



Law & Ethics Continuing Education Guidelines

This document identifies what distinguishes legal/ethical CEUs from professional development or skill-building CEUs and any additional requirements to be included by the applicant in their WAMFT CE Application.

Be mindful, many topics - such as self-care, cultural humility, or work with minors - can be related to ethical practices but are not innately an ethics-based presentation: “The question is not if you are a better therapist after taking the training; that is always the goal. The question is if you are a more ethically conscientious therapist after the training. It’s about the why, not the what.”

Law & Ethics Application Requirements:

- Like all professional CEUs, law and ethics CEUs are provided in 30 or 60 minute increments with a minimum of 60 minutes for one law and ethics CEU.
- Trainings may offer a combination of general and ethics CEs, such as a 3 hour training including one hour of ethics CE and two hours of general CE.
- In the application outline, the applicant should indicate which subtopics/sections are intended to be law and ethics CEUs.
- Presentations requesting ethics CEUs must include/reference at least one specific relevant RCW/WAC code number or federal equivalent and/or the AAMFT Code of Ethics per ethics CEU requested.

Ethics-Specific Learning Objectives/Outcomes (LOs) Requirements:

- At least one learning objective per hour of CEU requested.
- Trainings must include at least one LO referencing the identified specific legal and/or ethical code(s) relevant to their topic, such as the RCW/WAC code number, the federal equivalent, and/or the AAMFT Code of Ethics.

Law & Ethics Content Requirements:

Content must clearly address legal and/or ethical issues in the MFT profession:

- *Legal* - Address fulfillment of duties imposed by state or federal regulations or policies. This can include *but is not limited to**:
 - Scope of practice (what services can our license legally provide)
 - Updates on state/federal regulations or policies
 - Maintaining a license in good standing
 - Telehealth regulations
 - Documentation/record-keeping requirements
- *Ethical* - Address fulfillment of duties imposed by the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#).

This can include *but is not limited to**:

- General principles of bioethics/psychotherapy ethics across disciplines
- Ethical decision-making models
- Scope of competence (what services can the individual practitioner ethically provide, how do we define that, how we maintain that, etc.)
- Managing boundaries and multiple relationships
- Managing bias & countertransference

Many topics will naturally cover both. For example, legal confidentiality requirements overlap with the ethical discretion of the clinician regarding confidentiality, such as in family therapy.

Below is a list of example content that can qualify for Law & Ethics CEUs:

- Advertising, misrepresentation, representing credentials
 - ★ *This is a perfect example of “not always ethics” around a topic: Teaching how to advertise effectively? Not ethics. Teaching how to make sure you represent yourself accurately, including correct language, self-representation, and required information? Ethics.*
- Assessment, evaluations, testing practices
- Atypical clinical practices (forensic settings, mandated clients, custody evaluation, reunification therapy, legal testimony, etc.)

- Boundaries with clients & systems
- Client autonomy
- Complaints or investigations of license, maintaining a license
- Confidentiality, including duty to warn/protect, endangerment of person versus property, and limits of confidentiality
- Conjoint therapy - consent, confidentiality, secrets, records, etc.
- Cultural attunement and awareness
- Ethical responsibilities in research
- Ethical issues in telehealth therapy
- Evaluating benefits of therapy
- Fee-setting, payments, bartering, and other financial matters
- Harassment, exploitation, or other potential power abuses with clients
- Impaired therapist issues, therapist misconduct
- Law & ethics of therapy with minors
- Managing multiple relationships, boundaries, privacy, etc.
- Managing countertransference & self-of-therapist issues
- Mandated reporting, protecting client welfare
- Non-discrimination
- Obligations to public, public statements
- Obligations to the MFT profession
- Professional responsibility to supervisees/trainees
- Referring or transferring clients
- Relationships with other professionals, receiving referrals
- Responding to complaints against one's license or supervisees' licenses
- Responding to subpoenas
- Seeking or providing consultation
- Record-keeping, including moving or closing a practice
- Termination, client abandonment

Please note:

- While beneficial to the knowledge of systemic therapists, trainings that only cover religious ethics and moral theology do not qualify for Law & Ethics CEUs. It can qualify for Law & Ethics CE if the presentation references relevant legal and ethical codes and its ethical influence on MFT practices. Otherwise, the topic may be offered for general CEUs.
- Wellness or self-care practices alone (e.g. yoga, meditation) do not qualify for Law & Ethics CEUs, even if intended to prevent burnout.

Final statements:

- This document will be updated periodically to reflect most recent edits for ethical practices and processes. The CE applicant is responsible to check for any changes to this document for each application submitted.
- Additional questions regarding the application or continuing education requirements may be directed to continuing-education@wamft.org.