

Mindi R. Higgins Kessler, LCMFT, Ph.D.

Licensed Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist and Approved AAMFT Supervisor
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EDUCATION

Kansas State University

Manhattan, KS; 8/99-8/02
Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy
Major Professor: Dr. Briana Nelson
Dissertation: The Initial Treatment Decisions with Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Recommendations from Clinical Experts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, CO; 8/95-5/97
Masters of Science Degree in Human Development and Family Studies with a Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy
Thesis: Effects of Emotion Management Performances on the Marital and Work Satisfaction of Marriage and Family Therapists

Emporia State University

Emporia, KS; 8/91-12/94
Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology
Minor: Rehabilitation Services Education

COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

Private Practice Clinician

Topeka, KS, 5/06 – present
Provide therapy to children and adults of all ages.

- Specializing in attachment and other relationship work.

Staff Clinician, Family Service & Guidance Center

Topeka, KS, 9/01-5/06

- Provided therapy to children, ages 3-18 and their families.
- Provided family therapy training to pre-doctoral interns and post-masters fellows.

Therapist Intern, School of Veterinary Medicine

Manhattan, KS, 1/01-8/01

- Provided therapy to Veterinary clients, students, staff, and faculty.

Therapist, KSU Family Center

Manhattan, KS; 8/99-8/01

- Provided therapy to couples, individuals, and families in a university clinic setting.

Therapist, St. Isadoras Church

Manhattan, KS 11/99-5/01

- Provided premarital counseling to couples.

Family Preservation Specialist, Kansas Children Service League and Kansas State

Manhattan, KS; 8/99-8/01

- Provided in-home family therapy to families at risk of losing their children.

Family Preservation Specialist, DCCCA Family Preservation

DCCCA Family Preservation Services, Wichita, KS; 6/97-8/99

- Provided crisis intervention, family therapy, education, skills training, and case management to families.
- Maintained the family case record, provided written and verbal progress reports to SRS, and monitored and updated family case plans.

Therapist, Colorado State University Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic

Fort Collins, CO; 11/95-4/97

- Obtained 500 hours of client contact with individuals, couples, and families.

Therapist Intern, The Family Center

Fort Collins, CO; 5/96-5/97

- Responsible for organizing the center's resource files.
- Developed a five-week parenting curriculum for parents of young children.
- Taught Positive Parenting classes.
- Developed an eight-week educational support-group curriculum for adolescents.
- Conducted therapy sessions with individuals, couples, and families.

Bereavement Counselor

Fort Collins, CO; 11/95-4/97

- Co-facilitated a bi-monthly bereavement support group for parents who lost a child.
- Presented material on healthy communication skills to group members.

Youth-Attendant Care Worker

Emporia, KS; 12/94-8/95

- Provided direct, short-term supervision of individual juveniles who would otherwise have been held in jail.

House Parent, Mental Health Center of East Central Kansas

Emporia, KS; 8/93-3/95

- Provided weekend work supervising activities of chronically mentally ill residents.
- Provided crisis counseling to clients.

Child Advocate Volunteer, SOS Battered Women's Shelter

Emporia, KS; 8/93-5/94

- Led exercises to allow children to feel comfortable disclosing personal information about abuse or family violence.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Kansas State University

Manhattan, KS 8/97-8/99

- Designed and completed a pre-dissertation research project and a dissertation.
- Member of TRECK (Trauma, research, education, and consultation at K-State) Team.

Graduate Research Assistant, Colorado State University

Fort Collins, CO; 8/95-5/97

- Assisted in developing research and collecting and analyzing data pertaining to work and family linkages.
- Conducted focus groups and qualitatively analyzed data pertaining to resiliency traits of battered women.

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Emporia State University

Emporia, KS; 8/92-12/94

- Designed and conducted research projects in the Psychology Department under the supervision of Dr. Steven Davis.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Community Service Program Coordinator, Emporia State University

Emporia, KS; 7/94-5/95

- Contributed to the development of the Community Service Program.
- Organized community service events.
- Coordinated student volunteers with community agencies.
- Gave presentations to administrators, faculty, and students about the value of community service.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Highland Community College

Wamego, KS; 1/00-7/01

- Taught "Marriage and the Family" course to college students.

Co-Instructor, Friends University

Wichita, KS; 8/97-11/97

- Gave several lectures to an undergraduate Abnormal Psychology Class.

Teaching Assistant, Colorado State University

Fort Collins, CO; 6/96-8/96

- Served as an assistant for an undergraduate parenting course.
- Served as an assistant for an undergraduate death and dying course.

Parents in Control Instructor

Fort Collins, CO; 1/96-5/97

- Taught classes to assist parents in regaining control of difficult children.

Positive Parenting Instructor

Fort Collins, CO; 1/96-5/97

- Taught five-week courses on parenting skills for parents of young children.

Instructor, Butler County Community College

Madison and Eureka, KS; 12/94-8/95

- Taught introductory classes in psychology and sociology.

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- 2006-present Member, ATTACH (Association for the Training and Treatment in the Attachment of Children)
- 2004-present Clinical Member, AAMFT (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy)
- 2000-2001 Member, Flint Hills Critical Incident Stress Management Team
- 1999-2001 Member, T.R.E.C.K. Team (Trauma Research, Education, Consultation at K-State)
- 1997-2003 Associate Member, AAMFT (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy)
- 1996.1997 Student Member, AAMFT (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy)
- 1996.1997 Member, SAGE (Student Alliance for Gender Education)
- 1993-1995 Compeer Volunteer (Year long buddy-commitment to a chronically mentally ill community member)
- 1992.1994 Psychology Club President
- 1992.1995 Psi Chi Member, National Honor Society in Psychology
- 1992.1994 Student Member, SWAPA (Southwestern Psychological Association)
- 1992-1994 Student Member, PERK (Association for Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas)

COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

- 1995.1997 Member, College of Applied Human Sciences Technology Committee
- 1994.1995 Committee member on the steering committee for the 1995 Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention
- 1994.1995 Member, Umbrella Council of the Flinthills Region. Purpose was to identify and address the needs for children and families through the cooperative effort of the members of this organization.
- 1994.1995 Student Board Member, The Learning Connection of the Flinthills. Purpose was to provide educational programs for both community members and university students.

RESEARCH AWARDS

- 1996 Graduate Thesis Scholarship – Colorado State University
1994 Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award – Emporia State University
1994 Second Place, Undergraduate Non-research Award at the 14th Annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention.
1993 Second Place, Undergraduate Non-research Award at the 13th Annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

- 2000 Kansas State Human Ecology Alumni Scholarship
1997 Professional Development Award, Colorado State University
1993 Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities
1994 National Deans List
1992-1995 Citizen's Scholarship Foundation Scholarship
1992-1995 Emporia State University Endowed Scholarship
1991 Presidential Award of Excellence, Emporia State University

SPECIAL TRAINING

Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Intensive training, Summer 2007
Theraplay, Fall 2006; Spring 2007
EMDR, Fall 2005; Summer 2007
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Summer 2005; Winter 2006
Neuro-enhancement Treatment for Traumatized Children, Winter 2004; Fall 2005
Filial Play Therapy, Winter 2002
Play Therapy, Summer 2002; Spring 2006; Fall 2006
Critical Incident & Stress Management, Summer 2000
Hospice, 1996
Sexual Assault Victims' Assistance, Fall 1996
Parents' In Control Instructor, Spring 1996

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Higgins Kessler, M.R. (2007). What is Filial Therapy?. Presentation given to the staff at Family Service & Guidance Center.

Higgins Kessler, M.R. (2006). Introduction to Sand Tray Therapy. Presentation given to the staff at Family Service & Guidance Center.

Higgins Kessler, M.R., & Santiago, R. (2002). Treating Traumatized Children: A Scrapbook Approach. Presentation given to the staff at Family Service & Guidance Center.

Nelson, B. S. & Higgins Kessler (2001). Children, Violence, & Trauma. Presentation given to the Ottawa Extension Service.

Nelson, B. S., & Higgins Kessler (2001). Forgotten Victims: Children Who Witness Violence and Trauma. Presentation given at the Kansas Children's Advocacy Day in Topeka, KS.

Higgins Kessler, M. R., Yorgason, J., & Wangsgaard, S. (1999). Encouraging healthy relationships in the hospital setting. Workshop given to Wamego, KS Community Hospital Staff.

Higgins, M. R., & Seigenthaler, A. (1997). Communication strategies for parents. Presentation given to Colorado State University Housing Staff.

PAPERS AND POSTERS PRESENTED

Nelson, B. S., Higgins Kessler, M. R., & Anderson, J. R. (2001). The transtheoretical model of change in couples therapy. Poster presented at AAMFT, Nashville, TN.

Jurich, A. P., Higgins Kessler, M., Russel, C. (2001). Family Preservation: A new role for MFTs. Poster presented at the 2001 National Council on Family Relations.

Higgins Kessler, M.R., Nelson, B. S., & Jurich, T. (2000). Clinical decision strategies with sexual abuse survivors. Poster presented at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), Denver, CO.

Olson, M., Russell, C., Miller, R., Higgins Kessler, M. R. Orr, M. (2000). Post-affair spousal relationships: A qualitative investigation of the emotional processes couples experience following the disclosure of an extramarital affair. Poster presented at the National Council on Family Relations annual meeting. Minneapolis, MN.

Nelson, B. S., Wangsgaard, S., Yorgason, J., Carter-Vassol, E. L., Nelsen, T., Beggs, M., Reimer, J., & Higgins Kessler, M. R. (1999). Clinical approaches to single and dual trauma couples. Workshop presented at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), Chicago, IL.

Higgins, M. R. & Werner-Wilson, R. J. (1997). What is emotion work? How does it influence couples and families? Presentation given at the Colorado Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Denver, CO.

Higgins, M. R., Werner-Wilson, R. J., Cook, A. S., & Berger, P. (1997). How does emotion work performance influence marriage and family therapists? Presented at the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, (AAMFT) Atlanta, GA.

Higgins, M. R., Cook, A. K., Werner-Wilson, R. J. & Berger, P. S. (1997). The effect of emotion management performances on the work and marital satisfaction of marriage and family therapists. Presented at the National Council on Family Relations annual meeting. Arlington, VA.

Brunner, A. A., & Higgins, M. R. (1995). A review of the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Paper presented at the 1995 Great Plains Student Psychology convention, Emporia, KS.

Higgins, M. R., Roberts, S. L., Williams, J. L., Sullivan, H. E., Beishline, M. J. & Matchinsky, D. J. (1995). Graduate school: Getting in and getting the best of it. Symposium presented at the 1995 Great Plains Student Psychology convention, Emporia, KS.

Higgins, M. R. (1994). The impact of a mentally retarded child on the family. Paper presented at the 14th annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, Rockhurst College, Kansas City, MO.

Higgins, M. R. & Meyers, S. (1994). Child witnesses of family violence and the importance of intervention. Paper presented at the 14th annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, Rockhurst College, Kansas City, MO.

Higgins, M. R., Meyer, S., & Wimer, B. L. (1994). Between men and women: Who are the thrill seekers? Poster presented at the 14th annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, Rockhurst College, Kansas City, MO.

Higgins, M. R. (1994). The impact of psychotherapy on depressive patients. Paper presented at the 14th annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, Rockhurst College, Kansas City, MO.

Higgins, M. R., Sutton, A. M. & Davis, S. F. (1994). Perceptions of the 90s: Women on career and family. Paper presented at the 40th annual Southwestern Psychological Association, Tulsa, OK.

Higgins, M. R., Myers, S. C., Wimer, B. L., & Davis, S. F. (1994). Gender differences in sensation seeking. Poster presented at the 40th annual Southwestern Psychological Association, Tulsa, OK.

Higgins, M. R. (1994). The effect of battering on a mother's ability to perceive her child's psychological needs. Paper presented at the annual Association of Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Huss, M. T., Higgins, M. R., Sutton, A. M., & Davis, S. F. (1994). College students and sexual activity. Paper presented at the annual Association of Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Higgins, M. R., Meyer, S., Wimer, B. L., & Davis, S. F. (1994). Do sensation seekers fear death? Paper presented at the annual Association of Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Cole, R., Higgins, M. R., & Davis, S. F. (1994). Androgyny and the impostor phenomenon. Paper presented at the annual Association of Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Weintraub, D., Higgins, M. R., Beishline, M., Matchinsky, D., Pierce, M. & Davis, S. F. (1994). Do impostors really hold irrational beliefs? Paper presented at the annual Association of Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Higgins, M. R. (1993). Near death experiences: A glimpse at the promised land? Paper presented at the 13th annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO.

Miller, H. R., Ahrens, C. A., Hazlett, J., Fechner, L., Sawyer, D., Higgins, M. R., & Davis, S. F. (1992). A comparison of interpersonal flexibility in traditional and nontraditional students. Paper presented at the annual Association of Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS.

PUBLICATIONS

Higgins Kessler, M. R., & Nelson, B. S. (2006). Initial treatment decisions with adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Recommendations from clinical experts. *Journal of Trauma Practice*.

Higgins Kessler, M. R., Nelson, B. S., Jurich, A. P., & White, M. (2004). Clinical decision making strategies in the treatment of adult childhood sexual abuse survivors. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 32, 1-10.

Higgins Kessler, M. R., Whilte, M., & Nelson, B. S. (2003). Group treatments for adults sexually abused as children: A review of the literature and recommendations for future outcome research. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 27, 1041-1061.

Olson, M., Russel, C., Higgins Kessler, M. R., Miller, R. B. (2002). Emotional processes following disclosure of an extramarital affair. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*.

Nelson, B. S., Wangsgaard, S., Yorgason, J., Higgins Kessler, M. (2002). Single and Dual Trauma Couples: Clinical Observations of Relational Characteristics and Dynamics. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 72, 58-69.

Higgins Kessler, M., Werner-Wilson, R. J., Cook, A. S., & Berger, P. (2000). Emotion management of marriage and family therapists: How is it difference for women and men? *American Journal of Family Therapy*.

Higgins, M. R., Sutton, A. M., Huss, M. R., & Davis, S. F. (1995). Perceptions of career, family, and sex in relationships. *Psychological Reports*, 76, 622.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Werner-Wilson, R. J., & Higgins Kessler, M. (1999). Runaway children. In C. A. Smith (Ed.), The encyclopdedia of parenting, 370-372. Greenwood Press: Westport, CT.

Werner-Wilson, R. J., & Higgins Kessler, M. (1999). Scapegoating. In C. A. Smith (Ed.), The encyclopdedia of parenting, 234-235. Greenwood Press: Westport, CT.