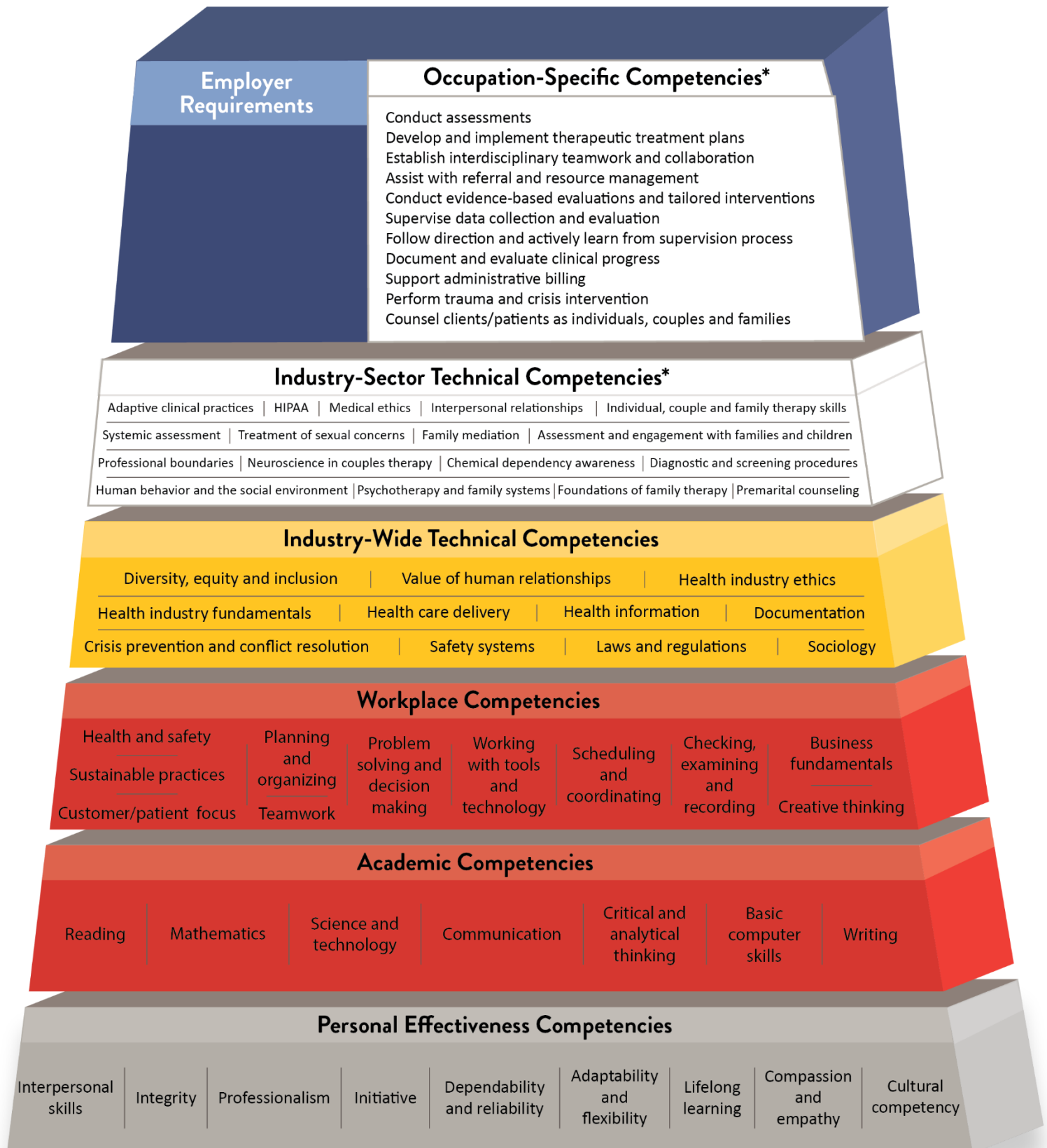


Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline

Competency Model for Health Care Services

Occupation: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist



Based on: Fundamentals of Health Care Competency Model, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/health-care-services.



Competency Model for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist – An individual who provides professional marriage and family psychotherapy to individuals, married couples, and family groups, either individually or in groups. The practice of marriage and family therapy utilizes established principles that recognize the interrelated nature of the individual problems and dysfunctions in family members to assess, understand, and treat emotional and mental problems. Marriage and family therapy includes premarital, marital, divorce, and family therapy, and is a specialized mode of treatment for the purpose of resolving emotional problems and modifying intrapersonal and interpersonal dysfunction. Licensure for marriage and family therapists is overseen by the Minnesota Board of Marriage and Family Therapy; individuals must follow their requirements for obtaining, renewing, and maintaining licensure

*Pipeline recommends the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Adaptive clinical practices** – Know how to adapt intervention strategies to the individual characteristics of the patient / client, including but not limited to, disability, gender, sexual orientation, developmental level, culture, ethnicity, age, and health status.
- **HIPAA** – Understand the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) for standards for electronic health record transactions, privacy, and security.
- **Medical ethics** – Understands principles of medical ethics and how they apply in professional standards, such as confidentiality, dual relationships, and informed consent into ongoing marriage and family therapy.
- **Interpersonal relationships** – Understand how to create and maintain healthy and functional interpersonal relationships with patients / clients, other mental health professionals, other medical staff, community resources, etc.

- **Individual, couple, and family therapy skills** – Able to skillfully provide psychological therapeutic counseling that can help individuals by working one-on-one to address mental health concerns to individuals, couples, and family members to improve communication and resolve conflicts.
- **Systemic assessment** – Understand the treatment focusing on assisting individuals in recognizing patterns and learning how to react to them.
- **Treatment of sexual concerns** – Understands the current approaches in the practice of sex therapy as it relates to mental health.
- **Family mediation** – Understands the importance of applied theories, multicultural implications and responsiveness, multidisciplinary collaboration, and ethical considerations while working with families to address issues.
- **Assessment and engagement with families and children** – Demonstrates a mastery of interaction skills within the intake, assessment, treatment, evaluation, and therapy process with children, adolescents and families.
- **Professional boundaries** – Understand what professional boundaries are and identify poor ones. Learn how to create healthy boundaries from the very beginning of the relationship.
- **Neuroscience in couples therapy** – Understand the multi-layered complexity of intimate relationships. Understands social-contextual issues, neurobiology and the reciprocal interactions between two partners. The individual knows how to facilitate the couple's relational empowerment and transformation.
- **Chemical dependency awareness** – Knowledge and experience with patients with chemical dependency and how it can impact a patient's mental health and relationships with partners and families.
- **Diagnostic and screening procedures** - Know how to use evidence-based critical analysis and interpretation of assessments to provide the basis for the health care plan.
- **Human behavior and the social environment** – Understanding of the contributors and characteristics of human behavior and how the social environment in which individuals live impacts and affects an individual's behavior and the relationships with partners and families.
- **Psychotherapy and family systems** – Understands diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders for individuals and families within the context of marriage, couples, and family systems.

- **Foundations of family therapy** – Understands the structure and function of families and relationships, connecting foundational theoretical and research underpinnings to the major models of family therapy. Understands how family therapy can significantly improve wellbeing for addressing the individuals within the family and each of their own mental health needs.
- **Premarital counseling** – Know how to prompt discussion on important issues, ranging from finances to children, to identify potential conflict areas and provide tools to navigate them successfully.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation, and discussion-based training.

- **Conduct assessments** – Know how to effectively conduct assessments in order to create a treatment plan.
- **Develop and implement therapeutic treatment plans** – Know how to lead assessments and therapy that results in successful treatment plans for an individual, a couple, or a family.
- **Establish interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration** – Able to collaborate effectively with a multidisciplinary team to ensure comprehensive client care.
- **Assist with referral and resource management** – Understand prudent utilization of all resources available to the individual, couples and families.
- **Conduct evidence-based evaluations and tailored interventions** – Understand how evaluation impacts couples' and families' progress and use detailed record keeping informing decisions about what best interventions should be taken with treatment.
- **Supervise data collection and evaluation** – Ensure the data collection and evaluation process is appropriate, that data is of high quality and evaluation meets expectations.
- **Follow direction and actively learn from supervision process** – Able to actively listen, ask questions, respond respectfully and act on what is learned.
- **Document and evaluate clinical progress** – Understand team support of client progress and intervention while being able to keep record of intervention milestones and setbacks and record keeping that can assess how progress is or is not moving forward.

- **Support administrative billing** – Depending on area of practice, may need to know how to help with coordinating documentation and paperwork for Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance to do proper billing and payment procedures for patients/clients.
- **Perform trauma and crisis intervention** – Knowledge about how trauma and crisis impacts the physical, mental, behavioral, social, and spiritual areas for the patient and how to align care with the unique circumstances of the patient.
- **Counsel clients / patients as individuals, couples and families** – Provide counsel and strategies to address numerous topics that impact mental health, such as unsatisfactory relationships, divorce and separation, child rearing, home management, financial difficulties, etc. and assist with strategies to improve the patients'/clients' overall mental health.

Updated October 2025