SOCIETY PREPARES ME FOR A CAREER IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

To become a marriage and family therapist, you need to have a masters or a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy. You can major in any related field at the undergraduate level: Anthropology, Family Life, Psychology, Sociology, etc.

The MFT program is one of several that you can do if you want a career counseling families.

➤ You can become a psychologist. To do this, you must have a doctoral degree in Psychology. Also, while psychologists can counsel families, they prefer to work with individuals and they prefer to focus on the brain – what people think and feel, brain chemistry, mental illnesses, etc.

➤ You can become a marriage and family therapist. To do this you must have at least a masters degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. While marriage and family therapists can counsel individuals, they prefer to work with families: how couples communicate, parenting strategies, how family members can support each other better, etc. Families may have problems with other areas (workplace, school, etc.), but marriage and family therapists do not usually help with those problems.

➤ You can become a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW). To do this you must have a masters degree in Social Work (MSW). You may also get a doctoral degree in any field. Social workers can counsel individuals and they can counsel families. They also prefer to consider the entire context: how what happens at work affects the family, how the schools affect what happens at work, etc. Thus, social workers will consider the big picture and figure out how to fix social problems – in the family and everywhere else.

Here is how you can use Sociology to prepare yourself for a master’s program in Marriage and Family Therapy.

➤ Statistics: Stats 121

➤ Research methods: Soc 300, 301, 307, 404, 405 (All of these are good. You need to be ready to do advanced statistical analysis in graduate school. Also, learning how to do an in-depth, qualitative research interview in Soc 404 can prepare you for learning how to do clinical interviews in your graduate program.)

➤ Classes related to marriage and family:
  Soc 318, 360, 365, 450, 460

➤ Other classes that may be relevant: Soc 326, 350, 380, 383, 481, or classes in the School of Family Life for Psychology

➤ Be a research assistant with a professor (volunteer, for credit, for pay, as an Honors thesis, as an International Field Study, etc). This is important. Get all of the research experience you can.

➤ Get volunteer or other experience working with families (e.g., at a hospital, and an afterschool program, in an organization that helps the poor, as a tutor, as an intern with an international development organization).
For more information about BYU’s Marriage and Family Therapy program, contact

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  If you want to talk about how sociology can prepare you for a career in marriage and family therapy, contact

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