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SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER

TAMFT CONFERENCE RECAP

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TAMFT PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: RECAPPING TAMFT 2023 CONFERENCE

JASON MARTIN, PH.D., LMFT-S, LPC-S

I write this after having returned from the TAMFT 2023 Conference in Austin, and what an amazing conference it was! On at least 3 occasions during the conference, I noted how despite working in marriage and family therapy for more than 20 years, I get my mind blown at every TAMFT conference I attend, thrilled by the lessons I've learned and the people I've met. Serving as President of TAMFT has been a great honor and privilege, and I was especially privileged this year to have a front-row seat to the amazing speakers and workshops throughout our time together in Austin. I was inspired by Travis Heath to challenge my practice of systemic therapy, digging into the unique power and opportunities that systemic practices present. I was challenged by Eliza Boquin and Eboni Harris to examine how I may not always provide the most welcoming therapeutic environment for the Black and Latinx communities and to do so better. I was informed by Ana Marcela Rodriguez and Diana Beltran about the unique challenges of the Hispanic community, both inside and outside the therapeutic framework. Each of these speakers and many others informed us, challenged us, and encouraged us to grow our

awareness of our clients and create better practices for those we serve.

However, the benefits of the conference did not end with the sessions. As always, one of the best aspects was connecting with people I do not otherwise encounter. Texas is a large state, and while telehealth has shrunk things a bit, it is still difficult for colleagues in Lubbock to connect with those in Beaumont, but that happens every year at the TAMFT conference. My professional life is greatly enhanced by those relationships. This year in particular, I was encouraged by the student participation and enthusiasm at the conference. Students are always a major factor at conference, from volunteering to make it happen to presenting posters and sessions. But this year, the enthusiasm and advocacy on the part of students was particularly notable. TAMFT is excited to have such a vibrant and active student body, and I'm excited to work with Student Representative on the Board, Jaida Pryor, to make sure that TAMFT is serving them as best we can.

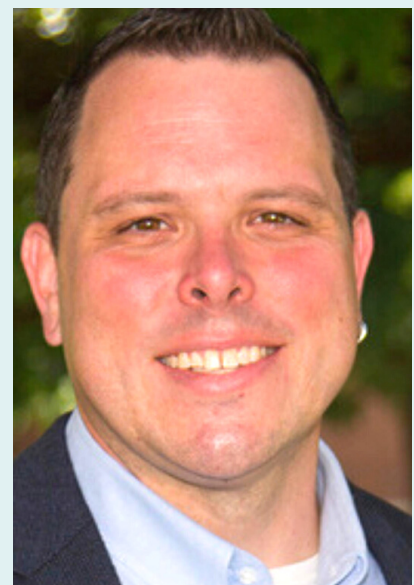
Finally, I want to mention the great legislative work that was

done at Day at the Dome on Wednesday before conference.

This biennial event is critical for getting the voices of MFTs heard in the Texas legislature. If you were not able to attend Day at the Dome, I highly encourage you to take part when it returns in 2025. Legislative advocacy is arguably the most important role of TAMFT, and Day at the Dome is a great way to directly engage with legislators to make sure they know about MFTs and the issues that affect our practice.

Thank you to the conference organizers, committee members, and Stansfeld staff for creating a great event, and I'm eager to see you all again next year. As always, thank you all for the work you do.

Jason Martin, Ph.D., LMFT-S,
LPC-S
President, TAMFT



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

LUCE O'STEEN, CHAIR, COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE



The thing I love most about TAMFT conferences are the unique conversations that take place. For those who are regular attendees of the conference, you likely know the struggle that is trying to balance your time between attending your breakout sessions and skipping those workshops for an important discussion with a long-time (or brand new) colleague. Oh? Just me? C'mon, you know you've done it before! It was hard this year, though. The conference committee put on such an unforgettable experience and the kinds of topics that our members presented on were all crucial subjects that deserve our attention. I greatly appreciate our growing momentum toward including more diverse voices in TAMFT's dialogues. Let's keep that up, yeah?

In truth, this momentum toward diversity is arguably a core piece of the systemic legacy, isn't it? Please forgive me, but I'm about to make 98% of you feel old: I just turned 26 two weeks before the publication of this newsletter (yes, I was born in 1997). Depending on your attitude toward Gen Z, I imagine this fact either makes you a little anxious or somewhat excited. What will Gen Z do with the field of Couple and Family Therapy? How will our experiences as cohorts shape the future of this profession? These are big questions that deserve their own rigorous research, but I will share this much: perhaps it's fair to say there's much for us to be critical about. Looking around, there seems to be a whole lot that just doesn't work well anymore – or maybe it never did, at least not for everyone.

How do I therapize teenagers (muchless plan my career) in light of the latest IPCC report? How am I supposed to mend this family cutoff when the U.S. political climate is the textbook definition of “pernicious polarization”? Pandemics. Mass shootings. Climate crisis. Wealth gap. How do I help clients find their power and hope when there's so much to feel hopeless and powerless about – especially as a gender-queer person at a time like this? In the words of conference keynote, Travis Heath, how do I help folks change their relationship to these systems when I'm not even satisfied with my own?

Well... talk about it, I guess. I talk about it with my trans friends and my people who have proven themselves safe. I talk about it with my therapist, and encourage the public to talk about their issues with their therapists. And I'm going to talk about it here. Because I want TAMFT to be a place where we can do that. If you're reading this and disagree with that vision, I hope you'll feel comfortable enough to reach out and talk with me about our differences (I, for one, have had enough of the alternative to that option). We're therapists. Whether at a conference or in the therapy room, listening and peacemaking through conversation is what we do. As long as we keep doing that, there's reason to hope that things can get better.

Gratefully,
Luce (They/Them)
M.S. MFT student
Chair, Communications Committee, TAMFT



Help show your support for Family PAC by purchasing TAMFT Merch!



[VISIT THE TAMFT MERCH SHOP!](#)

DAY AT THE DOME

TIM WHITE, MEMBER-AT-LARGE AND PAC CHAIRMAN

I am pleased to report that we had a tremendous turnout for our 2023 Day at the Dome! I am so happy for the demonstrated commitment and strong showing of support by those TAMFT members who were able to take part in this important advocacy activity. There were over 40 participants who stormed the Capitol, meeting and speaking with senators, representatives, and their staff about public policy and regulatory issues facing our profession during this legislative session.



TAMFT's visible engagement at the Capitol during session years compliments our advocacy efforts greatly! This is a very busy year for proposed legislation regarding various aspects of mental health. In particular, there are 15 bills directly mentioning LMFTs, Associates, and students, over 150 other proposed bills that potentially impact MFTs, and over 37 relating to BHEC!

The TAMFT Legislative Committee, along with our legislative consultant, Tristan "Tris" Castaneda's help, identified three specific issues to bring to the attention of legislators, encouraging their support. Of further interest, an interim report by a Senate Special Committee, colloquially referred to as the "Uvalde Report" provided recommendations seeking to improve access to mental health across the board for our school systems.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to get involved in some way in the TAMFT! As Margaret Mead famously said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has!"



DAY AT THE DOME

So, please sign up, get involved and let's engage together in strengthening access to mental health services in Texas and take constructive action in protecting the integrity of our license.

Best Regards,
Tim White
Board Member-at-Large and PAC Chairman



**PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO
TAKE OUR TAMFT
MEMBERSHIP SURVEY**



CLICK HERE

MEET OUR 2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the 2023 TAMFT Conference's Business Luncheon, we had the distinct pleasure of recognizing our four outgoing Board members for their years of hard work while also installing our newly appointed 2023 Board of Directors. The 2023 Board will continue to support TAMFT in the advancement and promotion of marriage and family therapy in Texas. Learn more about the 2023 Board of Directors and reach out to them with any questions, concerns, or ideas for the organization at any time.



Jason Martin
President



Carlos Perez
President-Elect



Angela Hayes
Secretary



Tim Parker
Treasurer



Tim White
Member-at-Large



Marion Vickerman
Member-at-Large



Layla Scott
Member-at-Large



Kelsey Austin
Member-at-Large



Wen-Mei Chou
Member-at-Large



Rebekah Torres
Associate Member



Jaida Pryor
Student Member



Meet the Board!

TAMFT 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: BEHIND THE SCENES

BY KELSEY AUSTIN, MEMBER-AT-LARGE AND CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

TAMFT is an organization that runs on the passion and dedication of our volunteers. One of the most tangible products that TAMFT volunteers offer is the annual conference. Each year, hundreds of MFTs and friends of the field gather for continuing education and networking. For many TAMFT members, the conference excitement begins with Early Bird Registration a few months before the scheduled event.



The excitement builds as workshop titles are released, and attendees create their schedules. The conference preparation for most attendees might look something like this:

1. Coffee
2. Therapist attire
3. Business cards
4. Water bottle
5. Snacks
6. Notebook and pen
7. Email long-lost colleagues to connect over lunch

Our Conference Committee members love to watch TAMFT members reconnect with one another and reignite their passion for the field over the course of three days. The ten (plus) months of planning are more than worth the experience. (Yes, you read that right.) The Conference Committee begins planning at least ten months in advance to make the magic happen! We're taking you behind the scenes to learn more about conference planning.

Here's a year in the life of a Conference Committee member –

11 months out:

- Conference Committee begins monthly meetings
- Previous conference survey is reviewed
- Strengths and opportunities are addressed
- Location is chosen, and hotel is booked



TAMFT 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: BEHIND THE SCENES

BY KELSEY AUSTIN, MEMBER-AT-LARGE AND CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

The 2023 annual conference was booked in Austin, Texas, to carry out TAMFT's Day at the Dome tradition. Day at the Dome provides members with the opportunity to visit Texas senators and representatives at the Texas Capitol with other colleagues and conferencegoers. We do this very important activity to connect with those lawmakers and inform them of our support or opposition to bills coming up in this year's legislative session.

10-8 months out:

- Conference committee begins meeting every 2 weeks
- Conference theme is chosen
- Blurb is written
- Keynote speakers are discussed

The Conference Committee was extremely selective when discussing potential keynote speakers for the 2023 annual conference. The committee factored in feedback from

previous conferences, current trends and issues in Texas mental health, and attention to diverse and inclusive presentations. We wanted to bring in content that was relevant, engaging, and applicable to our members' daily practice. We scheduled meetings with each keynote speaker to discuss our vision for the conference and share ideas regarding how they could provide value to our members. Rather than lectures, we were searching for storytellers that would engage the audience in conversations and experiential activities that would light a fire to be more competent, inclusive, and systemic therapists. The feedback we've received regarding the 2023 keynote speakers has let us know we hit the mark!



This extensive planning requires organization and attention to detail. The Conference Committee stays connected via Slack between Zoom meetings to discuss progress and setbacks. We also use Google Drive to store email templates, calls for proposals, meeting agendas, and notes. Each meeting ends with delegations of tasks to each member, noted in the meeting minutes. Despite being spread across Texas, our Committee stays very connected virtually to create a conference that delivers.

The work is unpaid and sometimes quite exhausting, but the feedback from satisfied and inspired TAMFT members has us counting down until planning begins for next year!

The results of this tireless work? A bustling room of aspiring MFTs mingling with seasoned specialists eagerly awaiting the first keynote of the conference. Networking with strangers over a partnered conversation during a presentation, we often learn and gain inspiration from one another. Standing ovations for speakers that rocked our worlds. A jam-packed room of ground-breaking research presented by the future of our field. Satiated intellectual appetites at the end of each long day. We hosted 41 workshops, boasted four keynote presentations, and provided numerous opportunities for attendees to connect with fellow professionals. This year, we were proud to see 335 attendees gathered for learning, laughter, and long-lived connection. We hope to see you all again next spring!

COMMITTEE UPDATES

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: *Diana Reinhart, Chair; Dr. Carlos Perez, Board Liaison; Marion Vickerman, Board Liaison; Tim White, PAC Chairman; Hannah McKinnies; Tara Roper; Sommer Greer*

Everyone, we had such a good turnout for Day at the Dome and I'm so happy for the support. There were over 40 participants who went and spoke to senators and representatives about the issues facing our profession in this legislative session. This is a very busy year for bills regarding mental health as there are 15 directly mentioning LMFTs, Associates, and students, over 150 that potentially impact MFTs, and over 600 relating to BHEC! The



Legislative Committee, along with Tris Castenada's help, identified the 3 most appropriate ones to bring to the legislature's attention. Instead of detailing that here, I'll offer a link offering more information for those interested. Of further interest, a document drafted by a Senate Special Committee, that has been colloquially referred to as the "Uvalde Report", specifically references better access to mental health across the board for our school systems. I will offer a link to that as well. Finally, we would like to encourage everyone to get involved in some way in the TAMFT as we have the potential to impact real change in advocating for our license.



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
- Access to Texas-based attorney with free consultations
- 12 free CEUs each year, plus bonus webinars (\$120+ value)
- Discounts on conferences, online courses, tuition/services and more
- Networking with like-minded individuals



TAMFT.org/Join-TAMFT

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: *Katie Keith, Chair; Dr. Layla Z. Scott, Board Liaison; Anna Thomison; Heather Austin; Heather Lucero; JoAnn Travis Evans*



The Membership Committee continues to be hard at work identifying ways we can serve TAMFT membership. We recently opened the 2023 TAMFT Membership Survey with the aim of gathering meaningful data and information about our membership base in order to best tailor programming to specific member needs and interests. We want to understand who not only joins TAMFT, but also who remains a long-term member of our organization. This helps us target needs across the profession. Active members were sent a survey link via email with the subject "TAMFT Wants to Hear From You!", and can still participate in providing feedback. As the Membership Committee transitions to welcoming new members in April 2023, we want to encourage anyone who may have an interest in any or all aspects of Membership Committee responsibilities to apply for committee service! The Membership Committee's focus for the next few months centers around pre-planning for annual committee initiatives such as the Fall Student Drive, Annual Awards, and additional member and non-member surveys. The committee has also been examining and refining goals around increasing communication with universities, discussing marketing initiatives to promote the benefits of TAMFT membership, and maintaining and/or increasing communication with lapsed/expired members, so it is a perfect time to join to share your input and talents to help further committee goals and initiatives.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

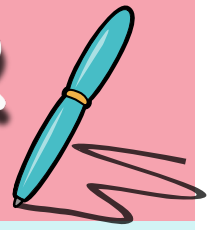
Members: *Nelliana Acuna, Chair; Dr. Wen-Mei Chou, Board Liaison; Benita Madison; Kat (Mary) Schultz; Hannah McKinnies*

The Education Committee is committed to delivering valuable monthly educational content to our members. Our upcoming webinar, "Identifying and Serving Survivors of Human Trafficking," is scheduled for Friday, April 28th, and will feature leaders from Aware Central Texas, a dual domestic violence/sexual assault program based in Killeen, Texas. Their expertise on this important topic will be invaluable to us as MFTs, as we are uniquely positioned to recognize and assist survivors of human trafficking. Given that we often work with clients who are experiencing relationship difficulties or family conflict, we may come across individuals who are at risk of, or have already been victimized by, trafficking. It is also worth noting that completing human trafficking prevention training is a requirement for Texas LMFT License renewal.

In addition, the Education Committee is planning a webinar in May to help new Master's degree graduates navigate the post-graduate licensing process. We are excited to welcome these new graduates to the next stage of their careers. We encourage all TAMFT members to join us for our monthly webinars, which are free and offer CEUs.



STUDENT CORNER



TSAMFT BOARD UPDATE

Members: Jaida Pryor, President; Emily Esail, Secretary; Melinda Barsales, Treasurer; Crystal Lina Lopez, Social Media Manager; Sydney Jeffrey, Outreach Manager

Greetings to the students and associates of TAMFT! At this year's annual TAMFT conference, we thanked our outgoing service members and welcomed a new student board! You can find the names of this year's board below, and you can find more information about them on the "Meet our 2023 Student Board" on the TAMFT website. President: Jaida Pryor, Secretary: Emily Esail, Treasurer: Melinda Barsales, Social Media Manager: Crystal Lina Lopez, and Outreach Chair: Sydney Jeffrey This year we are focused on engaging our student members and developing connections among MFT students and associates! Below you will find board meeting times for this upcoming year. Please join a meeting and learn more about what the students and associates are up to, to share any ideas you may have, or to connect with fellow members of TAMFT!

Meeting Calendar: May 20th, 9am; July 15th, 9am; September 16th, 9am; November 18th, 9am; January 20th, 9am; TAMFT 2024 Annual Conference Student Meeting (in-person)

Stay on the lookout for upcoming events and opportunities to connect! We are so excited to get to know you this year!

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: *Luce O'Steen, Committee Chair, Crystal Lina Lopez*

The Communications Committee continues to be hard at work, helping ensure the timely and effective dissemination of information to TAMFT members via social media, email, website, and, of course, this quarterly newsletter. All of this requires the efforts of volunteers like you. And we are still looking for TAMFT members willing to help put out great content about TAMFT and our industry as a whole via social, email, etc. If you are interested in being the collective public voice of TAMFT, consider volunteering for the Communications Committee!





CALL FOR TAMFT 2023 COMMITTEE SERVICE

TAMFT is seeking applications for member volunteers for committee service. Committee members will serve 2-year terms. The TAMFT Committees are as follows:

- **Governance Committee:** Governance Committee enforces TAMFT rules and policies, reviews TAMFT Bylaws and Policies for needed revisions, conducts annual Board self-evaluation, organizes Board and Committee structure, and oversees the Elections Subcommittee. There is also the opportunity for members to volunteer to serve on the Elections Subcommittee.
- **Finance Committee:** Finance Committee collaborates to develop the TAMFT budget for Board approval, receives regular financial reports, reviews and recommends financial policies and operating guidelines, including possible investments, and, if requested by Board, reviews TAMFT financial audit.
- **Education Committee:** Education Committee organizes and directs education opportunities, including online CEUs, serves as the Steering Committee for the Annual Conference, and explores additional opportunities for member education.
- **Membership Committee:** Membership Committee establishes new recruitment strategies for members, communicates with universities to engage potential new members, communicates with lapsed/expired members to encourage renewals, helps with member marketing campaigns, and administers yearly member surveys. Also oversees the Awards Subcommittee.
- **Legislative Committee:** Legislative Committee maintains the relationship with the TAMFT lobbyist, helps establish relationships with elected officials and their staffs, prepares updates to members on legislative issues, helps direct TAMFT advocacy efforts, prepares members to meet with legislators or testify, appoints members to or attends TSBEMFT, and BHEC meetings, and oversees Day at the Dome Steering Committee bi-annually.
- **Conference Committee:** Conference Committee organizes the annual conference by reviewing conference budget, choosing the location of the conference, and fees for hotel and speakers. Committee creates theme, logo, and marketing content, and collaborates with management company that will implement the committee's work. Committee will assist in creating calls for abstracts and reviewing abstracts for conference. Committee will choose and contact/contract with keynote speakers. Committee will plan the TSMFT and LMFT-Associate meetings.
- **Communications Committee:** Communications Committee examines all social media that is used by TAMFT to ensure that it reaches and is respectful to all members, examines the website to ensure that it is user-friendly and conducive to creating new memberships, and provides, at the Board's request, suggestions for advertising or marketing services or events of TAMFT.

APPLY FOR COMMITTEE SERVICE

ONLINE COURSES

CONTINUING
EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES

TAMFT OFFERS A
WIDE VARIETY OF
ONLINE
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR CEUs.

CHECK THEM OUT
HERE.



UPCOMING LIVE WEBINAR:



Misty Biddick



Alexandrea Long

Identifying and Serving Survivors of Human Trafficking

April 28, 2023
12:00-1:00pm CT