

# Biographical Data and Platform Statements

2024 Candidates

## BOARD MEMBER (3 POSITIONS)



### **Domonique Rice, PhD (She/Her/Hers)**

As an Independent Marriage and Family Therapist and AAMFT Approved Supervisor with a wealth of experience across Ohio, Arizona, and Nevada, my drive is rooted in a deep dedication to systemic family

therapy, mental health advocacy, and promoting principles of accessibility, affordability, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and engagement (DEIE) in the marriage and family therapy (MFT) field. In my role as a Director at The National Council for Mental Wellbeing, I spearhead initiatives to elevate the MFT profession by enhancing education, awareness, and systemic integration nationally, alongside advancing accessibility and diversity.

My journey, from earning a Ph.D. in Advanced Studies in Human Services to hands-on experience in challenging environments like state forensic psychiatric hospitals and state adult/juvenile correctional facilities, has emphasized the essential need for innovative, inclusive mental health care. This experience strengthens my commitment to ensuring that the pathway to becoming and remaining an MFT is equitable for all, supporting interns and licensed professionals alike.

I would like to ask AAMFT members to support my efforts, focused on:

- **Enhancing Accessibility and Affordability:** By developing resources and support within AAMFT for those early in their careers, to facilitate licensure and growth.
- **Advocating for DEIE:** By promoting a diverse and inclusive profession through systemic approaches that cater to varied populations, thus improving our field's cultural competence.
- **Promoting the Profession:** Through advocating for licensure portability, building relationships with national organizations, protecting our profession, and highlighting the unique qualities and benefits of MFTs.

My vision is to cultivate an MFT community celebrated for its inclusivity, excellence, and systemic impact, ensuring MFTs can thrive in diverse treatment settings. This collective effort aims to emphasize family therapy's crucial role in holistic health care, advancing AAMFT to a future where the MFT profession is widely accessible, esteemed, and integral to mental health care nationally.

### **(I) PRESENT PROFESSIONAL POSITION**

- Director, The National Council for Mental Wellbeing (2022- Present)
- Founder, Hope, Love, and Dream, Inc. (2020- Present)
- Owner/Independent Marriage & Family Therapist-Supervisor, Ohio Marriage & Family Therapy, LLC. D.B.A. The Art of Love and Intimacy (2016- Present)

### **(II) MOST RELEVANT PAST PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS (WITHIN THE LAST 7 YEARS)**

- Deputy Administrator of Quality & Oversight, State of Nevada
- Behavioral Health Services Administrator, State Ohio Department of Youth Services

### **(III) AAMFT MEMBERSHIP: PAST AND PRESENT PARTICIPATION IN AAMFT, INCLUDING TOPICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC INTEREST NETWORKS**

- Member, Family TEAM (2016- Present)
- Member, Couples and Intimate Relationships
- Speaker, The Systemic Family Therapy Conference (2022)
- Initial Reviewer, Minority Fellowship Program (2020-2021)
- Clinical Fellow, AAMFT (2018- Present)
- Ohio Advocate, Capitol Hill Day Medicare MFT Advocacy (2016; 2018)
- Board Member, Ohio AMFT - (2017-2018)
- Member, AAMFT (2010-Present)

### **(IV) PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES (Activities should be directly linked to the position and should demonstrate the skills needed for the position. Please refer to the list of competencies and skills for the position)**

Past and present activities, projects, or publications (limit 3) that are evidence of leadership skills, experience integrating information, working towards consensus, and decision-making skills.

#### **Group Skills (Team Orientation):**

- As a consultant for the Kaiser Permanente Workforce Development DEI Initiative, I've played a pivotal role in creating equitable pathways for diverse graduate students pursuing licensure in LISW, MFT, and LPC fields. This initiative, aimed at removing barriers for these graduates, directly supports the strategic goals of enhancing diversity and accessibility within the profession.

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- My leadership in developing and overseeing behavioral health programming and projects for a national organization, child & family services, severe mental illness patients and their families, and incarcerated adults and juveniles showcases my ability to work collaboratively and respect diverse perspectives within high-stress environments, ensuring governance policies are upheld with dignity and inclusivity.

### **Interpersonal Skills (Communication, Relational, Influence, Reputation):**

- My role at The National Council for Mental Wellbeing has been pivotal in advancing systemic family therapy and Substance Use treatment, through which I've developed and strengthened key communication channels across various sectors. This position has empowered me to advocate for significant policy and practice changes, addressing mental health disparities with a focus on integrity and independent decision-making. As an ambassador of the association, my engagements have not only underscored my commitment to these causes but also highlighted my ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders.
- My collaborative work with state agencies to design and implement systems of care for children, adolescents, and their families involved in agency-based services has been a testament to my relational and communication skills. These efforts have required a deep understanding of the complex needs of these populations, as well as the ability to work harmoniously with multiple agencies to create cohesive care systems that are both effective and empathetic.
- My advocacy work on Capitol Hill, pushing for the inclusion of Marriage and Family Therapists in Medicare, showcases my influence and reputation within the mental health community. Engaging directly with state representatives, I've been able to articulate the critical role MFTs play in the broader healthcare ecosystem, advocating for policy changes that recognize and support the value of our profession.

### **Personal Skills (Strategic, Innovative):**

- In addressing the critical shortage of mental health professionals, my involvement in the expansion of the Kaiser Permanente initiative across five states exemplifies not only strategic foresight but also a commitment to innovation within the field. This endeavor has been meticulously designed to complement the strategic goals of AAMFT, particularly in broadening access to mental health services and enhancing the professional landscape

for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs). By actively addressing this gap, the initiative is fostering a more inclusive environment for both professionals and those we serve.

- Additionally, my involvement in developing family-based programming in state psychiatric hospitals is a significant advancement in the treatment and care of patients with severe mental health illnesses. By integrating family dynamics into the therapeutic process, these programs have shown promise in improving patient outcomes and overall mental health. This innovative approach not only strengthens the patient's support system but also aligns with contemporary understandings of mental health care, which recognize the importance of treating individuals within the context of their relationships and communities.
- The establishment of a partnership with the University of Akron to facilitate MFT Interns' work within Juvenile Correctional Facilities is a testament to my dedication to both education and service. This collaboration not only provided invaluable practical experience for emerging therapists but also brought essential mental health services to underserved populations, embodying a holistic approach to mental health care that is both strategic and innovative.

### **Technical Skills (Knowledge of the Field and Organization, Expertise, and Experience):**

- My technical skills, reflective of my extensive knowledge and expertise within the marriage and family therapy (MFT) field, are further enriched by my ongoing commitment to mentoring MFT interns, those with dependent licenses, and professionals navigating the path to independent licensure. This commitment extends to addressing ethical dilemmas and supervision challenges, where I emphasize the importance of genuine self-care. My role in this capacity is not only to guide through the complexities of professional practice but also to underscore the necessity of self-care as a foundation for sustainable, ethical, and effective clinical work.
- My pursuit of continuous education within the MFT systemic lens is evidenced by my certifications as a Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator (CFMHE), Certified Child Custody Evaluator (CCCE), Certified Forensic Behavioral Analyst (CFBA), and Certified Forensic Psychometrist (CFP). Each certification has deepened my understanding of the intricate overlap between legal, psychological, and systemic dynamics in various forensic contexts, enhancing my capacity to contribute meaningful insights and advocacy within the MFT profession.

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- I have completed holistic sex therapy training with a focus on couples therapy and am currently advancing my expertise by pursuing certification as a Gottman Therapist. These endeavors are aimed at broadening my therapeutic toolkit, especially in addressing the complexities of couple dynamics with evidence-based, systemic approaches. The Gottman Method, renowned for its research-based strategy towards relationship therapy, and the nuanced understanding of sexuality in therapeutic practice from a holistic perspective, are integral to my commitment to offering comprehensive, cutting-edge care to the individuals, couples, and families I serve.

### Personal Attributes (Integrity, Commitment, Capacity):

- My professional and educational odyssey, initiated with my Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership from Wright State University in 2007, has been a testament to continuous growth and resilience. Embarking on my Master of Science degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at Capella University in the same year, amidst expecting a child, underscored my steadfast determination. This period heralded a challenging yet enriching era, as I navigated the complexities of being a single mother, full-time employee, graduate student, and later a therapist in 2010. The transition into a business owner and the pursuit of my Ph.D. at Walden University further enriched my journey, culminating in my graduation in 2015.
- Each stage of this path offered unique challenges but also invaluable opportunities for personal and professional development. The experiences gleaned from these diverse roles have profoundly deepened my resilience, integrity, and commitment. This multifaceted journey upholds my unwavering dedication to the principles of inclusion and diversity, which are central to my practice and advocacy in the field of marriage and family therapy. Reflecting on my journey, the completion of my Ph.D. in 2015 stands as a significant milestone, symbolizing not only academic achievement but also the embodiment of the therapist and advocate I have become, dedicated to creating inclusive and diverse therapeutic environments.
- This multifaceted experience has honed my capacity for critical and strategic thinking, allowing me to approach complex issues with a distinct perspective that values each individual's unique context. It has also reinforced my unwavering devotion to my fiduciary obligations, ensuring that I consistently act in the best interests of those I serve, uphold ethical standards, and contribute to the advancement of the profession with integrity.

- My commitment extends beyond professional responsibilities to include a deep-seated dedication to fostering an environment that champions diversity and inclusion. This commitment is evident in my advocacy work, my approach to therapy, and my efforts to support and mentor upcoming professionals in the field, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.
- The resilience I have developed through balancing these demanding roles has equipped me with the capacity to navigate adversity, adapt to change, and persevere in the face of challenges. This resilience, combined with a strong ethical foundation and a commitment to excellence, drives my continuous pursuit of professional development and contribution to the field.

These contributions illustrate my capacity to lead, innovate, and advocate within the marriage and family therapy profession, directly aligning with the competencies and skills vital for a role on the AAMFT Board. My comprehensive approach to tackling systemic issues, advocating for equity, and promoting the health and relevancy of the association and its members sets a solid foundation for my candidacy.

### **(V) COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: Past and present activities demonstrating knowledge of and commitment to social justice and systemic science.**

My commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is deeply embedded in both my past and present professional activities, demonstrating a consistent engagement with social justice and systemic science. This commitment is reflected through a variety of initiatives, collaborations, and educational pursuits that collectively aim to address disparities, foster inclusivity, and promote equitable mental health care practices.

### Educational Initiatives and Advocacy:

- I have developed and led educational programs aimed at integrating multicultural and social justice perspectives into the curriculum for marriage and family therapy students. This includes workshops and seminars that equip emerging therapists with the tools to understand and navigate systemic issues impacting mental health, with a particular focus on marginalized communities.
- My advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill, specifically advocating for the inclusion of Marriage and Family Therapists in Medicare, were driven by a commitment to expanding access to mental health services for underserved populations. This work demonstrates an understanding of systemic barriers to care and a dedication to legislative change that promotes equity.

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### Clinical and Community Engagement:

- In my clinical practice, I have implemented sliding fee scales and pro bono services to make mental health care more accessible to individuals across various socioeconomic backgrounds. This approach acknowledges the financial barriers that can prevent access to care and represents a tangible commitment to equity.
- Collaborating with state agencies to develop systems of care for children, adolescents, and their families involved in agency-based services, I have worked to ensure that these systems are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of the communities they serve. This includes fostering partnerships with universities to provide MFT interns with opportunities to work in juvenile correctional facilities, emphasizing the importance of systemic support for marginalized youth.

### Professional Development and Continuous Learning:

- My pursuit of certifications in areas such as forensic mental health evaluation and holistic sex therapy for diverse couples, polyamorous, and consensual non-monogamous relationships reflect a commitment to broadening my expertise in ways that directly support DEI principles. These certifications enhance my ability to address the unique needs of diverse client populations and contribute to a more inclusive understanding of mental health issues.
- Actively engaging in continuous education and training focused on DEI topics ensures that my practice remains informed by the latest research and best practices in social justice, and systemic science. This includes attending, hosting, and presenting at conferences and webinars, and engaging with professional communities dedicated to advancing these principles within the field of mental health.

Through these activities and commitments, I have demonstrated a sustained engagement with social justice and systemic science, reflecting a deep-seated belief in the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the mental health profession and beyond. My efforts underscore a dedication to creating a more equitable and inclusive society through both direct action and systemic change.

### (VI) RELEVANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION – Optional (up to five sentences)

You may choose to identify and/or describe parts of your background which may include the following: work setting (e.g., private practice, academia, agency, community health, government), home location (e.g., rural, urban, suburban), region (e.g., US state, international), any other relevant demographic information (e.g., age, ethnicity/race, gender, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual affiliation, ability, immigration status, languages spoken).

As a dedicated professional in the field of marriage and family therapy, my work spans across various settings, including national organizations, state governments, private practice, and consultancy roles within government-initiated mental health projects. My diverse professional background is complemented by my personal and professional experience in an urban and suburban environment, specifically within the multifaceted cultural and social landscape of the United States.

My identity and experiences as an African American female significantly inform my approach to therapy, advocacy, and education, embedding a rich understanding of the intersections between race, culture, gender, and mental health in my work. This aspect of my identity not only enhances my ability to connect with a broader range of clients but also deeply influences my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in both my professional practice and advocacy efforts.