Building Stronger Family Bonds

Training Future Mental Health Practitioners
A letter from
WILLIAM PINSOF, Chief Executive
and JANA L. JONES, President

Greetings!

When Chuck and Jan Kramer opened their Oak Park home to a group of psychotherapists in the 1960s to teach them about family therapy, they could never have imagined how far their fledging education program would go. During the past 45 years, our programs have evolved from home-based discussions to the advanced postgraduate training programs of the 1970s and 1980s to where we are today — the home of two world-class Master’s Programs run in conjunction with Northwestern University. And even more amazing, our recently accredited Counseling program is available nationwide online. Counseling@Northwestern is the latest phase in the Institute’s mission to educate therapists around the world who will one day be leaders in Marriage and Family Therapy and Counseling.

Evolution and growth are inherent in our three core activities — clinical service, education and research. As we learn new ideas in one area, we ensure that the discoveries we make influence the other two in order to continually improve our efforts to better serve our clients, educate our students and conduct our research.

Many clients seek help at the Institute’s Bette D. Harris Family and Child Clinic. As a crucial part of their training, students in both Master’s Programs provide therapy for those who seek help through our Clinic. Because we offer a sliding-fee scale, no one is turned away due to an inability to pay.

We look forward with enthusiasm to future developments in education. We also look back in gratitude to the many individuals and foundations who have contributed to the growth of our education programs. To them, to our students and alumni, and to our donors, we extend our heartfelt thanks for supporting our mission to strengthen and heal families and individuals for 45 years.

With gratitude,

William M. Pinsof
Chief Executive

Jana L. Jones
President

Institute News is published three times a year for friends, donors and alumni.

Join The Family Institute mailing list and receive updates and further information on events and happenings by emailing cok@family-institute.org.

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Read our blog, TFI Talks, at thefamilyinstitute.wordpress.com!
Training the clinicians of the future for 45 years
By Colleen O'Connor

Education plays a significant role in the history of The Family Institute. When mental health practitioners began meeting at Dr. Chuck Kramer’s Oak Park home in 1967, they did so to explore ideas and expand the reach of Marriage and Family Therapy via education. Since then, the Institute’s education programs have expanded in the fields of both Marriage and Family Therapy and Counseling, and extended their reach throughout the Chicagoland area and beyond.

1960s & 70s
In 1965, Institute founder Dr. Kramer began a study group to explore the tenants of Marriage and Family Therapy. Throughout these decades, this group formalized a two-year postdoctoral training program and held workshops and seminars. The 1975 merger with Northwestern Memorial Hospital allowed Institute staff academic appointments through Northwestern's Medical School, and in 1979, the creation of the Family and Child Clinic meant new hands-on training opportunities for students.

1980s & 90s
These decades saw an increase in training opportunities through new programs for Northwestern psychiatry and doctoral students. In 1986, Dr. William Pinsof took over the Institute and established its affiliation with Northwestern University in 1990. In 1991, the Institute’s Master of Science in Marital and Family Therapy began, with degree conferral by Northwestern. In 1994, the Institute opened its new headquarters on Northwestern’s campus: The Bette D. Harris Center.

2000s
The Institute enhanced its affiliation with Northwestern this decade with the formation of the Center for Applied Psychological and Family Studies. In 2002, Northwestern moved its Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology to the Institute as part of this new Center, doubling the size of our student body.

2010 - the Present
The Institute's education programs continue to grow, including our Fellowship Program. We now have eight Postdoctoral Fellowships — six Postdoctoral Clinical Scholar Fellows, the Dr. John J.B. Morgan Postdoctoral Clinical Research Fellow and the Madigan Family Postdoctoral Clinical Research Fellow. Our graduate programs also continue to grow, including the recent eight-year accreditation of our Master of Arts in Counseling, as well as its expansion to an online program, Counseling@Northwestern.

Education is an integral part of the Institute’s mission. As we move into the future, we will continue training the therapists of the future and positioning them to strengthen and heal families and individuals from all walks of life at the Institute, the Chicagoland community, our nation and even around the world.

For more information on our education programs, visit www.family-institute.org/education.
Our Counseling Program is Accredited!
Eight-year accreditation showcases strength and dedication
By Francesca G. Giordano, PhD, Program Director, The Counseling Program

On January 15, 2015, our Master of Arts in Counseling Program was accredited. CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) announced that the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program (our Master of Arts degree) was accredited for an eight-year period through March 31, 2023.

This decision is a major achievement for the Counseling Program. CACREP typically accredits new programs for two years. Receiving an eight-year accreditation the first time is a testimony to the strength of our Counseling Program and its training model.

The accreditation also confirms that the Counseling curriculum reflects nationally approved Counseling standards. These standards not only cover course content but include two clinically-based experiences as well. Students conduct an 80-hour practicum at The Family Institute’s Bette D. Harris Family and Child Clinic and a 600-hour internship at an off-site agency in the community for a total of two full years of clinical experience.

The CACREP Board based this accreditation decision on an extensive review, which included a 100+ page self-study document gathered and written by Counseling faculty and a three-day site visit. The site visit consisted of meetings with students, practicum supervisors, faculty and alumni. The site visitors also reviewed documents and met with internship supervisors at two off-site internship sites. The visitors then sat down with several Northwestern University personnel, including the Dean of The Graduate School, the Psychology Department Chair, and members of Northwestern University’s Library, Northwestern Career Advancement and Counseling and Psychological Center.

Moving forward, all Counseling students will graduate from an accredited Counseling Program (as well as those who graduated in 2014). The accredited status shortens and simplifies the Illinois licensure process for Counseling students, and allows them to be license-eligible in all 50 states.

The CACREP accreditation speaks to the academic rigor and dedication of our Counseling Program and our commitment to the future of mental health counselors.

Learn more about our Master of Arts in Counseling Program at www.family-institute.org/counselingprogram.
Counseling@Northwestern is a separate program from our on-ground Counseling Program with very similar dynamic curriculum features. The difference is it is delivered online to students across the country. Online Counseling students take the same courses, see clients in practicum and internship sites under supervision, and participate in reflective supervision relationships just like their on-ground counterparts.

Counseling@Northwestern students attend two immersion experiences in Evanston where they work directly with faculty while further developing their therapeutic skills. Online students also attend graduation at Northwestern and receive the same Master of Arts in Counseling degree.

Launched in March, Counseling@Northwestern is a unique partnership between Northwestern, The Family Institute and 2U, Inc. 2U partners with leading colleges and universities to deliver the world’s best online degree programs so students everywhere can reach their full potential. They provide the cloud-based platform on which the courses are offered in addition to support services for the online students, who are admitted four times a year (spring, summer, fall and winter).

2U works closely with Family Institute Counseling faculty to develop versions of their courses for the online platform. Working with content specialists, producers, directors and other types of media specialists, Counseling faculty create rigorous and engaging courses. Students also participate in live face-to-face small group discussions associated with each course, led by Family Institute faculty.

In addition to allowing the highly successful Counseling Program’s training model to be disseminated on a national level, Counseling@Northwestern is an opportunity for alumni to maintain their connection to the Counseling Program over time and distance. Along with current supervisors and preceptors interested in the online program, Counseling alumni will be used as group facilitators for courses.

Under the leadership of Dr. Francesca Giordano, Counseling@Northwestern will grow with each incoming cohort. Working with Ashley Seewald, MA, LCPC, Director of Program Development, the new online program will help train a whole new class of mental health counselors throughout the country.

For more information on Counseling@Northwestern, visit counseling.northwestern.edu.
Challenging and Rewarding Passion
The training cycle of a Marriage and Family Therapist

By Douglas Breunlin, Program Director, Marriage and Family Therapy Program

For graduates of our Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy (MSMFT) Program, the process of becoming a marriage and family therapist begins well before their arrival on campus. Prospective applicants research the MSMFT Program via our website, read faculty publications before they apply, and take part in open houses and interviews. The message of our program is clear: we have a passion for relational therapy and recruit and train talented applicants who have that passion, too.

After a rigorous screening process, the 28 accepted applicants arrive on campus in September where they are welcomed by the 40 members who make up the teaching and supervising faculty. Over the next seven quarters, they will take 19 courses, receive 250 hours of supervision and conduct 400 hours of therapy. The work is intense and the pace unrelenting.

By the end of the first quarter, students begin working with Institute clients. While scary and challenging, most students report that they were initially attracted to the program because clinical work is incorporated early on. Along the way, students experience moments of self-doubt about their ability to be a good therapist. They address their “growing edges” and explore them in supervision. They become more well-rounded and mature individuals.

As students enter their second year, they gain confidence and the program leaders begin to step back. As students enter their final quarter, energy shifts to life after graduation when our jobs committee assists students in finding employment. Most students will seek employment in agencies or practices where they can accrue the post-degree experience needed to obtain a license in marriage and family therapy (LMFT). Others will enter doctorate programs.

The cycle of an MSMFT student is challenging but rewarding. When our students compare their training to that of other graduate programs, they express amazement at the level they received. For the faculty, one of the greatest joys is to be able to provide that training, and then welcome graduates as colleagues in the exciting profession of marriage and family therapy.

For more information about our MFT Program, visit www.family-institute.org/mft.
At The Family Institute, we train the therapists of the future. Our two Master’s Degree Programs provide our students with a rigorous academic curriculum combined with the hands-on training they need to enter the workforce as astute and effective mental health practitioners.

We provide that training through our Bette D. Harris Family and Child Clinic, where clients receive our expert care regardless of their ability to pay. The Clinic provides that care by pairing each client with a therapist-in-training from one our Master’s Programs that best suits their needs. These therapists-in-training then create tailored treatment plans for their clients, working closely with expert supervisory therapists to ensure effective, supportive treatment.

We continuously look for ways to expand the services we provide to our clients, as well as training opportunities for our students. To that end, the Institute launched Project Strengthen, a new initiative that allows our Clinic to have an even greater impact. Project Strengthen builds on our current Clinic model by allowing our senior staff therapists to not only supervise but be primary therapists providing direct treatment to particularly complex cases, while giving our therapists-in-training the opportunity to observe, learn and take an active role in the treatment.

Project Strengthen allows our students to observe our expert senior staff therapists in action, and exposes them to a level of complexity they’re likely to see after they graduate and begin their careers.

Take, for example, a mother living with bipolar disorder and her son who struggles with substance abuse. This family would benefit from the care of an expert-led therapeutic team who can provide the systemic treatment that makes a real impact. By thoughtfully and deliberately matching a senior therapist to these complex cases, as well as the student(s) who will make up the therapeutic team, we can maximize the impact of our collaborative treatment and promote real change in these families’ lives, while enhancing our students’ training.

Project Strengthen allows our students to observe our expert senior staff therapists in action, and exposes them to a level of complexity they’re likely to see after they graduate and begin their careers. Project Strengthen not only broadens the reach of our training — it also deepens the reach of our services.

Project Strengthen is possible thanks to the generosity of our donors. Help us continue to expand our Clinic services by donating to the Bette D. Harris Family and Child Clinic today at www.family-institute.org/donate.
The mission of The Family Institute at Northwestern University is to strengthen and heal families and individuals from all walks of life through clinical service, education and research.

An affiliate of Northwestern University, The Family Institute is a unique, innovative not-for-profit organization, governed by its own independent Board of Directors and responsible for its own funding. We have four staff practice locations, including Evanston, Chicago, Northbrook and LaGrange Park. For more information on our staff practice, please call 847-733-4300 or visit our website at www.family-institute.org.

Scholarships allow us to help our students alleviate some of the financial burden of their graduate education.

You can help make that education possible for the therapists of tomorrow.

Each year, approximately 50 new students face that expense as they enroll in our Master’s Programs. Your gift in support of scholarships allows us to temper those expenses for some of our most qualified applicants.

Help make the future bright for students who want to achieve their goals at The Family Institute. Consider a gift to our Scholarship Fund.

For more information, visit www.family-institute.org/scholarships.

Circle of Knowledge Event

April 30, 2015
Dating, Mating & Marrying in the Age of Social Media
Microsoft, Chicago

If you are interested in more information about this event, please email cok@family-institute.org.

LOCATIONS

Bette D. Harris Center–Headquarters
618 Library Place
Evanston, IL  60201
847-733-4300

Millennium Park
8 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 500
Chicago, IL  60603
312-609-5300

Northbrook
686 Dundee Road, Suite 1501
Northbrook, IL  60062
847-733-4300

LaGrange Park
335 North LaGrange Road
LaGrange Park, IL  60525
847-733-4300