



Spring 2020

# GAMFT NEWS

The Official Newsletter of the Georgia Association for Marriage and Family Therapy



## Putting on Our Masks First We're Good at that, Right?

*Adam Albrite, Vice President*

This was a tough one to sit down and write. How impactful would it really be to string together one more message centered around the novel coronavirus without it feeling like I'm just paying lip service? Frankly, we've been reading about it morning, noon, and night every day since early March. The U.S. response to this global pandemic gave rise to an unprecedented situation. What felt like overnight, state lockdowns swept the country, parents thrust into home schooling, unemployment and infection numbers soared, and we moved our practices fully online. Even though I already saw many clients via tele-sessions, I felt reluctant at first to migrate into full-time telehealth practice. It wasn't until I reached

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## Masks...Continued

out to check in with a close friend that I switched gears. She is a lead epidemiologist in another state, and I knew she was in the thick of it. Among other things I wasn't ready to hear, without haste she said to me, "Adam, it's time. Move your practice online." This was in February.

However, my letter to you isn't fully about the coronavirus. What we've really learned is that while COVID-19 disproportionately affects all of us, our families, and our client families, it certainly has [not impacted American families equally](#). I have people in my personal and professional life who have been impacted directly by COVID-19, some who didn't survive it. No doubt you and your clients have as well. And because of necessary social distancing, in some cases we've been robbed of the opportunity to gather with family and friends to honor and celebrate their lives. For everything it's worth, my heart goes out you.

So, this message is about something greater than all of us. Something so fundamental, so often between the lines of our everyday experience that we unwittingly minimize its impact. Living with grief and loss.

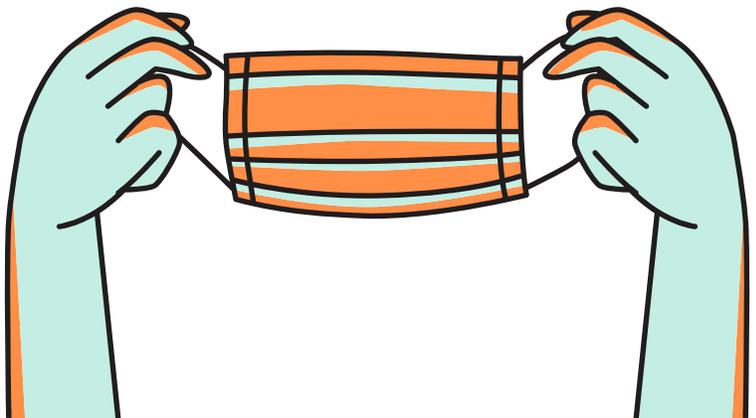
A few years back, my family and I assumed the care of a life-long elderly friend. She was a retired veterinarian suffering from terminal breast cancer and COPD – a chronic inflammatory lung disease that causes obstructed airflow from the lungs. It's incredible how important breathing is, particularly when someone requires an oxygen machine nearly 24/7. Breath is life-giving. Like the magnificent Amazon River Basin, touted with the reputation of being the lungs of the planet, every breath we take is processed inside the human body by the very blood flowing through each of us. Breath is precious. As an asthma sufferer I feel this all too often. So, when faced with a potentially life-threatening respiratory virus, it's both alarming and ironic that we must now guard something so

precious to life. The very thing that sustains life. The breath.

This was my family's first go at being caregivers. However, welcoming her into our home felt like the only choice, given she had no living relatives. Never having been in a situation like this, we did our best to prepare. But how does one prepare, really? It was a rough two years. Folding the caregiving of a dying loved one into our already full-time responsibilities has, in fact, been one of the greatest challenges in my life so far. Most of the people around us were supportive, though many were not. This was one of those things you don't understand unless you're on the inside. On the day she took her final breath, thankfully leaving her suffering behind, it dawned on me just how precious life was.

### The Family Systems Call

As systemic therapists, we know all too well how this pandemic will impact culture and families. Grieving rapid changes, both death and non-death experiences, is already challenging under normal conditions. We know the signs of grieving. The obvious: sleeping much more or less than typical, irritability and anger, connecting present with past grievances, distancing between family members, internalized guilt, blaming self and others, and general loss of energy as shifting roles impact overall function. In many ways our grief has been exacerbated by the physical-distancing-shelter-in-place context necessary to stay safe and flatten the curve.



## Masks...Continued

As family therapists in the trenches, I know you're feeling this. You know that home isn't always the safest place for children and intimate partners. The current crisis will have lasting implications for our practice and relational life as we know it. All of which have already included increased reports of abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, drug use, alcohol consumption, homicide, self-harm, and suicide. Compound that with economic fear and uncertainty, well, life as we know it is going to change. We're not sure exactly what the new normal will resemble, but we do know it's one where family therapists must be fully recognized as essential workers to meeting the growing healthcare needs of individuals and families across Georgia. And that's a call we will need to answer. Are we ready?

### Keep Your Masks by the Front Door

Forgive me in advance for returning to this basic analogy. I recognize using commercial air travel may not be ubiquitous, but at some point, odds are you have likely heard a speaker, fellow clinician, mentor, or flight attendant use the putting on your oxygen before you assist someone else with their mask. You know how it goes—the whole “If you don't take care of yourself, how will you be able to attend to others?”

So, what's at the heart of this burning-the-candle-at-both ends metaphor?

Well, something along the lines of increased stress, reduced mental acuity, frustration and anxiety, insomnia, you know, the stuff when left untreated, leads to rapid decline in healthy functioning, in some cases death. I'm revisiting this metaphor because it couldn't be more salient today. In fact, I think to **answer that call**, the one where we show up inside the arena for individuals, couples, families, and communities—it is our duty to ramp up self-care practices, stay engaged, and extend our reach. What a particularly strange

# Growing through Grief



## Dr. Shatavia Thomas, LMFT

Many therapists grapple with how to keep it together professionally when their personal lives seem to be unraveling. In the spirit of appropriate boundaries, our training reminds us the check

our stuff” at the door while in the therapy room with clients. Well, what happens when personal triggers seep through the window or plop right down on the couch in front of us? In my workshop next month, I will present stories of grief from both self of the therapist and family systems perspectives. Sharing family of origin narratives while also providing an overview of parallel client stories, together we will contemplate meaning making and next steps after family loss. We will also discuss the impact of death and bereavement on health and wellness, professional responsibilities, life satisfaction and family relationships. Additional questions discussed include - How do you work with clients ethically and effectively when there are similarities in experiences? How do you know when it is time to terminate, refer or take a break from accepting new clients in order to focus on personal healing? How and when it is appropriate to self-disclose (and what do you say)? What steps or tools might be useful for assessing personal wellbeing, professional functioning and healthy relationships?

double entendre this has for us today, as we continue to wear masks in public—in conjunction with physical distancing—to do our part in [fighting the spread of coronavirus](#), especially when we may have the antibodies, be asymptomatic, and not know it.

### Decriminalizing Self-Care

Conserving your internal “bandwidth” are more than just pretty words to say. Responding to increased work during this pandemic will absolutely take an emotional toll. I once read somewhere that powerhouse vocalists Mariah Carey and Celine Dion

## Masks...Continued

are careful to rest their voices regularly. Avoiding situations that require shouting or screaming, and in some cases, taking a two-day rest before a concert in order to preserve their voices. To preserve their instruments.

Now, I have no idea if this was a true story, but integrating that practice completely changed the way I work in therapy. In the same way their voices are their instrument, our use-of-self is the instrument of artful therapeutic craft. This made so much sense to me that after a year into my private practice, on days where I had sessions back-to-back, I would avoid the news in the car, endless scrolling through social media, in fact any media at all, as well as deep conversations with those in my personal life.

Self-care has to be rooted in self-preservation, just like self-love is rooted in honesty. -Lizzo

I struggled with this at first. As someone who takes pride in news media consumption, I would begin each day with an endless stream of data from my computer, smart phone, and the car radio, all before my actual calendar items. Then again between sessions to make sure I was still connected to the outside world. It drained my resources and dimmed my vital life force. The part of me that fuels the work. That part of me I leverage when sessions are particularly challenging. The co-therapist in the room, assisting me to hold space, attune, and venture into some of the darkest unwelcomed corners of a person's life in order to empower and promote change.

I cannot encourage you enough to experiment with curbing your consumption of news stories, social media, reports, and the endless commentary (within reason) on days where you must show up for clients. I get it. It's so tempting to scan text messages and social media between sessions. But it matters what goes into your eyes and ears. Compromise? Check for phone calls and client emails only. I know this is going to be obvious, but try moving your body instead—stretching, meditation, popping out for sunshine and fresh air. Just breathe. Just as we assist clients in processing the river of information carrying their lives, this small practice may empower us to do the same.

### Life in the Zoom Lane

I hope you've been able to stay connected. I know it's been challenging. It will be important for us to find ways to stay engaged with clients and to continue regular therapy sessions as much as possible, even from a distance. Even in the face of change, we have the resilience to stay engaged and connected. As you know, on March 13th the Executive Council made the tough decision to cancel the 2020 Annual Conference, after 40 consecutive years in-a-row. This was likely not the news you wanted to hear. Quite frankly, it wasn't the news I wanted to share. Much of the membership historically depends on this annually to accrue CEs, meet new colleagues, and connect with long-time MFT family. After months of planning, I can honestly say, it was an upset on our end as well. Like a wedding, it takes some heavy lifting on the backend to create an event that feels effortless to attendees. It was a loss for sure.

Similar to most organizations right now, we are doing our best to secure the well-being and sustainability of your GAMFT. As noted in previous correspondence to the membership, we're currently down to a "working board" only. All volunteers with full-time jobs and parental responsibilities. With increased flexibility on our

## Masks...Continued

end, the post-conference shift has fortunately been relatively smooth, and we believe this should have a low impact on our ability to deliver member services. The Executive Council were already meeting monthly, and committee leaders have begun meeting more regularly through video calls.

As an organization, we had also launched monthly virtual town-halls to better access your voice as a member. In response to that voice, we asked the internal team how we could do something the organization has never done before—virtual learning events. By April we transformed our in-person continuing education into a **Zoom Education Series**, opening with Dr. Morgan Stinston presenting on [The Ethics of Telebehavioral Health](#), followed by [Best Practices in Tele-Supervision](#) featuring Rachel McCrickard of Motivo.

Over the course of the summer and fall, keep an eye out for events popping up. The virtual town-hall meetups will continue, hosted by various board members, and we hope to provide most of the workshops that were slated for the Spring Conference as online events. In June we'll begin with [Growing through Grief: Personal and Professional Lessons after Loss](#), with Dr. Shatavia Thomas. It's almost prescient that we begin here given our current situation facing families, and we have much to learn from her wisdom and experience right now. Check out her workshop description in this newsletter and [sign-up today!](#)

### Expanding Your Reach

For some of us, using video conferencing for therapy sessions felt new and unfamiliar, but I am incredibly proud at how we were able to rise to the occasion as essential behavioral health providers. Check out the [Coronavirus Online Therapy](#) platform created in response to the pandemic as a way to reach essential workers. Nonetheless, I urge you to consider keeping telehealth a part of your work permanently, even if through hybrid practice. Why go back now? Individuals all over the state need access to family

therapists. Continued therapy sessions will likely become vital to maintaining healthy family structure in the coming days. We will get through this as a profession. But as I always say -- and I'll continue to bang that drum until my last breath -- we need one another to do it. Thank you for the work you're doing. It's making a difference.



Adam Albrite

From my living room to yours.

### Just a Few More Resources:

[Coronavirus Online Therapy](#)  
[AAMFT COVID-19 Resources for MFTs](#)

### Free and Low-Cost Therapy

[Open Path Psychotherapy Collective](#)  
[Open Counseling](#)

### Continuing Education Online

[GAMFT Online Training](#)  
[AAMFT At-Home Series](#)  
[Teneo Online Learning System](#)  
[SimplePractice Learning](#)  
[The Knowledge Tree](#)

### Thank you to our Sponsor!



# ATTENTION!

## UPCOMING GAMFT EVENTS

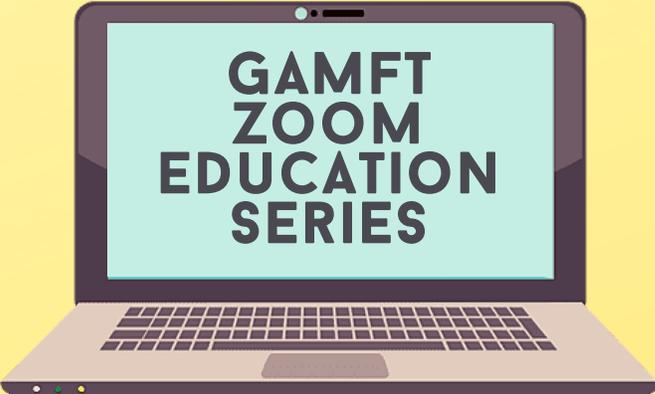
**FRIDAY, MAY 29, 12PM-1PM**

### May Virtual Town Hall

GAMFT Student Representative Shirley Shani Ben-Zvi and Supervision Chair Kara McDaniel will host to discuss all things relevant to students and new professionals.

[Click here](#) to register in advance for this meeting!

*Students  
& New  
Professionals!*



**GAMFT  
ZOOM  
EDUCATION  
SERIES**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 12PM-2PM**

### Growing through Grief

Join us the first Saturday in June to welcome Dr. Shatavia Thomas present on a family systems perspective of the grief process--including internal experiences and multigenerational aspects. See flyer on page 4!

[Click here to sign up!](#)

**FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 12PM-1PM**

### Annual Business Meeting

Please join us for this important annual meeting where we will provide financial and legislative updates, announce the nominees for elections, and discuss future directions for the organization.

[Click here](#) to register in advance for this meeting!



# Growing Through Grief

## PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LESSONS AFTER LOSS

with guest presenter:  
**Dr. Shatavia Thomas, LMFT**

This workshop highlights a family systems perspective on the grief process, including internal experiences and multigenerational aspects. The presenter will discuss the loss of family members and its impact on health and wellness, professional responsibilities, life satisfaction and family relationships. Infusing spirituality, bereavement and resilience resources, and creative writing, the presenter recounts personal narratives and summarizes clients' stories. Additional concepts examined within various contexts include self of the therapist, family of origin, boundaries, fit, self-disclosure, and cultural sensitivity.

### Objectives

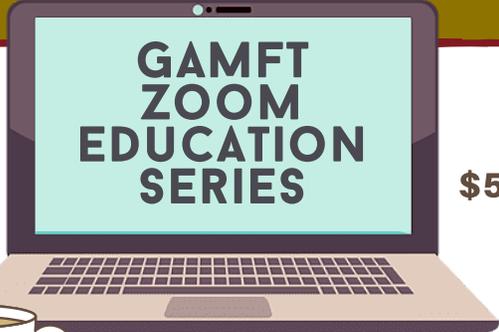
- 🌀 Explore the meaning of grief and related concepts from a family systems perspective
- 🌀 Discuss self of the therapist factors and other clinical considerations relevant during bereavement
- 🌀 Examine risk factors and resilience resources beneficial for therapists and clients in need



### More About the Presenter

Dr. Shatavia Thomas is a family therapist in the Acquired Brain Injury Unit of Shepherd Center, a world-renowned comprehensive research hospital, specializing in rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury, brain injury or stroke. Dr. Thomas is also the owner of Dr. Shay Speaks, LLC, in Atlanta. Earning her DMFT degree from Nova Southeastern University, she brings nearly 20 years of experience in mental health and 8 years in higher education. She specializes in self-care, spirituality, premarital preparation, childhood development, life transitions, diversity, family businesses, and sports and entertainment family concerns. As a consultant, writer and speaker, Dr. Shay offers services to nonprofits, churches, schools, hospitals, and media outlets.

**SATURDAY**  
**JUNE 6**  
**12 PM - 2 PM**



**GAMFT  
ZOOM  
EDUCATION  
SERIES**

**\$10 STUDENT MEMBER**  
**\$40 GAMFT MEMBER**  
**\$50 GENERAL ADMISSION**



**[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)**  
**OR GO TO [www.gamft.org](http://www.gamft.org)**

**2 CEs**

# Join Me for a Coffee?

*Shirley Shani Ben-Zvi, Student Representation Chair*

If you're an MFT Student, we want to hear from you. Here are some questions that seem important to me:

- **What are your needs?**
- **How can we support you?**
- **What questions can we answer for you?**

We have a few events coming up for you:

On **May 29, at noon**, GAMFT students' representative Shirley Shani Ben Zvi will host a **"Town Hall"** zoom meeting. Dr. Kara McDaniel, GAMFT supervision chair, will be joining her.



*Shirley Shani Ben-Zvi*

Following that, there will be "Coffee with the Students' Representative", every second Friday of the month, starting June 12, at noon.

All MFT students and pre-licensed professionals are welcome to join us, get updates from the board, ask questions, and express your needs!

We look forward to hearing from you and will do our very best to support you!



**COFFEE WITH YOUR STUDENT REP**

Every 2nd Friday at Noon  
(upcoming dates: June 12th, July 10th, August 14th)

Stay tuned for more details!



# Are You Searching for a Clinical Supervisor?

*Kara McDaniel, Approved Supervisor Chair*

Congratulations on graduating with your degree, whether in marriage and family therapy, counseling, social work, or psychology! Now that you have accomplished this very important step in your professional journey, the next step is state licensure. In order to work toward state licensure, you must have a clinical supervisor.

**WE, AT GAMFT, ARE HERE TO HELP GUIDE YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY!**

Although finding a supervisor can present some challenges, we are hopeful that the following guidance will help you locate a supervisor who will be the best fit for you.



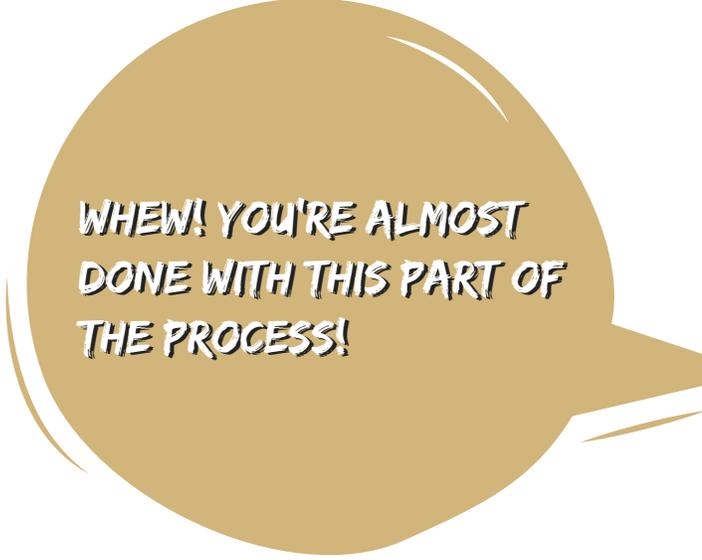
*Kara McDaniel*

- All clinical supervisors must either be an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or meet the criteria in the GA rules to be an MFT Supervisor
  - [AAMFT Approved Supervisor Resources](#)
  - [Frequently Asked Questions about Approved Supervisors](#)
  - The Georgia Composite Board for Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists outlines the criteria required for Georgia supervisors <http://rules.sos.ga.gov/gac/135-5>

## Searching for a Supervisor...Continued

- Begin searching for potential clinical supervisors. Clinical supervisors may be located by either asking for recommendations from a fellow colleague who has or is currently in supervision with a clinical supervisor. Or you can search on one or more of the links.
  - [Find an AAMFT Approved Supervisor](#)
  - [Motivo](#)
- Once you have developed a list of potential supervisors with whom you think may be the best fit, contact them directly by phone or email to schedule a convenient date/time for the two of you to meet.
- Before meeting with each potential supervisor, treat this time as you would a job interview. Prepare! Although not an exhaustive list, below are some possible questions that you may ask during your time together:
  - What are the reasons you chose to become a supervisor?
  - How long have you been a supervisor and how many people have you supervised?
  - What are your areas of specialty?
  - What theoretical approaches do you use when working with clients?
  - How would you best describe your supervision style?
  - How do you incorporate self-of-the-therapist work in supervision?
  - What days/times are you available for supervision?
  - How much do you charge for individual supervision? Dyad supervision? Group supervision?
  - Do you conduct individual supervision? Group supervision?
  - Do I need to sign a contract? If so, what are the terms of the contract?

- Whether emergent or non-emergent, how do you handle questions that come up between supervision sessions?
- Has your license ever been suspended or revoked by a state board?
- How many supervision hours will I be required to obtain each month?
- Do you conduct evaluations? If so, what types of evaluations will be conducted and how often?



**WHEW! YOU'RE ALMOST  
DONE WITH THIS PART OF  
THE PROCESS!**

- After completing the interview process, it is time to make a final decision. When you make this determination and you and supervisor both agree to sign a contract (see most important components that may be included in a supervision contract below) to enter into a supervisory relationship, you may begin or complete the state licensure paperwork for submission.
- Below are some important elements that you may see included in a supervision contract.
  - Philosophy and supervision style
  - Expectation to follow code of ethics and state laws
  - Duration of contract, criteria for termination, and payment structure
  - Criteria and process for evaluation

## Searching for a Supervisor continued...

- Responsibilities and expectations of both supervisor and supervisee
- Agreement regarding keeping supervisor informed if/when needed in between scheduled supervision sessions
- Confidentiality and limits to confidentiality
- Contact information and emergency procedures
- Process by which issues/concerns will be addressed
- How other parties, such as agencies and other supervisors, may be involved
- Supervision goals
- Record keeping for supervision sessions
- Statement regarding how technology (phone, text, email) may or will be used

Although the process of searching for and choosing a clinical supervisor can feel as though you are trying to find a needle in a haystack, it is with great hope that this step-by-step guide will help to pave a smooth journey.

Remember! We, at GAMFT, are here to help guide you every step of the way!



## Christus Powell Fellowship 2020



**Cecil Walker,**  
*Multicultural Affairs Chair*

The Georgia Association for Marriage and Family Therapy would like to congratulate Quinten Oppong, this year's recipient of the Christus

**Cecil Walker**

Powell Minority Fellowship. In efforts to promote the importance of diversity in the work of MFTs across the state, this award is given to a Georgia student of minority background who shows promise in and commitment to a career in MFT education, research, or practice.

Quinten is currently a student in Mercer University's Master's of Family Therapy Program. He completed a Bachelor's in Sociology with a minor in Public Health also at Mercer. In addition to his educational pursuits, he has worked full-time as an Employment Specialist at River Edge Behavioral Health Center in Macon since 2018



**Quinten Oppong**

2020 Christus Powell Fellowship Awardee  
Mercer University Family Therapy Student

## Christus Powell, continued...

assisting a diverse population of clients in gaining employment. Prior to that, he has worked in a variety of positions serving the health and educational needs of the community including elementary school reading tutor, personal care home volunteer, and First Step family screener.

As an African immigrant familiar with the realities of child soldiers in various African countries, Quinten is very interested in the effects of trauma on child and adolescent mental health. He is also interested in the intersection between couples therapy and immigration having personally seen the difficulties immigration can sow in family dynamics. Quinten states that he not only hopes to work in direct client contact, but he also has aspirations on the nonprofit and human resources side of mental health service, ensuring proper care and resources for burnt out employees in underserved areas in Central Georgia.

To his instructors and those familiar with his work and aspirations, Quinten is an eager and involved student learner. He is known for excelling at identifying the ways that social location, power, and family interactions are influenced by larger diversity and contextual factors, often encouraging discussion on families who have immigrated from other cultures. Quinten is a warm, engaging individual dedicated to a career of using MFT systemic skills to address contextual and mental health issues in Central Georgia. His instructors affirm total confidence in his ability to carry out his goals and substantially contribute to the MFT profession in Georgia.



## Final Call for Nominations to GAMFT Board

The Elections Committee for GAMFT is requesting suggestions and recommendations from GAMFT membership for candidates for the 2020 slate of officers. This year we will be voting on the offices of **President-Elect, Secretary,** and **one member of the Elections Committee.**



**Adam Froerer**  
Elections Chair

Each of these positions is important to the continued growth and relevance of our organization so we hope that every member of GAMFT will give thoughtful consideration to the selection of candidates for this year's election.

Descriptions for the positions:

- **President:** The President shall serve a term of two (2) years, following a term of one (1) year as President-Elect. The President shall be the Chief Officer of the GAMFT and of the Board and shall perform such duties as are customary for presiding officers, including making all required appointments with the approval of the Board. The President shall also serve as a member ex-officio with right to vote on all Committees except the Elections Committee. The President will orient each new officer and Committee Chairperson to the GAMFT By-laws.

The President-Elect shall serve a term of one (1) year, succeeding to the office of President upon completion of that term. When the office of President-Elect is occupied, the President-Elect shall serve as Presiding Officer of the GAMFT and Board during the absence of the President.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS continued...

The Past President shall serve a term of one (1) year, upon completion of a term as President, to provide continuity for the Board. When the office of Past President is occupied, the Past President shall serve as Presiding Officer of the GAMFT and Board during the absence of the President.

- The **Secretary** shall serve a term of two (2) years. The Secretary shall keep the records of all business meetings of the GAMFT, the Board, and the Executive Council. The Secretary shall direct the distribution of minutes and reports as authorized by these bylaws and the Board. The Secretary will maintain an archive library to keep a copy of all the records and publications of GAMFT.



**Annisa Pirasteh**  
Committee Member

- **Elections Committee Member:** The members of the Elections Committee shall be elected by mail or electronic ballot by the voting membership of the GAMFT and shall serve a term of three (3) years, staggered so that one (1) member shall be replaced each year. The term of office shall begin on the January 1 next following their election.



**Tabitha McCoy**  
Interim Member

The Elections Committee, which shall consist of three (3) members, shall choose its own chair who will report to the President. The Elections Committee shall consist of three (3) members. This committee shall conduct a call for nominations and prepare a slate of nominees to be reported to the membership at the Annual Meeting. The committee shall prepare the ballot, conduct the elections by mail or electronic ballot, and report the outcome of the vote to the membership.

If you have a recommendation and/or if you are interested in serving in one of the positions to be voted upon this year, please contact any one of the following three members of the 2020 Elections committee:

**Adam Froerer, Chair:** [froerer\\_as@mercer.edu](mailto:froerer_as@mercer.edu)

**Annisa Pirasteh:** [annisa.pirasteh@gmail.com](mailto:annisa.pirasteh@gmail.com)

**Tabitha McCoy:** [tlmccoy@valdosta.edu](mailto:tlmccoy@valdosta.edu)

**Please send nominations by June 1, 2020.**



# Legislative Committee Leadership Report

The Legislative Committee, comprised of Michael Chafin, Michele Smith, David Blanchard, and Dan Upshaw, has not been very active since the last GAMFT Board meeting as the coronavirus shut things down at the Capitol.

## 1013 Status Report

Both Sharon Cooper and Kevin Tanner communicated with the GAMFT Legislative Committee that it would be best for our 1013 issue to be handled by the Behavioral Health and Reform Commission. Crossover day came and went without us being able to drop our bill. The Committee is very hopeful, however, that because of our progress with the Commission and the key stakeholders involved, the relationships that we've been building, that adding MFT's to those who can sign 1013's and 2013's will happen during the next legislative cycle. In fact, there is hope that we will also make progress with Medicaid, since MFT's cannot bill for Medicaid at this time. The Committee will continue to attend the Commission sub-committee meetings; it is our plan for these important MFT initiatives to be included in the overall recommendations the Commission makes to the State Legislature.

Because of the pandemic, we do not know when the legislature will convene again this year. The Lieutenant Governor is saying possibly May 14th and the House Speaker is saying maybe June 11th. We plan to monitor this, and we will continue to work our contacts and our legislators.

## GAMFT Virtual Meetings

During the March Board meeting, the Board of Directors discussed the possibility of having the Legislative Committee conduct and facilitate one of these meetings. The Committee has discussed this and think that this is a brilliant idea. We plan to reach out to key legislators to ask if they would like to participate and speak to our



Michael Chafin



Michele Smith

GAMFT audience regarding the mental health situation in Georgia and any other pieces of legislation of import to them. Hopefully, we can pull this off sometime during the summer months.

## Legislative Bills the Committee is Following

The Legislative Committee has identified the following bills that may have an impact on Georgia families:

- **HB 760** - This is the bill Sharon Cooper dropped allowing Peace Officers to take a person who appears to be suffering from mental illness directly to the hospital emergency rooms. Terry Norris, the Executive Director of the Sheriff's Association is obviously not supportive of this bill. It is currently in the House Hopper. It has not moved. We will continue to follow.
- **HB 544** - This is a bill that will require the affidavits that accompany an emergency involuntary treatment order to become a part of the patient's medical record. The House Committee favorably reported it by substitute. It was on the House calendar for March 12th, but the House did not convene; having a "Committee Day."
- **HB 1060** - This is the "Vulnerable Youth Protection Act." This legislative initiative was given a green light by the GAMFT Executive Committee for us to support last year, but we will need a full Board vote before we can "officially" support it. It protects transgendered youth under the age of 18. It is still in the House Hopper. We will continue to follow.

**CONTINUED PAGE 12**



## Legislative continued...

- **HB 715** – This legislation is an “Occupational Tax” bill that raises the tax limit from \$400 to \$800 and it identifies 18 professions; MFT’s and LPC’s are listed. The LPC’s are opposed. The GAMFT Board will need to weigh in on this when the Legislature convenes again. The House Withdrew it, but it’s been recommitted. It has now been referred to the Ways and Means Committee and is in the House Hopper. We plan to continue to follow.
- **SB 316** – This bill would allow the spouses of active military personnel who are professionally licensed in another state, who are not had ethical violations in the last 5 years, and who have “comparable” training compared to the Georgia statute that addresses their license, to be able to obtain a license in Georgia by endorsement. It passed the Senate by substitute on February 27th. It was read in the House for the second time on March 2nd. Our plan is to follow.

For those who are interested in following the progress of these bills, log on to the General Assembly’s website at [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov) and put in the bill number for updates.



David Blanchard

### **MFTs in Medicare: Take Action!**

As we are now over halfway through the 116th Congress, which began in January 2019 and will conclude at the end of this year, AAMFT is providing members with a brief update on the status of the AAMFT-supported legislation that would allow MFTs to serve as Medicare providers, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act ([HR 945](#) / [S 286](#)).

The MFTs in Medicare legislation, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019, was introduced just over one year ago. Due to outreach by Family TEAM members and other providers, we

now have a record number of supporters in Congress for this legislation! Currently, 106 Congresspersons are cosponsoring HR 945 and 30 Senators are cosponsoring S 286.



Dan Upshaw

We thank everyone who has contacted their Congressperson and Senators to support the MFTs in Medicare legislation. *If you haven’t contacted your Members of Congress recently, [please take action by using this link](#) to contact them.* This link takes you directly to a page that allows you to input your address and easily send a letter to your Senator and Congressperson. It couldn't be easier!

But that is not all! May is Mental Health Awareness Month and it serves as another perfect opportunity to reach out and contact your Congressperson and Senators and engage with them online, call or write in support of making marriage and family therapists Medicare-eligible providers! Our voices, together with many voices across the country, will amplify our message to Congress! AAMFT has created a webpage for members interested in participating in this continued call to action. On this page page created for March's Action Week, you can find resources for contacting your Members of Congress, as well as sample social media posts, scripts, and arguments. The page is found at: [www.aamft.org/advocacy/actionweek2020](http://www.aamft.org/advocacy/actionweek2020) .

Despite the current issues affecting the public health of our nation, we can still make our voice heard with those who represent us in Washington! If you have any questions about this process, please email [FamilyTEAM@aamft.org](mailto:FamilyTEAM@aamft.org).



# Welcome Newest Board Members!



**Leah McMillan**  
South Georgia  
Chapter Chair



**Cecil Walker**  
Multi-Cultural  
Affairs Chair



**Abby Culin**  
Public Relations  
Chair

## Keep a lookout for some awareness...

### **MAY 2020**

World Day for Cultural Diversity (21st)  
International Missing Children Day (25th)  
World Hunger Day (28th)

### **JUNE 2020**

Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness  
Men's Health Month  
National Safety Month  
National Cancer Survivors Day (June 7)  
Family Health and Fitness Day (June 13)  
PTSD Awareness Day (June 27)



# Free Telehealth Platform for all Rural Georgia Providers

The Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center has partnered with the Global Partnership for Telehealth to provide 6-months free access to the Pathways Telemedicine Platform

**To sign up, contact the GRHIC at  
478-301-4700 or [info@georgiaruralhealth.org](mailto:info@georgiaruralhealth.org)**

Free Accounts for:

- Mental Health Providers
- Physicians
- Physician Assistants
- Nurse Practitioners



# Classifieds

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:** Successful counseling practice in Alpharetta looking to add a skilled couples counselor. Experience working with couples in graduate school and/or clinical settings required. Marriage and Family Therapy license an advantage. Must have scheduling flexibility to be willing to see some clients on Fridays and Saturdays. Please send cover letter and resume to [andrew@mcconaghiecounseling.com](mailto:andrew@mcconaghiecounseling.com)

**SUPERVISION:** New post graduate supervision group forming this spring. Meets the 2nd Friday of the month 9-11am in Roswell. Cost is \$60. Consultation prior to group start is required. Led by Jennifer Vann, LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor.

<https://www.cornerstonefamilyservices.com/copy-of-jennifer-vann-lmft>

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:** Thriving private practice in Woodstock, Georgia seeking licensed clinician to perform intake, therapy, and possible assessment/testing responsibilities. Clinician must be willing to join major insurance panels if not already a participating provider. Warm, friendly work environment with administrative and collegial support. Significant independence and ability to plan own work hours. Please contact office manager, Teresa Ingram, if interested at 770-592-0150.

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:** Seeking Fully Licensed Professional Counselor, Marriage & Family Therapist or Clinical Social Worker: Eagle Ranch, a Christian children's home in Georgia, has an immediate opening to work in their girls' program. [eagleranch.org/employment/counselor](http://eagleranch.org/employment/counselor)

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:** Accelerated Recovery Centers is seeking experienced LMFTs for Full-Time and Contract openings in our Family Systems Program. For more information, please contact Scott Ferguson at 678-429-3958 or at [sferguson@iwanttostopnow.com](mailto:sferguson@iwanttostopnow.com). Days, Nights and Weekends.

**SUPERVISION:** In North Georgia with Mary Carlson, Ph.D., L.M.F.T. Emphasis on encouragement with commitment to growth in skills, etc., desired by therapist. Call 770-393-8964

**OFFICE SPACE:** BEAUTIFUL OFFICE SPACE NEAR CLAIRMONT AND I-85. Amenities include office supplies, equipment, free parking and handicap access. Reasonably priced. Contact Jeanne Montgomery MA, LMFT 404-633-3347.

**TREATMENT PROGRAM:** Paul Anderson Youth Home in Vidalia, GA, is a residential program founded in 1961 focusing on young men between the ages of 16 to 21 years of age. Treatment focuses on substance abuse, mental health and failure to thrive issues. Call (912-535-2128) or find us at [PAYH.org](http://PAYH.org).

# Upcoming Continuing Education

5/16	Portraits in Pathology: 7 Deadly Sins	2 Core Hrs	Synchronous Webcast James Hollis, PhD	Van Waddy 404-233-4401
5/29	Helping Clients Rewrite Their Stories from a Narrative Perspective	5 Core Hrs	Synchronous Live Webinar Linda Buchanan, PhD	Jordan Barbeau 404-913-2005
6/5	The Closer We Are the More We Have It? Relational Intimacy and Sexual Frequency	6 Core Hrs	Synchronous Webcast Michael Sytsma, PhD & Marti Witherow, LPC, LMFT	Michael Sytsma, PhD 770-822-4505
6/5	Practical Ethics for Mental Health Professionals	6 Ethics Hrs	Synchronous Webcast Jeffrey S. Ashby, Ph. D., ABPP	Dawn Collinge 404-709-3171
6/5	LGBTQ Community and Religious Trauma: Ethical Considerations	5 Ethics Hrs	Ridgeview Institute Katie Leikam, LCSW, KISW-CP, BC-TMH	Latosha Lawler 770-434-4568 ext. 3001
6/6	PTSD, Sexual Trauma and Childhood Abuse	5 Core Hrs	Maritza Garza, MA, LMFT	Teri Bowers 800-587-2623
6/12	Hypno-Counting with Memory Reconsolidation for Discrete Trauma Treatment	7 Core Hrs	The Knowledge Tree Becky Beaton-York, PhD	Jordan Barbeau 404-913-2005
6/19	Essential Competencies to Work with Transgender/Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents	6 Core Hrs	Live Webinar Dr. Ren Massey	Jordan Barbeau 404-913-2005
6/26	True Self-True Other, The healing Power of Emotion in Attachment Based Psychotherapy	5.5 Core Hrs	Synchronous Webcast Dayle Doreen Hosack, LMFT and J. Alan Graham, Ph.D.	Philip Graffunder 404-295-4852
7/31	Mind-Body Health: A Holistic Approach to Treatment	6 Core Hrs	Location TBD Becky Beaton-York, PhD	Jordan Barbeau 404-913-2005

**For more upcoming CEU opportunities, please visit:**

**<http://gamft.org/upcoming-workshops-and-conferences/>**

# Attention GAMFT Members!

## We'd love to hear from YOU!

In addition to sharing relevant information with our members, the goal of the GAMFT newsletter is to strengthen our MFT community by supporting and promoting connection and inclusiveness through sharing our collective wisdom, resiliency and enthusiasm. Therefore, the more of us who contribute our knowledge, experience, and ideas, the richer our GAMFT family becomes.

We encourage members to make submissions including clinically related articles that offer educational and/or inspirational insights to your colleagues, reviews such as books or movies that may be valuable to MFT's, or any relevant information on issues involving the GAMFT community. Please note that this does not include advertisements for workshops, employment or office space so please refer to the protocol for these submissions in the advertisement section. All submissions will be printed in full as received whenever possible but are subject to editing for length, clarity, readability, grammar, spelling, biased language, and appropriateness. Opinions expressed in the GAMFT newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GAMFT. Submission of an article does not guarantee its publication.

### Submission Guidelines are as Follows:

Guidelines and recommendations for an article is maximum word count of 920 for full page; recommend maximum 750-word count with photo. Word counts also include approximately 690 for 3/4 page, 460 for 1/2 page, 230 for 1/4 page. We do recommend and encourage including a professional photo of the author, as well as specific listing of name and credentials as they should appear with the article. Please submit a 1-2 line biography of the author as well to be added at the end of the article.

The Newsletter is published quarterly, in February, May, August, and November. Submissions need to be received by noon on the 20th of the month prior to the newsletter going out that you would like your submission included in. Therefore, if you want to publish in the May newsletter, you will need to have your submission in by April 20th.

Articles can be submitted in Word format to **StephanieVillarrealMFT@gmail.com** and any questions can be directed to our **Social Media Chair and Newsletter Editor**, Stephanie Jordan, at the above email address.

We look forward to hearing from you and including your voice in this process! Thank you!



Stephanie Jordan

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## ABOUT

The GAMFT Newsletter is a quarterly publication for GAMFT members and MFTs in the state of Georgia.

## SUBMIT AN AD

Please direct inquiries to:

**office@gamft.org**

Submission deadlines:

January 15, April 15, July 15,  
and October 15

## RATES

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