

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

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University Center Greenville  
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## **CURRENT POSITION**

**Converse University (UCG) – Greenville, SC** July 2019 – Current  
Assistant Professor  
Department Chair: Marriage and Family Therapy Program July 2020- Current  
Program Director July 2021 - Current  
Associate Program Director 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)  
MFT Systems I (MFS 634; n = 4)  
Basic Techniques of Psychotherapy Interview (MFS 661; n = 1)  
Research Literacy in Marital and Family Therapy (MFS 647; n = 6)

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**Virginia Tech**

Instructor on Record

Adult Development and Aging (HD 2004)

Online Course

Principles of Human Services (HD 2336)

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Human Sexuality (HD 2314)

Blacksburg, VA

August 2016 – July 2019

Summer 2019

Spring 2019

Spring 2019

Fall 2018

Spring 2017

**Purdue University**

Instructor on Record

Statistical Methods for Behavioral Sciences (BHS 201)

Adolescent Development (Psych 362)

Adolescent Development (Psych 362)

Adolescent Development (Psych 362)

Adolescent Development (Psych 362)

Freshmen Experience of Psychology (BHS 103)

Hammond, IN

August 2013 - May 2016

Spring 2016

Fall 2015

Spring 2015

Fall 2014

Spring 2014

Fall 2013

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Peer-Reviewed Journals**

**Thomas, M.E.**, Grafsky, 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

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disclosure: The use of narrative family therapy when working with LGBTQ groups. In Viers, D. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). *The group therapist's notebook: Homework, handouts, and activities for use in psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

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. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.), *Ethics and professional issues in couple and family therapy*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

## Magazine Articles

**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/>

\* Denotes Co-First Authors

## PRESENTATIONS

### Professional Presentations

#### National Level

**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 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.

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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 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 Graftsky, 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.

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**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.

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 annual Indiana Marriage and Family Therapy Spring Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

## **THERAPEUTIC SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE**

### **Emerge Family Therapy Center**

Graduate Student Supervisor

Spartanburg, SC  
July 2019 - Current

- Provide Supervision for master-level students
- Meet every week for case consultation
- Hold group supervision

### **Virginia Tech Family Therapy Center**

Graduate Student Supervisor

Blacksburg, VA  
January 2019 – May 2019

- Provide Supervision to a first-year Ph.D. student
- Meet every week
- Provided case consultation and clinical procedures guidance

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Undergraduate Student Supervisor Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

- Clinical supervision provided to undergraduate interns
- Met every week
- Provided case consultation on cases the intern would observe

## **THERAPEUTIC EXPERIENCE**

### **Thomas Counseling Services, LLC**

Greenville, SC

Owner/Private Practice

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**

Spartanburg, SC

Therapist Fellow

January 2020 – November 2020

- Maintained a client caseload
- Successfully used Structural Family Therapy, Collaborative Language Systems, and Play Therapy.
- Worked with individuals, adolescents, families, couples, and premarital couples

### **Virginia Tech Family Therapy Center**

Blacksburg, VA

Therapist Intern

January 2017 – December 2018

- Maintained a client caseload
- Successfully used Structural Family Therapy, Collaborative Language Systems, and Play Therapy.
- Worked with individuals, adolescents, families, couples, and premarital couples

### **Crown Counseling Services**

Crown Point, IN

Therapist

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
- Successfully used Structural Family Therapy, Collaborative Language Systems, and Play Therapy.
- 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.

*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 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.

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### **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**

### **Queer and Trans Advocacy Network (QTAN)**

Chair

January 2023 – December 2025

- Oversee network activities
- Communicate with AAMFT
- Chair QTAN Conference
- Advocate for Queer/Trans members of AAMFT

Chair-Elect

January 2021 – December 2022

- Prepare to transition to Chair after two years.

### **American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy**

Family Team Leader

- 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 Calumet**

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



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- Represented Purdue University at Indiana AAMFT state conferences

## **AFFILIATIONS**

**American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy** August 2013 - 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

**Minority Fellowship Program - Youth** September 2015 - September 2016  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
Cohort member

**Indiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy** August 2013 – July 2016  
Student member

## **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*

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**Queer and Trans Advocacy Network (QTAN)**

January 2021 – December 2022

Chair (National Position)

- Prepare to transition to Chair after two years
- Advocate for Queer/Trans members of AAMFT

**Graduate Council – Converse University**

August 2021 – Current

- MMFT Representative

**GRADUATE STUDENT THESIS/DISSERTATION COMMITTEE, MEMBER**

**Converse University**

Student: Meredith Lockamy

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**

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.

**SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBER**

**Marriage and Family Therapy Department**

Spring 2020 – two tenure-track positions

Spring 2022 – tenure-track positions

Spring 2023 – two tenure-track positions