Alumni

Dr. Kristen Dreyfus

Dr. Dreyfus is originally from New Jersey where she attended college at Monmouth University. There she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Women's Studies. She then continued her education at Boston College, receiving a Master's degree in Educational and Developmental Psychology. In 2014, she earned a PhD in Medical Family Therapy from East Carolina University where her dissertation research focused on primary care patients with diabetes. During her internship she was part of an inpatient integrated care team where she saw patients who were hospitalized for complications related to diabetes. Dr. Dreyfus has worked for the East Carolina University for the last 18 years during which time she was involved with the curricular aspects of the Diabetes Fellowship in the Department of Internal Medicine. Currently, she serves as the Director of Institutional Assessment in the office of Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research. Dr. Dreyfus is a member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the North Carolina Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and the Collaborative Family Healthcare Association. Clinically, she works with individuals, couples and families from a biopsychosocial-spiritual lens. Her interests focus upon the Attachment Theory, Emotionally Focused Therapy, and healthcare utilization patterns among patients with chronic diseases.
Dr. Grace Wilson

Dr. Grace Wilson (2014) is the full-time Behavioral Science faculty member at the Great Plains Family Medicine Residency Program in Oklahoma City, OK. In her time in that role, she has launched an integrated behavioral health care program at the outpatient clinic, and she has initiated an integrated self-management program for chronic pain patients. She is a 2015-2016 Behavioral Science/Family Systems Educator Early Career Fellow with the Society for Teachers of Family Medicine, and she also teaches in Oklahoma Baptist University’s Medical Family Therapy professional certificate program. She states, “Through diverse clinical and supervision settings, skill development in areas such as biofeedback and program evaluation, and rich professional connections, my time at ECU uniquely prepared me to take on my role educating Family Medicine residents. My current position blends teaching, research, clinical work, and supervision to impact not only patients, but also medical and mental health providers.”

Dr. Dan Marlowe

Dr. Marlowe is currently the Director of Behavioral Health for the Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lillington, NC. Dr. Marlowe is responsible for the psychosocial well-being of Campbell's medical students, health professional students, graduate students, and faculty at their Health Sciences campus as well as on main campus.
Dr. Patrick Meadors

Dr. Meadors is the Psychosocial Oncology Manager at the Levine Cancer Institute (LCI) within Carolinas Healthcare System and is responsible for the provision of integrated psychosocial and psychiatric services throughout the LCI hospital network and physician practices. Following graduation, Dr. Meadors joined a radiation oncology practice in Ocala, FL consisting of 5 medical offices in 4 counties and served as adjunct faculty at the University of Florida. While in Ocala, he served as the President of the Unit Operating Board in Marion County, FL for the American Cancer Society and received the Hope Award for exemplary volunteer services that improved quality of life for cancer patients. Since joining LCI, he has been recognized as a Tier I leader for CHS and received the KEAP award for outstanding performance and key contribution to the system. He has multiple publications in the area of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and oncology and most recently presented on 'Development of Standardized Evidence-Based Therapeutic Practices Within a Large Healthcare Institution' at the International Psycho-Oncology Society Conference in Washington, DC.

Dr. Keeley Pratt

Keeley J. Pratt, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in Human Development and Family Science Program and the Couple and Family Therapy Specialization located in the Department of Human Sciences at The Ohio State University. She is an Independently Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and an AAMFT Approved Supervisor. Dr. Pratt graduated with her doctorate in Medical Family Therapy in 2010, and completed a post-

doctoral research fellowship from 2010-2012 at Research Triangle Institute International (RTI). For the past decade, Dr. Pratt has worked as a clinician-researcher Pediatric Obesity Treatment Centers and more recently adult outpatient weight management and bariatric surgery. She runs the behavioral health and family therapy services for the Living Well Phase I Program adult weight management program at the OSU Wexner Medical Center and is the coordinator for a graduate interdisciplinary specialization in Obesity Sciences at OSU. She has received federal and foundation funding for her work in obesity treatment.

Dr. Jackie Williams Reade

Dr. Williams Reade is an Associate Professor and Director of the Medical Family Therapy Program at Loma Linda University. Upon graduating from ECU, Dr. Williams Reade was accepted as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD. Of her ECU experience, she said, "My time in the ECU MedFT program gave me a broad foundation as well as expertise in opportunities, challenges, and systems related to the greater medical world. Her research interests and publications are primarily in the areas of pediatrics, palliative care, and illness narratives.

Dr. Kenneth Phelps
Dr. Kenneth Phelps is currently an Associate Professor of Clinical Neuropsychiatry and Adjunct Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the University of South Carolina (USC) in Columbia, SC. He serves as the Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic Director at Palmetto Health - USC Medical Group. He specializes in the treatment of youth and families traversing a variety of neurodevelopmental and neuropsychiatric illnesses. Dr. Phelps has special interests in children and families living with Tourette's Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders. He delivers family-oriented cognitive and behavioral interventions within a multi-disciplinary team of providers. Reflecting upon the program, Dr. Phelps states, "The doctoral program (at ECU) allowed me the ability to understand the complexities of the mind, body, family and culture, which I can now pass along to budding physicians and rotating medical students."

Dr. Jonathan Wilson

Dr. Wilson is an Assistant Professor of Psychology/Marriage and Family Therapy at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, OK. Dr. Wilson began his appointment OBU in 2013 while completing his dissertation at ECU. Along with Dr. Grace Wilson, a fellow ECU MedFT alumni, he co-founded Oklahoma's first Medical Family Therapy certificate program in 2014, a one-year clinical certificate intended for master's level behavioral healthcare providers of all disciplines. He was awarded Oklahoma Baptist University’s “Promising Teacher Award” in 2017. His dissertation research, a qualitative study examining the screening experiences of healthcare providers for IPV among migrant and seasonal farm working women, has subsequently led to multiple AAMFT conference presentations and publications. When asked about his time at ECU, he responded "ECU prepared me to succeed in many different arenas of behavioral healthcare. While I ultimately elected to accept a tenure-track faculty position focused primarily on teaching, I felt equally equipped to succeed in clinical practice, research, and policy work."
Dr. Ryan Anderson

Ryan Anderson received his B.S. degree in Marriage, Family, and Human Development and his M.S. degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Brigham Young University. He received his Ph.D. in Medical Family Therapy from East Carolina University as a part of the first MedFT cohort, and completed his internship at the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center. He has worked as a family therapist in outpatient practice, in inpatient psychiatric settings, in cancer care, in several other medical settings, as a wilderness therapist and Assistant Clinical Director at Outback Therapeutic Expeditions, and as a therapist at Telos Residential Treatment. His teaching experience includes undergraduate university courses, first year medical students, and community outreach and education programs. He has also been a speaker at various conferences and continuing education events. He is the author of "Navigating the Cyberscape: Evaluating and Improving Our Relationship with Smartphones, Social Media, Video Games, and the Internet" and of "Screen Savvy: Creating Balance in a Digital World."

In addition to his work in the social sciences, Ryan spent about a decade dabbling to various degrees in video game design and production, working as a voice actor, writer, and designer for numerous mods and several independent games. He is also excited to be a part of the development team and the Clinical Director for Telos U, a multidisciplinary, highly collaborative treatment center for young adults designed to help young adults with depression, anxiety, processing issues, learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorders, electronics addictions, and general difficulty transitioning into adult roles. Telos U will also feature an extensive array of outpatient services. Ryan has a variety of other interests, including martial arts, history, cooking, music, language, physics, astronomy, hiking, and European board games. Most of all, though, Ryan enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons.
**Dr. Matt Martin**

Matt Martin, PhD, LMFT, is Clinical Assistant Professor of Research and Evaluation at the Arizona State University Doctor of Behavioral Health Program. He is an AAMFT Clinical Member and Approved Supervisor. He has graduate degrees from Brigham Young University and East Carolina University. He completed pre-doctoral training in Concord, New Hampshire and a post-doctoral fellowship in Chicago, Illinois. His research interests include scaling and measuring integration, population health management, and substance use prevention.

**Dr. Jennifer Harsh**

Dr. Harsh is an assistant professor and the Director of Behavioral Medicine in the division of General Internal Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE. She is responsible for educating internal medicine residents and medical students on psychosocial components of illness and health, supervising behavioral medicine interns, developing research projects that focus on patient, family, and medical resident wellbeing, and providing clinical care for patients and families as part of a patient centered medical home model of care.
Irina Kolobova

Dr. Irina Kolobova has a master's degree in Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy from Lewis & Clark College and a PhD in Medical Family Therapy from East Carolina University. Dr. Kolobova is currently the Behavioral Science Director for the Penn State Health St Joseph Family and Community Medicine Residency Program. Previous experience includes working as an Integrated Care Consultant with the Center of Excellence for Integrated Care, a Medical Family Therapist with Greene County Health Care, a Research Coordinator in the Department of Endocrinology at Oregon Health & Science University, and other research positions related to psychosocial health. Dr. Kolobova's research interests include access to care, financial models for integrated care, health disparities, resident education, and program evaluation. To find balance, Dr. Kolobova enjoys traveling (preferably without an itinerary), stand up paddle boarding, and outdoor adventures.

Meghan Lacks

Dr. Lacks received both her master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and PhD in Medical Family Therapy from East Carolina University. She completed a pre-doctoral internship with AAMFT serving as a research and policy analyst for military initiatives. Previously, she served as the Director of Integrated Care for a federally-qualified health center in eastern North Carolina. Currently, Dr. Lacks is a full-time clinical assistant professor in the division of Behavioral Medicine in the Department of Family Medicine at East Carolina University. Dr. Lacks is responsible for providing education, training, and supervision to students from various mental health disciplines working as behavioral health consultants in primary care settings and for the training and education of Family Medicine residents on the psychosocial components of illness and health.
Dr. Aubry N. Koehler

Aubry N. Koehler graduated from the Medical Family Therapy Program in 2015. She is originally from Massachusetts and completed her doctoral internship at Concord Hospital/Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency Program in Concord, NH. She currently works as Integrated Care Strategist at Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, a Behavioral Health Managed Care Organization administering Medicaid for members across 20 counties in North Carolina. Aubry’s academic interests are health disparities, medical residency training, and culturally sensitive programming for racial/ethnic minorities. Her non-academic interests include being outside and spending time with her daughter, Ada.

David Haralson

Dr. David Haralson works as an Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy at Pfeiffer University in Morrisville, North Carolina. In this capacity, he teaches graduate courses in marriage and family therapy, mentors students, conducts research, and provides marriage and family therapy service opportunities in the community. His research interests include developing culturally-adapted parenting classes, improving health outcomes for Latino patients and other minority groups, and developing attachment-based treatment for substance use problems. Prior to coming to ECU, Dr. Haralson obtained his Bachelor of Science Degree in Sociology from Brigham Young University-Idaho and his Master of Science Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Colorado State University. His time spent at ECU has been invaluable in understanding medical culture and diagnoses, in understanding the complexities of health as it related to biopsychosocial and spiritual contributors, and in the development of his administrative and supervisory identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist. Outside of his professional life, he enjoys spending time with his wife and five children, playing sports of all kind, listening to music, hiking, camping, playing board games, and playing retro video games.
Mary Moran
Dr. Mary Moran graduated from ECU in spring 2018 and completed her master’s in Marriage and Family Therapy from university of Akron. She also received a certificate in Health Care Administration while completing her Ph.D. in Medical Family Therapy at ECU. Dr. Moran works as the Program Coordinator-Trauma Research and is responsible for coordinating and conducting research in the Level I trauma center to ensure accreditation requirements from the American College of Surgeons at Summa Health in Akron, Ohio are met. Dr. Moran is also responsible for helping residents conduct research and has the flexibility to conduct her own research agenda. Specifically, the type of research that the trauma center conducts is primarily operational and financial, which are important components of the Sis Sigma certification. Dr. Moran is currently pursuing this certificate to better conduct operational and financial research for the trauma center.

Current Students

First Year Students

Afarin Rajaei

Research Interests: Various aspects of couples’ relationships ranging from biopsychosocial-spiritual (BPSS) stressors in conflicted intimate relationships, romantic relationship quality, couples' social networks, disclosure of romantic challenges, marital conflicts, divorce and remarriage to relationship recovery and repair. Also, Social justice in the context of medical care, Improving the quality of integrated health care and lowering the cost at the same time, Interpersonal health communication and intercultural communication in heath context, Communication approaches to health advocacy, and Community-Outreach and Programming.

Why I Chose MedFT at ECU: When I was looking for a PhD program, I realized early on that I was interested in Medical Family Therapy and the biopsychosocial-spiritual model. I chose the
Medical Family Therapy doctoral program at ECU because it provided me with the opportunity to improve my clinical skills in the context of health care as well as my research skills. Our program is one of the pioneers in the field of MedFT and the quality of learning is outstanding. On the other hand, we have family atmosphere in our program, which is supportive, understanding, and caring not only among faculty but also current and former students. I felt this since the moment I came here for the interview. From the beginning, you have a mentor who helps you with all of your questions and concerns. Last but not least, I truly believe that our program and faculty are dedicated to support me to become a better educator, therapist, and researcher. The PhD program in MedFT at ECU has everything I was looking for in a program and I feel very happy and privileged to study here.

Melissa Welch

Research interests: health outcomes research, family engagement and quality of care, patient and support system experiences with integrated care settings, caregiver support, chronic illness, family adjustment to new diagnosis, integrated care in the hospital setting, autoimmune diseases and mental health, gerontology, biopsychosocial-spiritual approach, training of MedFTs and medical providers, policy change, Medical Family Therapy advocacy

Why I Chose MedFT at ECU: I chose the MedFT program at ECU because I could see a painful gap in the US healthcare system that needs to be filled and knew that ECU’s doctoral program would prepare me to be the researcher and leader necessary to contribute to filling that gap. The faculty in the MedFT doctoral program genuinely care about my desire to learn and fuel my passion in every step of the program. Similarly, the other students in the program encourage and challenge me to be the best student and professional I can be. I chose this program because it was clear that they understand what it takes to prepare medical family therapists to do the necessary work to improve our healthcare system and would be supportive throughout the educational process. I am confident that upon the completion of my degree at ECU, I will have the knowledge, skills, and potential to make a lasting impact in the field of Medical Family Therapy.
Julian Crespo

**Research Interests:** intersection between religious beliefs from particularly sexual trauma in Latino communities. Specifically I hope to answer: what role do non-constructive guilt play in the biopsychosocial-spiritual health of current Catholic Latino women who report sex trauma as a child or adolescent?

**Why I Chose MedFT at ECU:** I chose MedFT because of the systemic nature of the program. I wanted to study something that connected different dimensions of human beings in the case of bps dimensions of being a human. I chose ECU mainly because I had a very positive experience during my master’s degree. I also practically chose ECU because I live in the area and it has been easy for me to become established in the program. This particular area is also populated with a lot of Latino families, with a huge need to serve these people who are bi-cultural and bi-lingual. It is important that we gain a better understanding to serve them and establish the literature to gain a better understanding for what it means to be healthy and to understand all of the systems that mean to be healthy.
Second Year Students

Rebecca Levy

Research interests: Integrated care treatment in emergency department for suicidal patients, narrative therapy, cultural humility in MedFT, health disparities, social justice in the context of medical care, promotion of family and integrated care

Why I Chose MedFT at ECU: I chose the MedFT program at ECU because it provided me with the foundational education that I needed to make a difference in mental health care as part of the integrated health care system. As I worked in the field during my master’s program, I continued to see the need of MedFT as part of the greater system. There is no other program where I can get this quality of learning of MedFT as it is one of the pioneers. The faculty and my peers are truly devoted to the research and promotion that mental health deserves as part of the holistic approach.

Natalie Richardson

Research Interests: Ambiguous Loss, Clinical Interventions for Complicated Grief, Cultural Expectations Surrounding Grief and Bereavement Processes, Impact of Traumatic Stress on Relational Health, Military Couple Experiences, Community-Outreach and Programming
Why I Chose MedFT at ECU: When searching for potential PhD programs, it was important for me to find a program that emphasized the value of both clinical development and research for students. ECU provided a unique opportunity to extend my clinical training as a master’s level clinician to include practical experience in integrated behavioral health care. The program and faculty place a large emphasis on systemic and biopsychosocial-spiritual approaches to healing, which fit well with my research interests of ambiguous loss and clinical interventions addressing complicated grief. While I was originally drawn to the esteemed reputation of the program as a successful institute for producing competitive scholars contributing to the field of medical family therapy, it was the personal connections formed early on with faculty and current students that really solidified my decision. Since the moment I arrived in Greenville, I have felt supported in my personal goals, valued as a professional and clinician, and validated in my adjustment as a new student. I fully believe each faculty member has my best interest in mind and will do their part to ensure that my time during and after the program is a success.

Rachel Williams

Research Interests: Biopsychosocial-spiritual impact on major illnesses, specifically Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), the father’s emotional and supportive role during infertility, miscarriages, and stillbirths, medical residents understanding of the behavioral healthcare role in medical settings and their willingness to utilize behavioral health care providers

Why I chose MedFT at ECU: While completing my master’s program at ECU I realized early on that I was interested in Medical Family Therapy and the biopsychosocial-spiritual model. I finally chose this program at ECU because I’ve always felt at home with the other students and faculty. The program at ECU truly provides a family atmosphere in which I am able to willingly be vulnerable and stretch my own values and beliefs. The faculty are genuinely supportive in my research interests and in preparing me for my intended career path. I feel as though the program is dedicated to furthering the field of Medical Family Therapy through research and practice, which was also a factor in my decision.
Third Year Students

Braden Brown

**Research Interests:** Examining the effects of relationship satisfaction on measures of sleep quality, cost effectiveness of obesity treatment in integrated healthcare settings, BPSS interventions for managing chronic pain, the transition into and out of collegiate and professional sports from a BPSS perspective.

**Why I Chose MedFT at ECU:** I chose the Medical Family Therapy doctoral program at ECU because I strongly resonate with its biopsychosocial-spiritual and systems theory approach to understanding and treating individuals, couples, families, and larger systems. Secondly, I chose ECU because of the faculty’s investment in helping me further develop my skills as a researcher, clinician, teacher, supervisor, grant writer, administrator, and policy maker. Most importantly, I chose ECU because of its family-based culture and the continual love and support I have felt not only from every faculty member, but also from current and former students. I feel very privileged and honored to be a part of such a prestigious program where I am surrounded by a team of incredible leaders, mentors, colleagues, and friends.

Jessica Goodman

**Research Interests:** integrated care and the emergency department, health disparities among minority and underserved populations, biopsychosocial-spiritual approach to supporting military and veteran couples and families, integrated care policy development

**Why I chose MedFT at ECU:** The MedFT program at ECU was the first PhD program in the field, and has been leading the way in integrated care research, clinical training, and student development ever since. This program has a proven track record for developing competent and dedicated scientist-teacher-practitioners, ready to address the challenges in our health care system and mentor the next generation of integrated care professionals. The faculty and students here also share my values around supporting social justice in the health care context, and working to reduce health disparities among minority and underserved populations. While it was the reputation of the program and presence of ECU’s MedFT faculty and graduates in the literature that initially sparked my interest in the program, the enthusiasm and passion of the faculty for the field and
the authenticity, care, and supportiveness that came across in all my interactions with them were what ultimately drew me here.

**Eunicia “Niecie” Jones**

**Research Interests**: Niecie is interested in addressing ethnic health disparities within the healthcare system. She is particularly interested in health outcomes for people from the African diaspora in regards to sociohistorical oppression and how to provide culturally conscious and competent care.

**Why I chose MedFT at ECU**: I chose MedFT at ECU because of the fresh perspective offered by the biopsychosocial-spiritual model, especially within the field of collaborative health care. I wanted to learn how to do this in an integrated setting and learn how the medical and behavioral health processes work together and can benefit each other in order to improve patient outcomes. The BPSS focus academically also fit with my personal life because it was important for me to know my program faculty and students were concerned with and invested in therapist self-care.

**Ozlem Kose**

**Research Interests**: Sexual dysfunctions and couples functioning in the context of chronic illness, attachment-based therapies, individual and cross-cultural dimensions of dyadic coping behaviors.

**Why I chose MedFT at ECU**: I chose ECU because of the program’s strong emphasis on research and evidence-based clinical work. All of the faculty in the program provide excellent resources as well as unconditional support and acceptance for the students. Every single day, I am truly inspired and motivated by their enthusiasm, dedication, and passion in the field of Medical Family Therapy.
Florence Lewis

**Research Interests**: Heightening the awareness of the current cultural, societal and political influences on racial and ethnic minority mental and physical health; positive and negative coping skills among ethnic and racial minority groups

**Why I chose MedFT at ECU**: As I approached the end of my master degree, I wanted to know more about how physical illness related to mental health symptoms. In my clinical work, I saw that many of my clients had physical concerns along with their mental health concerns and I didn't know how to incorporate that into their treatment. I am grateful for this program at ECU because I am able to gain more versatility as a clinician, researcher and growing scholar to become a better to professional for the population that I care so much about, which is racial and ethnic minorities in the US.

Erin Sesemann

**Research Interests**: I am interested in the effects of family dynamics on childhood obesity, particularly dynamics that are passed through generations. I also interested in the financial and policy worlds behind integrated care: how to make it more accessible and accepted in traditional healthcare settings.

**Why I Chose MedFT at ECU**: I was really looking for a program that would help me prepare for not only my future career but also my future lifestyle. I was drawn to ECU’s program because of their emphasis on the balancing the biopsychosocial-spiritual components of health in research, clinical work, and also in its students and faculty. It truly seems like a program that provides opportunities to professionally and personally.
Glenda Mutinda

**Research Interests:** Pregnancy and hypertension, biopsychosocial-spiritual interventions, and chronic illnesses.

**Why I chose MedFT at ECU:** My decision to come to ECU was based on the status/esteem and the general atmosphere of the program as well as my research interests. The MedFT program at ECU is the only accredited MedFT program in the country and the majority of the MedFT research I had read as a Master's student was produced at ECU. Upon meeting the faculty at various conferences, it was clear to me that they value a family-like atmosphere that cultivates not only learning, but a sense of belonging. Lastly, I knew early on in my career as a master's student that I wanted to become a MedFT. This program not only supports my research interests, which are 100% MedFT related, but also my future career path.