



\*\*The term “focus” should be used to describe opportunities in areas of training which are not recognized specialties. Training programs should strive to provide explicit explanations of the type of training provided in these non-specialty areas.

Approved by CoS Board of Directors, 8/19/2023.

**Common Definitions and Criteria Across All Recognized Specialties**  
Clarifications to help recognized specialties use the APA-Taxonomy\* in a consistent manner

- Broad and general training forms the core of education and training in health service psychology. Programs are accredited by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association. Programs integrate the broad and general training with those educational and training activities related to recognized specialties as determined by the specialty and described in a specialty taxonomy. In addition, each specialty will have education and training guidelines consistent with its specialty area. Specialty training may be acquired at the doctoral, doctoral internship, postdoctoral, or postlicensure stages as defined by the specialty.
- By definition, postdoctoral education and training is a Major Area of Study in a specialty recognized by the Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Subspecialties in Professional Psychology (CRSSPP) and requires that 80% or more of time be spent in the specialty area. At the postdoctoral training stage, as per above, it is recognized that training in the Major Area of Study will be consistent with the education and training guidelines set forth by the specialty.
- A course is typically defined as 3 semester-credit hours (or equivalent) in a health service psychology training program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA).
- A practicum is typically defined as the equivalent of one academic year (e.g., 9 months, in semester or quarter systems) consisting of supervised training for at least 8 hours per week, or its equivalent, with at least 50% of time in the provision of clinical services.
- Consistent with what is described in *CoA Standards of Accreditation*, supervision should be provided by persons with competencies in the specialty demonstrated by appropriate training, credentials, and qualifications for training in the specialty as defined by the specialty.
- Additional training experiences can also include, but are not limited to, research experiences, lab meetings, brown bags, lecture/colloquia series, and grand rounds, as defined by the specialty.
- For definitions of continuing education (CE) and continuing professional development (CPD) see the APA [Quality Professional Development and Continuing Education Resolution](#). A continuing education (CE) course is defined as an organized program by the American Psychological Association or Canadian Psychological Association, a State Psychological Association, or other major provider of CE (e.g., Society of Behavioral Medicine).

\* Taxonomy; [www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/taxonomy.pdf](http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/taxonomy.pdf)

### **Specialty Specific Definitions and Criteria**

Use superscripts in table entries above to reference footnotes provide in this section which expand upon or clarify table entries as needed.

Superscript 1: CFP Doctoral Training, For the Major Area of Study Couple and Family Psychology (CFP) systemic principles are infused throughout the curriculum of APA accredited doctoral programs and specifically within designated courses and practicum. In contrast to an individual approach, a systemic approach views human behavior to occur within a contextual matrix of individual, interpersonal, and environmental or macrosystemic factors (Stanton, 2009). At the Emphasis, Experience, Exposure levels of doctoral training, systemic principles are infused in the relevant curriculum requirements.

Superscript 2: CFP Doctoral Course: Doctoral courses are considered the equivalent of the three credit hours. The majority of course content is relevant to the CFP foundational and functional competencies presented in Celano (2019) and Stanton & Harway (2019), which appear in Fiese, Celano, Deater-Deckard, Jouriles & Whisman (Eds.) (2019). *APA handbook of contemporary family psychology: Vol.3. Foundations, methods, and contemporary issues across the lifespan*. Washington, DC: APA.

Superscript 3: CFP Doctoral Practicum: Must include at least 50% of clinical service delivery with individuals, couples, parents, families and individual family members, and their relevant interprofessional teams using a systemic epistemological framework. Doctoral practicum may also include seminar attendance, readings, supervision, etc.

Superscript 4: CFP Doctoral Dissertation or Research Project: Empirical research, extended case studies, literature critiques and analyses, or capstone projects relevant to CFP topics, problems, populations, competencies.

Superscript 5: CFP Supervised Experience/Practice: Clinical service delivery involving systemically oriented assessment, consultation, and therapy to individuals, couples, families and family members, and interprofessional care teams. CFP supervised experience/practice may include not only direct services but also seminar attendance, assigned readings, research, provision of clinical supervision, teaching, and program development/evaluation/administration.

Superscript 6: CFP Supervisors: Primary supervisors of CFP supervised experience/practice should have training, qualifications, or credentials (e.g., ABPP, HSP) as couple and family psychologists.

Superscript 7: CFP Post-doctoral Training: Exposure at this level of training (10-20% time commitment) reflects CFP supervised training that may be available within organized post-doctoral training where the major area of study is another specialty.

Superscript 8: CFP Post-licensure supervised practice. The minimum required supervision hours by a CFP specialist (ABPP) or licensed psychologist qualified to supervise CFP must be documented as part of the “supervised experience” at this education and training level.

## Examples of Program Descriptors for Each Stage of Training

### Doctoral Training Program

A typical doctoral program that offers a **Major Area of Study** in couple and family psychology (CFP) includes 12 credit hours of coursework and one nine-month (two-semester) practicum. Coursework emphasizes various CFP theories, assessments, and interventions with couples and families. Students are introduced in courses to models of treatment with couples and families, then gain applied experience with couples and families in practicum. Additionally, students complete a dissertation or research project with a systemic focus.

### Internship Training Program

A typical, one-year, full-time doctoral internship with a couple and family psychology **Major Area of Study** or **Emphasis** should include a balance of clinical experiences and didactic offerings. The integration of theory, research, and practice in applied psychology generally and family psychology more specifically will be central to the professional socialization of the pre-doctoral intern. In addition to substantial opportunities for assessment and treatment of individuals and interpersonal psychopathology and/or organizational problems, interns should be provided diverse clinical experiences in systemic assessment and intervention with couples and families. Both individual and group supervision should be offered.

Internships that are strong in family psychology training are those that meet the following three criteria:

- Include didactic or case presentations focused on family psychology or systemic theoretical perspectives.
- For a Major Area of Study in family psychology, the internship includes  $\geq 50\%$  of supervised experience of couples/family therapy or systemic consultation supervised by a faculty member with demonstrated competence in family psychology. For an Emphasis 30 - < 50% of supervised experience is required. For example, in an internship with four clinical rotations, two of the four would focus on couple and family psychology to be considered a Major Area of Study and one of the four to be considered an Emphasis in couple and family psychology.
- Employ at least one licensed faculty member with demonstrated competence in family psychology. Demonstrated competence in family psychology is defined by board certification in family psychology from the American Board of Professional Psychology; election as fellow of Div. 43; service in Div. 43 through governance or committee activities; scholarly publications, including research reports, related to family psychology and/or completion of postdoctoral training in family psychology (adapted from Division 43's website: [\*Predoctoral Internships in Couple and Family Psychology\*](#)).

### Postdoctoral Training Program

Postdoctoral training in with couple and family psychology as the **Major Area of Study** requires that 80-100% of the training, (broadly conceptualized to include, but not be limited to, clinical service delivery, supervision, research, and didactics) is focused on the application of

systemic theoretical perspectives in couple and family psychology. A program example is the Family Institute at Northwestern University, which offers a one-year postdoctoral fellowship with couple and family psychology as the Major Area of Study. The program goal is teaching trainees to think and practice within a systemic lens and learn to work systemically with a diverse clinical population of individuals, couples, and families. Weekly seminar topics address a range of CFP issues and populations. Each fellow participates in at least one clinical consultation team consisting of trainees and staff level therapists; each team is focused on a specific population of treatment models (e.g., emotion-focused therapy, transition to parenthood, integrative systemic therapy). In addition, fellows may elect to participate in applied clinical research, including the option to learn how to conduct an empirically based treatment related to an ongoing randomized clinical trial. Fellows spend at least 80% of their time in systemic practice, supervision, research, and/or didactic presentations.

### Post-licensure Training Program

Post-licensure CFP training may be provided in an organized program of study. One example is provided by the Child and Family Therapy Clinic at Kennedy Krieger Institute, which offers a one-year fellowship that is open to licensed professionals. The program is focused on using a family therapy framework in diagnosis and treatment pertaining to a wide variety of concerns. Participants receive weekly individual and group supervision, as well as consulting with interdisciplinary teams that provide comprehensive care.

Post-licensure CFP training may also be provided with a combination of (a) organized online CFP curriculum (at least 25 hours of APA approved continuing education (CE) or continuing professional development (CPD) courses consistent with systemic principles and the CFP functional and foundational competencies) and (b) 500 hours of clinical experience supervised by a couple and family psychologist who is Board certified or eligible for Board certification. Online APA-approved CE or CPD courses in CFP are available via CFP associations (e.g., APA Div. 43, ABCFP, AACFP), as well as universities, (e.g., the Integrative Couple and Family Therapy Program at St. John's University, the William James Child and Family Forensics CE Certificate program).