you covered.

### February 7th | Student Board Meeting

**Back to School!** Join us virtually as we discuss spring initiatives, share updates, and hear from students across Texas MFT programs. All student members are welcome!

### March 7th | Peer-to-Peer Meeting

**"So You Want to Be an LMFT? Everything You Need to Know About the MFT Journey"**

From licensure requirements to landing your first job, this session is designed to answer the questions you didn't know you had. Bring your curiosity—and your coffee!

### April | TAMFT Annual Conference

**In-Person Student Board Meeting:** We're thrilled to invite you to our in-person Student Board Meeting at the TAMFT Annual Conference! This is a special opportunity to connect face-to-face with student leaders from across the state.

Join us as we officially welcome Mia Maples as our incoming TSAMFT Student President. Don't miss it!

## How to Attend

All board meetings are held virtually via Zoom. Registration is required to attend, so watch for the email with meeting information and registration links each month. Once registered, you'll receive the Zoom link to join!

## Join Our Community

Want to stay connected between meetings? Join our TSAMFT Discord for peer support, resource sharing, and community connection:



**Together, we are TSAMFT.**

Questions? Reach out to us at [Info@tamft.org](mailto:Info@tamft.org)  
Connect with us on social media @TSAMFT





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# LISTEN TODAY!



## Episode 12: Everyone's Equity

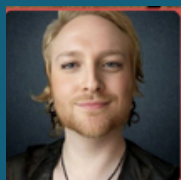


**JOYCE JACQUOTE**  
M.S., AAMFT Approved  
Supervisor, LMFT  
Supervisor, LCDC



**FELICIA J. HOLLOWAY**  
PhD, LPC-S, LMFT-S,  
AAMFT Approved  
Supervisor

## Episode 11: The Beauty of Inclusion



**LUCE O'BRIGID (SHE/HER)**  
MA, LMFT-A

## Episode 10: Sex Addiction



**JEFFREY COIRA**  
MA, LCSW, LCDC\*, CST\*  
\*Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor  
\*AASECT Certified Sex Therapist



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# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## NADIA BAKIR, LMFT-S

Nadia Bakir is a local therapist and clinical supervisor, whose practice is in Be Well, in the Brentwood area. She works with traditional and non-traditional individuals, couples and families using her knowledge of immigrant trauma, polyvagal and attachment theory, and so much more. She has also recently become elected president of Relational Minds, formerly known as Austin in Connection. When not holding the backs of her clients or associates, she's either out in nature either hiking or playing with plants, with her neurodivergent family or connecting with her diverse group of friends and colleagues.



## FELIX VARA, LMFT

Felix Vara, LMFT, owner and operator of The Vara Psychotherapy Group, PLLC, specializing in systemic relationships of first responders and men's mental health. A retired law enforcement executive, Felix brings firsthand experience to his therapeutic work, helping first responders and high-stakes professionals navigate the complexities of career, relationships, and identity. With a solution-focused approach, he empowers clients to build resilience, improve communication, and enhance overall well-being. Passionate about breaking the stigma around men's mental health, Felix offers individual therapy, executive coaching, and speaking engagements to support those who serve and lead under pressure.



## DR. MARK WHITE, LMFT-S, LSOTP

I specialize in helping individuals and relationships reconcile, recover, and prosper after infidelity, compulsive sexual behaviors, porn addiction, marital conflict, and parenting problems. I treat anxiety, depression, anger management, and substance addictions. I help blended and divorced families navigate custody, co-parenting, and parental alienation.



## TATIANA FRANCO, MFT STUDENT

I am an MFT student at Our Lady of the Lake University, graduating in 2026! I attended my first TAMFT convention this year and would like to go to as many as I can. My goal is to become a sex & couples therapist and write a book to help women with their sexuality and traumas.

# Did You Know?

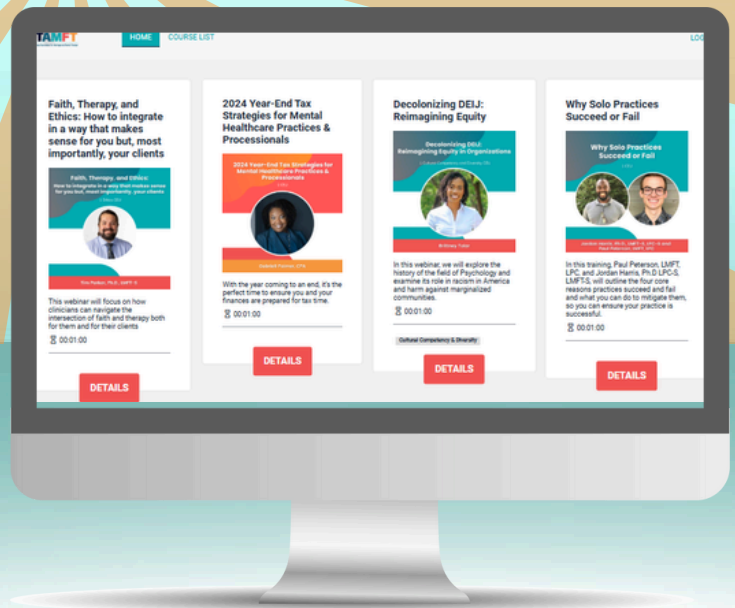
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### UPCOMING LIVE WEBINARS:

**Holding Complexity:  
Navigating Political Differences in  
Couples and Families**

1 Cultural Competency and Diversity CEU

January 23, 2026 | 12-1pm CT | Live Via zoom



Jude Austin, Ph.D.

**From the Playroom to the  
Living Room: Integrating  
Parents into Play Therapy for  
Lasting Change**

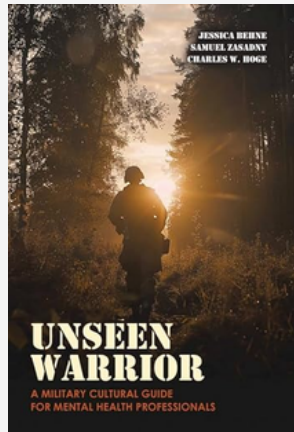
February 20, 2026 | 12-1:00pm CT | Live Via zoom



Rachel Garner, MS, LCSW-S, and  
Taryn Durham, MA, LMFT-Associate



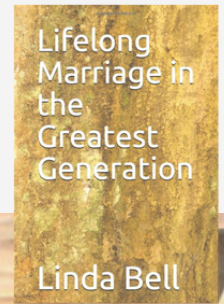
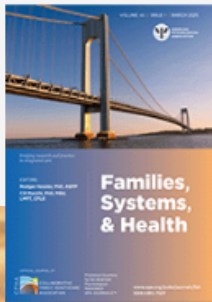
# AUTHORS CORNER



## Unseen Warrior: A Military Cultural Guide for Mental Health Professionals

by Jessica Behne, MA, LMFT, Samuel Francis Zasadny, Charles W Hoge

Unseen Warrior offers mental health professionals a comprehensive guide to providing clinical services for military personnel and veterans. Drawing on the authors' more than 50 years of cumulative military service and 35 years of clinical expertise, this book bridges the cultural divide that open exists between military and civilian life. Key insights into values, experiences, and challenges that are important in applying effective therapeutic strategies are presented. With practical tools and a step-by-step field manual, Unseen Warrior empowers you to deliver culturally competent, impactful mental health care to the men and women who have served.



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