

M. Evan Thomas (He/Him), Ph.D., LMFT

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University Center Greenville
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Greenville, SC 29607
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CURRENT POSITION

Converse University (UCG) – Greenville, SC

July 2019 – Current

Associate Professor

Department Chair: Marriage and Family Therapy Program
Program Director

August 2024- Current

August 2024- Current

Assistant Professor

Department Chair: Marriage and Family Therapy Program
Program Director
Associate Program Director

July 2020- July 2024

July 2021 - July 2024

July 2019 – June 2021

EDUCATION

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, VA

Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies

2020

Concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy

Committee: Erika Grafsky, Ph.D. (Chair), Nancy Brossoie, Ph.D., April Few-Demo, Ph.D., & Pamela Teaster, PhD

Purdue University

Hammond, IN

M.S. in Child and Family Development

2016

Concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy

Committee: David Nalbone, Ph.D. (Chair), Lorna Hecker, Ph.D., & Jennifer Gonyea, PhD

University of Georgia

Athens, GA

B.S. in Psychology

2012

Cum Laude Honors Graduate

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Converse University

Greenville, SC

Instructor on Record

July 2019- Current

Family Therapy with Families of Addiction (MFS 637; n = 4)

Advanced Therapeutic Models I (MFS 639; n = 4)

MFT Systems II (MFS 680; n = 4)

Ethical, Legal, & Professional Issues (MFS 645; n = 2)

M. Evan Thomas

MFT Systems I (MFS 634; n = 5)
 Basic Techniques of Psychotherapy Interview (MFS 661; n = 1)
 Research Literacy in Marital and Family Therapy (MFS 647; n = 7)

Virginia Tech

Instructor on Record

Adult Development and Aging (HD 2004)

Online Course

Principles of Human Services (HD 2336; n = 3)

Human Sexuality (HD 2314)

Purdue University

Instructor on Record

Statistical Methods for Behavioral Sciences (BHS 201)

Adolescent Development (Psych 362; n = 4)

Freshmen Experience of Psychology (BHS 103)

Blacksburg, VA

August 2016 – July 2019

Summer 2019

Fall 2018- Spring 2019

Spring 2017

Hammond, IN

August 2013 - May 2016

Spring 2016

Spring 2014 - Fall 2015

Fall 2013

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journals

Thomas, M.E., Graftsky, E.L. (2021). Appalachian church leaders: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study to understand how substance use impacts their communities. *Pastoral Psychology*, 70, 379–397. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-021-00956-3>

Morgan, A.A.*, **Thomas, M.E.***, & Brossoie, N. (2020). Trauma-informed care as a framework for addressing the Opioid Epidemic in Appalachia: An exploratory Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*, 44(3), 156-169.

Thomas, M.E., & Brossoie, N. (2019). Appalachia mental healthcare: An interpretative phenomenological analysis study to identify training program needs. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*, 43(2-3), 91–102.

Book Chapters

Nedela, M. R., **Thomas, M. E.**, & Murray, M. (2020). Circles of outness: Systemic exploration of disclosure decisions in mixed-orientation relationships. In C. Boyd & J. S. Whitman (Eds.), *Homework Assignments and Handouts for LGBTQ+ Clients: A Mental Health and Counseling Handbook*. Routledge.

Thomas, M.E., Nedela, M.R., & Murray, M.M. (2017). Externalizing the process of disclosure: The use of narrative family therapy when working with LGTBQ groups. In Viers, D. (2nd Ed.). *The group therapist's notebook: Homework, handouts, and activities for use in psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

M. Evan Thomas

Hussain, K.M., **Thomas, M.E.**, Polezoes, S., & El Helou, L. (2016). Ethical and clinical considerations for In-Home Family Therapy. In Hecker, L.L. and Murphy, M. (2nd Ed.), *Ethics and professional issues in couple and family therapy*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Magazine Articles

Thomas, M.E. and Pittman, L. (2023). Creating systemic change through a social justice lens: Steps to make impactful changes. *Family Therapy Magazine*. <https://ftm.aamft.org/creating-systemic-change-through-a-social-justice-lens-steps-to-make-impactful-changes/>

Thomas, M.E. and Nedela, M.R. (2021). Queer therapists practicing in their cultural community: Proactive ethical decision-making suggestions. *Family Therapy Magazine*. <https://ftm.aamft.org/queer-therapists-practicing-in-their-own-cultural-community-proactive-ethical-decision-making-suggestions/>

Other Published Work

Thomas, M.E. (2024). Pride, Advocacy, and Dancing! *The AAMFT Blog*. <https://blog.aamft.org/2024/06/pride-2024-pride-advocacy-and-dancing-.html>

Thomas, M.E. (2023). Pride Is Meaningful. *The AAMFT Blog*. <https://blog.aamft.org/2023/06/pride-is-meaningful.html>

* Denotes Co-First Authors

PRESENTATIONS

Professional Presentations

National Level

Thomas, M.E. and Veldorale-Griffin, A. (2024, March). *Be the Leader You Want to See*. The workshop was presented at the AAMFT National Leadership Symposium. Phoenix, AZ.

Thomas, M.E. and Addison, S. (2023, October). *Affirming Supervision via the AAMFT LGBTQIA Affirming Guidelines*. “Intensive Workshop” presented at the AAMFT National Systemic Family Therapy Online Conference.

Veldorale-Griffin, A., **Thomas, M.E.**, and Surmick, S. (2023, October). *Advocating for LGBTQ+ Rights as MFTs*. “Expert Hour” presented at the AAMFT National Systemic Family Therapy Online Conference.

Thomas, M.E. (2023, March). *Substance Misuse Training in Appalachia: The Need to Include “Self of Practitioner” Work to Reduce Stigma*. Workshop presented to the annual Appalachian Studies Association national conference. Athens, OH.

Thomas, M.E. (2023, March). *Creating Systemic Change Through a Social Justice Lens: Steps to Make*

M. Evan Thomas

Impactful Changes. Invited presentation at the annual AAMFT Leadership Symposium. New Orleans, LA.

Morris, N., Nedela, M.R., & **Thomas M.E.** (2021, November). *I don't know what I don't know: LGBTQ+ 101*. Presentation presented at AAMFT National Systemic Family Therapy Online Conference.

Thomas, M.E. and Morgan, A.A. (2019, September). *Trauma-Informed Care: A Framework to Treat Opioid Use in Rural Areas*. Forum presentation submitted to the annual American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy National Conference, Austin, TX.

Thomas, M.E. and Brossoie, N. (2019, September). *Rural Communities: Preparing Clinicians to Address Substance Use*. Career development presentation submitted to the annual American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy National Conference, Austin, TX.

Thomas, M.E. and Morgan, A.A. (2019, March). *Trauma-Informed Care: A Way to Combat the Appalachian Opioid Epidemic*. Roundtable presentation submitted to the annual Appalachian Studies Association Conference, Asheville, NC.

Thomas, M.E. and Stephen Premo, J. (2018, November). *Differentiation: The key to overcoming substance use stigma*. Research presentation submitted to the annual American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy National Conference, Louisville, KY.

Stephen Premo, J., & **Thomas, M.E.** (2018, November). *SBIRT in clinical training programs: Lessons learned*. Research presentation submitted to the annual American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy National Conference, Louisville, KY.

Brennan, K., Scott, R., Brossoie, N. Premo, J. S., & **Thomas, M.E.** (2018, November). SBIRT training for student nurses: How age, attitudes, and beliefs influence proficiency. Paper presented as part of the symposium, Engaging Older Adults in Conversations about Their Alcohol Misuse, at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Boston, MA.

Premo, J. S., Brossoie, N., & **Thomas, M. E.** (2018, October). SBIRT in residency and clinical training programs: Lessons learned. Poster presented at the Collaborative Family Healthcare Association Annual Conference, Rochester, NY.

Thomas, M.E. (2018, September). *Trauma-Informed Care: A Way to Combat the Rural Opioid Epidemic*. Presentation presented to the annual National Association for Rural Mental Health National Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Thomas, M.E., Stephen Premo, J., & Brossoie, N. (2018, April). Roundtable discussion: Preparing students to address substance misuse in Appalachian culture. Roundtable presentation submitted to the annual Appalachian Studies Association Conference, Cincinnati, OH.

Natwick, J., Stucki, B.D., Morgan, A.A., & **Thomas, M. E.** (2017, October). *Experiential interventions to enrich therapy*. The forum presentation was presented at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy National Conference in Atlanta, GA.

Thomas, M. E. and Brossoie, N. (2017, September). *Influence of rural culture in addressing*

M. Evan Thomas

substance use. Presentation presented to the annual National Association for Rural Mental Health National Conference, San Diego, CA.

Thomas, M. E., Morgan, A.A., & Natwick, J. (2017, September). *Relational therapy in rural communities*. Presentation presented to the annual National Association for Rural Mental Health National Conference, San Diego, CA.

Lewis, F.J. and **Thomas, M. E.** (2017, June). *A systemic view of racial discrimination and the African American population: Applying contextual family therapy*. The forum presentation was presented at the annual Groves Conference on Marriage and Family, Charleston, SC.

Thomas, M. E. and Grafsky, E.L. (2017, March). *The importance of the Appalachian region on adolescent identity development through a Place Attachment Theory lens*. Poster presentation at the annual Appalachian Studies Conference, Blacksburg, VA.

State Level

Strickland, M. L., and **Thomas, M. E.** (2022, February). *The Importance of Using a Systemic Lens in the Counselling Professions*. Oral Presentation at the 58th Annual South Carolina Counseling Association (SCCA) Conference, Hilton Head, SC.

Thomas, M.E. (2021, July). *Queer Communities 101: Basic Practices to Be More Inclusive in Clinical Practice*. Invited Presentation presented to Mental Health America Spartanburg.

Thomas, M.E. (2021, June). *Rural Mental health: Preparing Clinicians to work in rural communities impacted by substance misuse*. Invited presentation presented to the South Carolina Counseling Association.

Karlsen, A. S., Strickland, M. L., **Thomas, M. E.** (2021, February). *Adapting Couple and Family Therapy Training to Our Virtual World*. Oral Presentation at the 57th Annual South Carolina Counseling Association (SCCA) Conference, Hilton Head, SC.

Thomas, M.E. (2020, August). *Rural Mental health: Preparing Clinicians to work in rural communities impacted by substance misuse*. Presentation presented to the South Carolina Association for Marriage and Family Therapy August Webinar.

Thomas, M. E., and Sanchez, B. (2015, October). *Fostering intimacy among couples: Utilizing Uno and Gottman*. Poster presented at the annual Indiana Marriage and Family Therapy Fall Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Hussain, K.M., **Thomas, M. E.**, Moore, R., & Sanchez, B. (2015, October). *Interfaith couples and families: conceptualizing challenges through a Structural Family Therapy lens*. Poster presented at the annual Indiana Marriage and Family Therapy Fall Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Thomas, M. E. (2015, April). *The impact of practicing in a rural setting on ethical decision-making for clinically practicing therapists*. Oral presentation presented at the annual Purdue University Calumet Student Research Day, Hammond, IN.

Hussain, K.M., **Thomas, M. E.**, Polezoes, S., & El Helou, L. (2015, April). *Ethical and clinical considerations for in-home family therapy*. Poster presented at the annual Indiana Marriage and Family Therapy Spring Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

M. Evan Thomas

Brockman, M., **Thomas, M. E.**, & Johnson, E.W. (2014, October). *Addressing sexual distress in individuals with an Autism Spectrum disorder: Utilizing the family and developmental theories through a narrative lens*. Poster presented at the annual Indiana Marriage and Family Therapy Fall Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Sanchez, B., **Thomas, M. E.**, & Williams, N. (2014, April). *Widening the scope: Adjusting premarital counseling to include same-sex couples*. Poster presented at the annual Indiana Marriage and Family Therapy Spring Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

THERAPEUTIC SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE

Converse University

Clinical Supervisor

Greenville, SC
July 2019 - Current

- Provide Supervision for master-level students (n = 43)
- Meet weekly for case consultation.
- Hold group supervision.
- Provide live supervision.
- Develop Self of Therapist

Virginia Tech Family Therapy Center

Graduate Student Supervisor

Blacksburg, VA
January 2019 – May 2019

- Provide Supervision to a first-year Ph.D. student. (n =1)
- Met weekly.
- Provided case consultation and clinical procedures guidance.

Undergraduate Student Supervisor

Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

- Clinical supervision provided to undergraduate interns (n=3)
- Met weekly.
- Provided case consultation on cases the intern would observe.

THERAPEUTIC EXPERIENCE

Thomas Counseling Services, LLC

Owner/Private Practice

Greenville, SC
October 2020 - Current

- Specialize in working with Queer Couples/Individuals/Families
- Specialize in working with individuals/couples/families impacted by substance misuse.

Emerge Family Therapy Center

Therapist Fellow

Spartanburg, SC
January 2020 – November 2020

- Maintained a client caseload.
- I used structural family therapy, collaborative language systems, and play therapy successfully.
- Worked with individuals, adolescents, families, couples, and premarital couples

Virginia Tech Family Therapy Center

Therapist Intern

Blacksburg, VA
January 2017 – December 2018

M. Evan Thomas

- Maintained a client caseload.
- I used structural family therapy, collaborative language systems, and play therapy successfully.
- Worked with individuals, adolescents, families, couples, and premarital couples

Crown Counseling Services

Therapist

Crown Point, IN

January 2016 - July 2016

Therapist Intern

January 2015 - January 2016

- Facilitated LGBTQ Youth Groups
- Worked closely with the Indiana Department of Child Protective Services
- Worked closely with the Northwest Indiana community via home-based therapy

School Therapist at East Chicago Lighthouse Charter School August 2015 - May 2016

- Maintained client caseload.
- Worked with at-risk youth on coping strategies.
- Worked directly with a school system for systemic treatment.

Purdue University Calumet Couple and Family Therapy Center

Hammond, IN

Therapist Intern

January 2014 - December 2014

- Maintained a client caseload.
- I used structural family therapy, collaborative language systems, and play therapy successfully.
- Worked with individuals, adolescents, families, couples, and pre-marital couples

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research at Virginia Tech

Qualitative Dissertation

April 2019 – May 2020

Title: Appalachian Church Leaders: An IPA Study to Understand Their Experiences with Substance Misuse

Chair: Dr. Erika L. Grafsky

Faculty Stigma of Substance Use Training

Role: Co-Investigator/Research Team Leader

September 2018- May 2019

PI: Dr. Nancy Brossoie

This qualitative study aims to understand the experiences of faculty teaching healthcare students how to screen for substance use. An IPA design was used, and phone and face-to-face interviews were utilized to collect data.

Appalachian Lexicon: Updating Appalachian Medical Terms

Role: Co-Investigator/Research Team Leader

September 2018- May 2019

PI: Dr. Nancy Brossoie

This mixed-methods study aims to understand if clients in Appalachia use unique terms to describe their physical and mental healthcare needs. An online survey and phone interviews are used as methods of data collection.

M. Evan Thomas

Rural Cultural Adaptation for SBIRT Training

Role: Co-Investigator

January 2017 – May 2019

PI: Dr. Nancy Brossoie

This study aimed to explore the need to culturally adapt the training of SAMHSA's Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) model to fit better the characteristics found in rural communities.

An Exploratory Study on the Needs of Rural Practicing Mental Health Service

Providers. Role: Co-Investigator/ Research Team Leader October 2016 – July 2017

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ericka Grafsky

The study aims to utilize mixed methods to research and explore the needs of rural practicing mental health service providers.

SBIRT Training for Students in Health Professions in Rural Southwest Virginia.

Role: Graduate Research Assistant/Co-Investigator September 2016 – May 2019

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

PI: Dr. Nancy Brossoie

The quantitative study aims to research best practices implementation projects integrating SAMHSA's Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) model into the college coursework of counselor education students, nursing students, and medical residents. SBIRT is used in clinical environments to talk to patients/ clients about their alcohol and drug use.

Research at Purdue University

Quantitative master's Thesis

January 2015 - May 2016

Title: *The Impact of Practicing in a Rural Setting on Ethical Decision-Making for Clinically Practicing Therapists*

Chair: Dr. David P. Nalbone

Research at the University of Georgia

Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant

Fall 2012

Research Professor: Dr. J. Maria Bermudez

Assisted in preparing a grant for submission (submitted November 1, 2012) to the Foundation for Child Development- \$149,921.00. Titled: Resilience and Vulnerability: Exploring the Effects of Parental Deportation and Police Detention on Latino Immigrant Children.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Queer and Trans Advocacy Network (QTAN)

Chair

January 2023 – December 2025

- Oversee network activities.
- Communicate with AAMFT regarding policy related to Queer/Trans* topics.

M. Evan Thomas

- Chair QTAN Conference in Summer 2022.
- Advocate for Queer/Trans members of AAMFT.

Chair-Elect

January 2021 – December 2022

- Prepare to transition to Chair after two years.

Family Team Leader

January 2017- January 2020

- Advocacy leader for the state of Virginia.
- Represented AAMFT at the state and national levels.
- Advocate for underserved communities and policy around substance abuse.

Virginia Tech

HDFS Graduate Student Assembly

August 2018- May 2019

Vice President

- Worked with students and faculty to create changes in the Human Development department for graduate students.
- Voiced student feedback to graduate faculty and reported program updates to program members.

Purdue University

Marriage and Family Therapy Program Student Representative

August 2015 - May 2016

- Solicited student feedback regarding curriculum, clinical experience, and program experience.
- Voiced student feedback to program faculty and reported program updates to program members.
- Represented Purdue University at Indiana AAMFT state conferences.

AFFILIATIONS

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

August 2013 - Current

Professional Member

Appalachia Studies Association

January 2016 - Current

Professional Member

National Association for Rural Mental Health

January 2016 - Current

Professional Member

South Carolina Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

August 2019 – Current

Professional Member

Queer and Trans Advocacy Network

August 2019 – Current

Professional Member

Minority Fellowship Program – Doctoral

September 2017 – August 2019

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Cohort member

M. Evan Thomas

Minority Fellowship Program - Youth

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
Cohort member

September 2015 - September 2016

Indiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Student member

August 2013 – July 2016

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Laura Jane Harper Scholarship, Virginia Tech 2016-2017
- Graduate Distinction Scholarship, Purdue University 2014-2016
- Third Place Poster Presentation Recipient at the Indiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Fall Conference, October 2015
- Audience Favorite Poster Presentation Recipient at the Indiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Fall Conference, October 2015
- Third Place Poster Presentation Recipient at the Indiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Fall Conference, October 2014

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

Peer Reviewer for Journals

August 2016 – Current

Journal of Rural Mental Health

Journal of Appalachian Healthcare

Journal of Family Theory and Review

Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved

Journal of Sexual and Relationship Therapy

Queer and Trans Advocacy Network (QTAN)

January 2021 – December 2022

Chair (National Position)

- Advocate for Queer/Trans members of AAMFT.
- Collaborate with MFT national organization to create [resources](#) for Queer and Trans* community.

Graduate Council – Converse University

August 2021 – Current

- MMFT Representative

GRADUATE STUDENT THESIS/DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBER

Virginia Tech (PhD)

Student: Lauren Pittman

Expected Graduation: May 2028

Role: A content expert on the queer community.

Converse University (EdD)

Student: Meredith Lockamy

M. Evan Thomas

Successfully Defended: April 2023

Role: A content expert on mental health.

Student: Karen Cleveland

Successfully Defended: February 2021

Role: A content expert on rural mental health and culture for a quantitative dissertation examining education in rural Appalachian communities.

Purdue University Northwest (MS)

Student: Lexie Unhjem

Successfully Defended March 2020

Role: Content area expert on rural mental health for a quantitative master's thesis examining rural mental health and racial minorities.

FACULTY SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBER

Marriage and Family Therapy Department

Spring 2020 – two tenure-track positions

Chair

Spring 2022 – tenure-track position

Chair

Spring 2023 – two tenure-track positions

Committee member