

CFHA Families & Health Special Interest Group – Why Families are Important to Health and Health Care

Name, Title, & Affiliation	Photo	Why are families important to health and health care?
<p>Maureen Davey, Ph.D., LMFT</p> <p>Associate Professor Drexel University College of Nursing and Health Professions, Department of Couple and Family Therapy</p>		<p>I develop and evaluate family-centered approaches to care because I believe they can help diverse populations of children, couples, and families cope with illness (e.g., parental and pediatric illness). I am also developing training curricula to help providers in primary and tertiary medical settings use family-centered approaches to screening (medical <i>and</i> psychosocial vital signs). Someday, I hope there will be a time when nobody will think of providing medical care without also providing support to a patient’s family, children, and partner/spouses.</p>
<p>Monica Frazer, PhD</p> <p>Senior Scientific Advisor/business owner, Minneapolis-St. Paul Area,</p>		<p>In my area of work, patients living with advanced chronic illness (which will be many of us, eventually) face challenges such as accelerating functional declines that increase reliance upon caregivers, changing roles and interactions that can help or hinder preservation of life quality, and consideration of end-of-life planning that is driven by values generated and transmitted through family systems. Healthcare systems must recognize and include family in the care of patients living with serious illnesses if they are to truly reorient toward whole-person health for all.</p>
<p>Limor Gildenblatt</p> <p>Medical Family Therapy doctoral student at Saint Louis University, Clinic Coordinator and Therapist at The Center for Counseling and Family Therapy, and Behavioral Health Specialist at Des Peres SLUCare Outpatient Clinic</p>		<p>Families play a tremendous role in supporting one another when navigating through the complexity and unpredictability of medical illness. Moreover, families may provide useful information that may impact patient care and are often involved in the patient's healthcare decisions. Whenever possible, the healthcare team should collaborate with families at the onset of illness to achieve best treatment outcomes for their patients.</p>

<p>Angela L. Lamson, PhD, LMFT, CFLE</p> <p>Professor Director ECU Marriage and Family Therapy Program College of Human Ecology East Carolina University Medical Family Therapy Greenville, North Carolina</p>		<p>Families are the heart of health and healthcare. The first health coaches in a child's life are often her family members. They represent the emotional, physical, relational, and spiritual health that will influence her growth, response to illness and wellness, and decisions about health behaviors over time. While family members have the capacity to influence one another, it will take the combined efforts of providers, policy makers, researchers, educators, trainers, administrators, and healthcare finance to promote the inclusion of family members in patient visits, as participants in research, and as a voice in policy decisions in order to maximize the best health outcomes for patients and their families.</p>
<p>Kaitlin Leckie, PhD, LMFT</p> <p>Director of Behavioral Health Education, Southern Colorado Family Medicine Residency</p> <p>Chairperson, Families and Health Interest Group</p>		<p>As I explained in more detail in "50 Shades of Family" on CFHA's <i>Families and Health Blog</i>, (http://www.cfha.net/blogpost/753286/193651/50-Shades-of-Family), I believe "the patient is to the family as the organ is to the body." In sum, just as you would not treat a kidney, for example, apart from the body, neither should a person be treated without taking into consideration the systemic and multi-directional influence of his or her family.</p>
<p>Matt Martin, PhD, Director of Behavioral Science at the Duke/SR- AHEC Family Medicine Residency Program</p>		<p>However constituted, the family is the unit of society that most often addresses the physical and emotional needs of an individual. Families can exhibit incredible resiliency in the face of illness and stress. As a clinician, I strive to help struggling individuals and families connect with those around them. As an educator, I work to teach students and residents the importance of involving relational systems.</p>
<p>Randall Reitz, PhD Director of Behavioral Sciences, St Mary's Family Medicine Residency</p>		<p>For most people, the central role of family in health is apparent from our own lives. I was raised in a family that was deeply impacted by cancer, heart disease, seizure disorder, and diabetes. In some instances, family influences led to wellness and stability, in others they brought chaos and complications. As my professional career mirrors this experience, I constantly seek to include the full-spectrum of family and relationships in patient care.</p>

<p>Jackie Williams-Reade, PhD</p> <p>Program Director, Medical Family Therapy Certificate</p> <p>Assistant Professor, Counseling & Family Sciences, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA</p>		<p>I became a medical family therapist because I observed firsthand how illness has far-reaching effects on individuals, families, and communities. In my clinical work, I have seen the significant impact that family roles, rules, and relationships have on a patient's resiliency and overall well-being. While we are at a state in healthcare where "family-centered care" is a priority, there is a gap in how we understand and address the psychosocial aspects of family functioning in response to illness. Filling this gap is imperative in order to make long-lasting changes for patients, family members, and the medical team members who care for them.</p>
<p>Grace Wilson, PhD</p> <p>Behavioral Scientist, Great Plains Family Medicine Residency Program</p>		<p>Families are important to health and healthcare because both illness and healing happen at the intersection of our physical, mental, spiritual, and relationship health. Families are not only the context for our patient's health and illness; they are a powerful resource for instigating healing.</p>
<p>Lisa Zak-Hunter, PhD</p> <p>Behavioral Science Educator-Via Christi Family Medicine Residency</p> <p>Clinical Assistant Professor- University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita</p>		<p>Family functioning, relationships, history, values, and stories lie in the bedrock of understanding health and well-being. By addressing and involving these facets of our patients' lives, we have a more complete assessment and targeted treatment approach.</p>