

ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 536-X-8
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

536-X-8-.09 Technology-Assisted Training/Education
Requirements of Profession.

(1) Marriage and family therapists who conduct teletherapy within the state of Alabama must be accountable to education and training standards for teletherapy prior to initiating services.

(2) Therapists may only advertise and perform those services they are licensed and trained to provide. The anonymity of electronic communication makes misrepresentation possible for both therapists and clients. Because of the potential misuse by unqualified individuals, it is essential that information be readily verifiable to ensure client protection.

(3) Therapists shall review their discipline's definitions of "competence" prior to initiating teletherapy to assure that they maintain recommended technical and clinical competence for the delivery of care. Therapists shall have completed basic education and training in suicide prevention in relation to electronic communication. Marriage and family therapists inform clients of the protocol if suicide is an imminent threat.

(4) Therapists shall assume responsibility to continually assess both their professional and technical competence when providing teletherapy services.

(5) Minimum 12 hours initial training required in teletherapy. Telehealth training do not need to award continuing education credits (although they may, and those would be counted toward annual CE requirements) as long as the training covers the required content areas outlined below. After initial training, licensees must demonstrate continued competence in major content areas (see below; e.g. encryption of data, HIPAA compliant connections). Areas to be covered in the training must include, but not limited to:

- (a) Appropriateness of Teletherapy
- (b) Teletherapy Theory and Practice
- (c) Modes of Delivery
- (d) Legal/Ethical Issues

(e) Handling Online Emergencies

(f) Best Practices & Informed Consent

(6) In order for an MFT Intern to practice teletherapy, the Intern must be actively supervised for one (1) hour for every five (5) clinical hours, by an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, AAMFT Supervisor Candidate, ABEMFT Approved Supervisor, or ABEMFT Supervisor Candidate trained in teletherapy and telesupervision. Supervision must include discussion specifically related to the practice of teletherapy, whether that supervision is virtual or in person. The intern must also complete the minimum required 12 hours of training or one (1) credit course (15 classroom hours) in teletherapy.

(7) In order for a Licensed MFT Associate to practice teletherapy, the Associate must be actively supervised for one (1) hour for every ten (10) clinical hours, by an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, AAMFT Supervisor Candidate, ABEMFT Approved Supervisor or ABEMFT Supervisor Candidate trained in teletherapy and telesupervision. Supervision must include discussion specifically related to the practice of teletherapy, whether that supervision is virtual or in person. The associate must also complete the minimum required 12 hours of training or one (1) credit course (15 classroom hours) in teletherapy if not completed previously as an intern.

(8) In order for a Licensed MFT to practice teletherapy, the licensee must have completed a minimum of 12 hours initial training. This requirement is met for LMFT's who completed the 12 hours of teletherapy training or one (1) credit course (15 classroom hours) in teletherapy as an LMFT Intern or LMFT Associate.

(9) In order for an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, AAMFT Supervisor Candidate, ABEMFT Approved Supervisor, or ABEMFT Supervisor Candidate to be considered trained to provide telesupervision or telesupervision training, the Supervisor must have three (3) additional hours of training in telesupervision beyond the minimum required training to practice teletherapy.

Author: The Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§34-17A-1 thru 34-17A-26.

History: New Rule: Filed June 19, 2019; effective August 3, 2019. **Amended:** Published January 31, 2022; effective March 17, 2022.