



**Tai J. Mendenhall, Ph.D., LMFT**

**Associate Professor**

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### **Advising Philosophy:**

My role as an advisor incorporates a balance between leading (i.e., teaching the “science”), coaching (i.e., facilitating the connection of knowledge to real-life situations in the field – the “art”), and knowledge co-discovery (i.e., the interactions between advisee and advisor). This co-discovery leads to my advisees teaching me as much as I teach them, and we learn things together that neither of us could independently. Successfully negotiating and navigating this balance is an exciting way to foster advisees’ learning, scholarship, and field-preparation.

### **Communication:**

I believe that effective communication is multi-faceted (email, in-person discussions, telephone/texts, etc.). If/When you email me, I ask that you include appropriate communication etiquette (e.g., fill in the subject line, include greeting/salutation). I do not hold formal office hours. If you would like to set up a time to meet, send me a message with some days/times that work for you, whereupon I will respond with a day/time that works for me. If you see that my office door is open, all students and advisees are free to knock and drop-in for questions and/or consultations.

### **Meetings:**

My advisees and I usually meeting on a weekly basis. I ask that materials (e.g., revised manuscripts, data summaries) that we will discuss be sent to me one to two days beforehand so I can be prepared and effective in offering direction(s) and feedback. If/When you need to cancel or re-arrange a meeting, please try to let me know with as much advance notice as possible. If/When you would like to meet as soon as possible (e.g., emergencies, situations – good or bad – that require immediate attention), you may call or text me via cellphone.

### **Publications and Presentations:**

By the time that my doctoral advisees graduate, I expect them to have multiple manuscripts published, in-process, under-review, and in-process on topics related to their scholarship agenda. I will provide guidance in making good decisions about whether or not pursuing a specific manuscript and/or outlet is a good use of your time and effort. For work that I am involved in, I expect credit in co-authorship (with our order of authorship negotiated for each respective paper we work on together). I echo these expectations and processes for professional presentations (e.g., conference forums, posters) that you advance.

### **National Meetings:**

It is my expectation that you will attend and present at national meetings related to C/MFT (e.g., American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy) and/or integrated care (e.g., Collaborative Family Healthcare Association) during – at least – the final two years of your doctoral studies. These forums offer invaluable opportunities for you to network with current and future peers, colleagues, and employers, secure awards (e.g., recognizing merit, funding scholarship), and increase your visibility on the job market. Additionally, because I participate regularly in these forums, your participation will allow me the ability to introduce you to field leaders, engage with other programs, etc. – all of which contribute to and facilitate your success.

### **Teaching:**

Most of my advisees pursue careers as university or college faculty, wherein teaching represents an important (and sometimes primary) responsibility. It is thereby important that you gain excellent teaching

experience during your graduate program. This may involve working as a teaching assistant, co-teaching a course(s) with me or other faculty members, and independently teaching after prerequisite courses/preparation are completed. I will work with you throughout your program to seek, sequence, and engage in these activities.

### **Career Path:**

I believe that one of my primary roles as an advisor is to help, promote, facilitate, and prepare you for success on the academic job market. Collectively, this encompasses attention to your competence and proven track-record in scholarship and professional writing (e.g., quantitative and qualitative methods; publications in refereed journals; presentations at national and/or international forums), teaching (across assistant-, team-, and independent- roles), and outreach (e.g., public engagement; service) capacities. We will discuss this throughout your journey as a doctoral student, from the first semester to the last.

### **Independence:**

Professional development is something that evolves across degrees (e.g., from BA/BS to MA/MS to Ph.D.) as learners/students/trainees/supervisees grow from learning knowledge and skills to creating new knowledge and advancing/refining skills. I thereby expect that the manners in which I support your growth will evolve over time (e.g., from advising you regarding the nuts-and-bolts of the program and/or about what courses you take to identifying and consulting with me regarding what independent opportunities align with your goals/path; from me editing/revising your written work to offering substantive feedback regarding its content). By the time you graduate, I do not want you to “need” me in the same ways that you did when you began the program.

### **Professionalism:**

I expect you to manage your time, work/life balance, RA/TA responsibilities, course participation, and other programmatic efforts in a manner whereby you are professionally successful and biopsychosocially healthy. I am open and receptive to your seeking counsel at any time during your program, and will work with you in how to achieve these goals. I will support you in boundary-setting, and in saying “no” when you must to do this.

### **Personal Life:**

There is more to life than your school, and there is more to life than your work. Alongside their professional accomplishments, it is important to me that my advisees do not become statistics in terms of depression, burnout, divorce, and other “costs” of doctoral education that are frequently cited in professional literature. I encourage you to take care of yourself (e.g., exercise, hobbies) and the relationships that you hold most dear (e.g., partner, children, other family members, friends) so that you still have them when you become “doctor”.

### **Ethics:**

All advisees must abide by the University of Minnesota’s Code of Conduct. Clinical advisees must also abide by the AAMFT’s Code of Ethics.

### **Equity and Inclusion:**

Across of my efforts with you (e.g., advising, teaching, RA/TA efforts), I will work to promote social justice and diversity across both content and process activities. We will address together issues related, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, national origin, veteran status, social economic status, religion, and professional status – and consider educational resources and opportunities for you, for your patients/clients, and for your students.

### **Conclusion:**

I see my advisees as representing the next generation(s) of community-engaged scholars across multiple fields in health care (biomedical, behavioral, psychosocial). Our work together will equip you to hit the ground running in your career as a scholar, educator, and clinician whose efforts advance our progress in

eliminating the longstanding disparities that characterize our contemporary health- and social- systems. As you do this, my hope is that you – too – work with your own advisees in the future to do the same.