

Welcome and thank you for visiting the Central Florida Association for Marriage and Family Therapy website. It is an honor and privilege to serve as your 2023-2024 CFAMFT President. Our mission is to serve as a leader in the provision of mental health care in the Orlando community through our traditional values of integrity, inclusion/diversity, and the development of innovative skills in mental health treatment. As a professional organization, our purpose is to advance quality mental health care through education/training, advocacy, and professional networking/support.

As your President, I am committed to promoting the same high quality monthly educational presentations for which CFAMFT has been known. While many of our presenters in years past have frequently been local therapists/providers, we will be working diligently to offer a couple of special events in 2023-2024, partnering with more prominent and distinguished presenters in the mental health field. Watch your monthly newsletter for opportunities to participate in these special offerings.

In regard to advocacy opportunities, CFAMFT has been active in years past by visiting our State Capital in Tallahassee to speak with State Senators and State Representatives about upcoming legislation changes in our field. Recently, a major piece of federal legislation was approved at the end of December 2022, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act. This bill, when signed by President Biden will allow LMFTs and LMHCs to be eligible to bill Medicare. This is one of the final areas of federal law in which LMFTs and LMHCs were not treated similarly to social workers and psychologists who have been able to treat and bill Medicare clients for years. Our many years of advocacy and lobbying for this upcoming legislation is a major success for expanded mental health access which is likely to take effect in January of 2024.

CFAMFT has provided excellent opportunities for professional networking and support through our monthly educational presentations, social get-togethers (prior to Covid), and our annual holiday breakfast. This aspect of CFAMFT is what prompted me to join this organization after having been a member of our local counselors' organization. Meeting with other therapists who espouse a strong systemic perspective was both important and beneficial to me as a practicing (LMHC) therapist who frequently works with families and couples. I also found that members of CFAMFT were very friendly, inviting, and inquisitive about the work I did, expressing a true interest in getting to know me and my practice specialties. Finally, I was very impressed with the large body of students and interns from our local universities and colleges who were regularly attending our

monthly educational presentations and expressing interest in joining our Board. Moving forward, I hope to implement mentoring opportunities for students by pairing them with more seasoned, licensed therapists who can encourage, support and mentor them along their path of degree completion and eventual licensure.

In closing, I want to express sincere thanks to past and present CFAMFT members and Board members who have supported our organization by attending monthly presentations, paying their annual dues, volunteering on a committee (or the Board), and bringing your suggestions for improvement, change, and innovation to our Board. Please know that I am always available to hear your suggestions, approval, and constructive criticism in all areas as this is how CFAMFT will remain a strong, vibrant, and essential organization for practitioners in the mental health field.

Warmest Regards,

Linda Mesing Cook, LMHC, NCC