



Steven M. Harris, Ph.D., LMFT

Professor

General statement of advising philosophy:

I want to be aware of my students' career and life goals and help them have experiences to meet these goals. I feel like I prepare people well for an academic career, and I have a history of my advisees being hired as faculty members. So, I'm going to want to help you position yourself so you qualify for an interview for an academic position. This means getting the publications, research presentations, and teaching experiences to give you the CV you need to secure an interview in the academy.

Communication:

The best way to reach me is through email: smharris@umn.edu. I also offer my cell phone number to my students and can be reached by texting. I can't always take a call due to my teaching and clinical responsibilities. I'm pretty responsive but I also don't live to work. When I'm engaged in family activities, I am not available.

Feedback:

I try to be open and honest with my students. I will be so when providing feedback on your ideas and written work. If you have any questions, please let me know what they are. I'm happy to talk. My feedback on most papers will come in the form of a returned version of your document in track-changes mode with comments in the margins. I welcome feedback from my students as well. I know that sometimes this can be scary (to speak up) because there is an inherent power imbalance in the professor/student relationship. However, I know I'm not always right and I also have a tendency to joke around and can be misunderstood, and in some instances, I need to know how you are experiencing our mentoring relationship. My goals are always centered about helping you succeed in your career.

Resolving conflict:

If you have a problem with me or a concern about your progress in the program, please talk to me first. Let's see if we can come to an understanding of your concerns and see if we can't solve the problem. If we can't let's get someone to help us have a civil and respectful conversation.

Meetings:

We should probably meet weekly or on an as needed basis. This can change throughout the program for a variety of reasons. Feel free to initiate meetings, knock on my door, and let me know how much support you need from me. I expect students to be advocates for themselves in the mentoring relationship. I won't always be thinking about your needs and it's important for you to speak up and tell me what you need from me.

Program requirements:

You will need to be a self-advocate for your degree plan and any clinical experiences you want to have. This means meeting me with occasionally and checking in on whether or not you're meeting program goals. We can also meet to discuss your clinical experiences and if you're getting the training you need to be an effective MFT.

Publications:

I'd like my students to have at least 6 publications after they have completed their doctoral work with me. Having more like 8-10 will enhance the student's marketability when they are ready to go out on the job

market. Example: By the time my advisees graduate, I expect them to have multiple published manuscripts in the publication pipeline on topics related to their research agenda and clinical interests. I will provide guidance in making good decisions about whether or not pursuing a specific manuscript will be a good use of your time and effort.

Authorship:

Let's talk about authorship at the beginning of any project we're doing together. Let me know of your desire for authorship. That will give us an opportunity to discuss what level of investment and work are needed to be an author on a paper or research presentation. Being an RA does not automatically qualify someone for authorship.

Teaching:

If my advisees want teaching experience they should let me know. I will do what I can to include you as a TA in my classes, or more specifically, I'll invite you to co-teach with me and I'll provide you with feedback on your teaching.

National meetings:

I expect that we will do research together and that you and I will present together. As you may need mentoring in this process it is expected that we would share authorship on most projects we do together. I expect you to be thinking of presenting your research at national meetings.

Independence:

I will not be hand holding anyone, not because I don't like holding hands, I just won't be thinking about your needs all the time. I have many people who put demands on my time and I don't always think about my advisees. So, please don't be offended if I forget something you've told me or if I ask to be reminded about something. The academic life puts a lot of responsibility on the individual to get themselves motivated to produce, I kinda feel the same. You need to be a self-starter and an advocate for yourself.

Professionalism:

If an advisee is hired to put in a certain number of hours per week, I expect them to do so. I will typically not be asking for an accounting of hours and as long as the work is getting done I won't even think about "hours" on the clock for the students I work with. Sometimes life happens and things don't get done, but when that becomes the rule and not the exception, there is a problem that we will need to discuss. You may be a student now but you are being trained to be a professor and a peer. I expect you to have your own ideas and thoughts and when you disagree with me you can and should let me know about it.

Personal life:

I value my personal life and I think my advisees should have a personal life as well. We need to conduct our professional lives as models of mental and emotional health. I encourage my advisees to be well rounded in their work-life balance.

Ethics:

My advisees are typically C/MFT clinicians and I expect them to adhere to the AAMFT's code of ethics.

Equity and inclusion:

Those in power and those with privilege (that includes professors AND students in higher education) have a responsibility to treat others with respect and dignity. I always want to be looking for ways to broaden inclusivity and pay attention to issues of equity. These opportunities may manifest in a variety of places. I want to be open to discussions of equity, power, privilege, and inclusion that go beyond political correctness. I am also aware that individuals are at different places with regard to their own understanding of their social location and hope to help others see how they are showing up in a variety of ways. My experience has taught me that while we say we get to have "difficult" conversations in the academy, we mostly have learned how to be offended or tip toe around topics so that we don't offend one another. My hope is always for more open and honest dialogue about these topics among the people I interact with.