



**Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities**  
*Frank E. Shelp, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner*

---

**Division of Mental Health**

*Two Peachtree Street, NW • Suite 23.415 • Atlanta, Georgia, 30303-3142 • 404-657-2273*

## **Strengthening Family Engagement: Family Therapeutic Intervention Skills in Work with Children & Adolescents**

**Robyn Mowery, PhD, Assistant Professor and Clinical Director**

**Steve Livingston, PhD, Director and Associate Professor**

**Mellonie Hayes, PhD, Assistant Professor**

Marriage and Family Therapy Master's Program at Mercer University School of Medicine

**Ms. Dana McCrary**

DBHDD Family Liaison

**Background:** Research indicates that systemic family therapy is as effective, and in some cases more effective, than standard and/or individual treatments for many mental health problems related to children and adolescents. Estrada and Pinsof (1995) indicate that the inclusion of parents in family-based interventions led to better outcomes for children with mental health disorders. A main shift in the systemic family therapy field has seen a move away from illness-based treatment approaches to collaborative, strength-based therapy approaches. Families are encouraged to access their strengths and resources and become co-collaborators with mental health professionals in dealing with problem issues.

This training is sponsored and funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) as part of the Department's support of **System of Care** in Georgia. A system of care incorporates a broad array of services and supports that is organized into a coordinated network, integrates care planning and management across multiple levels, is culturally linguistically competency, and builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth at service delivery and policy levels.

**Description:** This training will focus on teaching basic family systems theory, a family-centered service provision approach, strength-based approaches to working with families, and skills/techniques effective in engaging families in treatment service, and will address the following **learning objectives**:

- Participants will learn the value and content of a family systems approach in working with children and adolescents with mental health/behavioral issues.
- Participants will learn evidenced-based systemic approaches (strength-based) to working with children/adolescents and their families.
- Participants will learn about a family-centered service provision approach and how to effectively engage families in treatment services for children and adolescents.