

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNICATION LIAISON

Dear SFTA-K community,

Thank you for continuing to show up with such insight and commitment. It has been truly encouraging to see not only your consistency, but also the growing interest from more and more people who want to join the Association and our Special Interest Groups. This growth has even invited us to pause and reflect on how we can keep including more voices along the way; a beautiful challenge to have as a community.

I also want to celebrate the incredible success of the Global Systemic Therapy Summit. What a historic moment to host the very first AAMFT conference in Africa! We came together across borders; from Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Togo, the U.S., Kenya, and beyond; and shared knowledge, connection, and vision for our field. We are deeply grateful to all who joined: MFTs, MFT students, and colleagues from allied fields.

On a personal note, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served with SFTA-K this year. As I transition into a new role, I want to thank the board for their trust and guidance, and all of you for your feedback, engagement, and the shared commitment that made this work so meaningful. That said, welcome to the this Summer Newsletter, hoping you enjoy the read!



SARAH BIRREGAH, COMMUNICATION LIAISON

In this newsletter you will find:



Dr. John Souza's Workshop, The AAMFT Global Systemic Therapy Summit, SIG Leads Meet & Greet, Grief SIG In-Person Meet, Spirituality SIG Update

AAMFT X SFTA-K BOARDS MEET

In July, SFTA-K held a landmark meeting with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). The discussion centered on the power of storytelling and documentation, a way to honor SFTA-K's growth, highlight milestones, and amplify the voices of therapists and communities touched by systemic therapy, while continuing to increase awareness and promote the field. The AAMFT leadership encouraged SFTA-K to share its story widely through creative platforms such as digital media, podcasts, academic writing, and video storytelling, ensuring that systemic therapy in Kenya, and even across Africa, gain both visibility and recognition.

This meeting also marked the beginning of a stronger partnership between the two associations. Together, SFTAK and AAMFT are exploring opportunities for training, research collaboration, and professional advocacy to advance systemic therapy in Kenya and across Africa.

We are eternally grateful to AAMFT for their sponsorship and unwavering support. Their encouragement and generosity continue to inspire us as we work to build capacity, engage members, and amplify the impact of systemic therapy, both locally and internationally.



SFTA-K extends its deepest thanks to AAMFT for their sponsorship and unwavering support. Your belief in our vision and commitment to walk this journey with us means more than words can express. Together, we are building a future where systemic therapy continues to touch lives and strengthen communities.

DR. JOHN SOUZA'S WORKSHOP



On July 5th, SFTA-K had the honour of hosting a workshop in collaboration with Dr. John Souza on ***Innovative Experiential Therapeutics for Couples and Families***. The session brought together Marriage & Family Therapy students and practitioners to explore creative, hands-on approaches to therapy. Participants were introduced to a range of experiential activities that can be used with couples and families, including sensory play with beans, movement-based activities, amongst others. These approaches highlighted how play and creativity can deepen emotional connection, foster insight, and bring therapeutic conversations to life.

The atmosphere was warm and engaging, and many participants shared how inspired they felt to integrate these activities into their own practice.

As a special keepsake, each participant potted a leaf from the same plant gifted by Dr. Souza. These plants, each lovingly named, now serve as a reminder of the workshop and the shared growth it symbolized.

THE AAMFT GLOBAL SYSTEMIC THERAPY SUMMIT (GSTS) - KENYA

Where do we even begin? The GSTS was more than just a gathering; it was a powerful moment of reflection on how systemic theories can meaningfully meet our African context. This year, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) made the exciting decision to host its annual summit in Kenya. What a fantastic opportunity it was; not only for us to showcase our work locally, but also to connect with the global systemic therapy community right here at home.

Over three days, we listened to the voices of colleagues practicing across Africa as they presented their research and shared insights from the field. The audience responded generously with suggestions, reflections on what is already working, and visions for what lies ahead.

The presence of so many international participants created a vibrant space for networking and building connections across borders. It was an opportunity to meet some of the very leaders in the field whose books we studied during training, people we once only dreamed of meeting in person.



A big thank you to AAMFT for choosing to host the GSTS here on Kenyan soil, and for facilitating engagement with some of the best leaders and pioneers in the field. At the same time, seeing local practitioners take the stage to share their experiences was especially inspiring. For many, it was the first time their voices were heard on such a platform, and it was truly powerful.

The energy was electric. We gathered, exchanged knowledge, and inspired one another. And as the summit closed, one message rang clear: GSTS was impactful, uplifting, and a step forward for us all.

SIG LEADS MEET & GREET

Members of the SFTAK Special Interest Groups were deeply honored to be joined by Dr. Pierre Scott (Grief Lead), Dr. Zephon Lister (Community Mental Health Lead), and Dr. Michelle Karume (SFTAK Advisor) during a lively Meet and Greet session at the close of Day One of the summit.

The evening began with a lighthearted icebreaker, Two Truths and a Lie - which set a relaxed tone and encouraged members to connect informally. Laughter and storytelling filled the room, creating an atmosphere of warmth and camaraderie.

Following this, members engaged the SIG Leads in a thoughtful Q&A session. Questions ranged across various aspects of the Special Interest Groups, offering participants a valuable opportunity to gain deeper insights into the vision, direction, and opportunities for involvement.

The event not only provided clarity and inspiration but also strengthened the sense of community within the SFTAK network.



GRIEF SIG IN-PERSON MEET WITH DR. SCOTT

After interacting only virtually the members of the grief SIG had the opportunity to meet the lead Dr. Pierre Scott, who was in Nairobi for the Global Systemic Therapy Summit for a physical check-in session.

During this 3 hour interactive session the members got to unveil their personal grief. The reflective journey helped the psychology students and practitioners explore and understand their own experiences with grief. This exercise facilitated deeper empathy and awareness that can enhance their therapeutic practice.

It was a welcomed experience to speak of our own grief over a meal and in a safe space facilitated by the community built by being in the special interest group.



SPIRITUALITY SIG UPDATE

We would like to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Elisabeth Esmoil-Wilson for her time, dedication, and service as the Spirituality SIG Lead. Her contribution has been invaluable, and we wish her the very best as she steps away from this role for personal reasons.

At the same time, we are delighted to extend a very warm welcome to our new Spirituality SIG Lead, Dr. Vishwani (Deepa) Ram-Souza.

Dr. Deepa is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and co-owner of Elemental Guidance, LLC in Hawai'i, where she provides kincentric care to individuals, families, and communities locally and internationally. She holds a Ph.D. in Integral and Transpersonal Psychology from the California Institute of Integral Studies and an M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy. She is also an AAMFT Approved Supervisor and serves as adjunct faculty at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.



Dr. Deepa is the founder of Nature Family Therapy® (NFT), a metasystemic paradigm that reframes pain and angst as sacred signals of disenfranchised grief. When engaged, this grief awakens resilience and guides humanity toward its innate potential for wholeness-based eudaimonia - the restored oneness of all kin, human and beyond-human. She has facilitated over ten NFT practitioner cohorts, presented widely across North America, Africa, and Europe, and continues to contribute to the field through her upcoming works, including Nature Family Therapy: Restoring Wholeness by Reconciling Kinships (2025).

As part of SFTA-K, Dr. Deepa brings her deep commitment to guiding members in exploring the spiritual dimensions of therapeutic practice, fostering transformation of pain into purpose, and engaging systemic approaches that restore wholeness through reconciled kinship within self, among humans, and with the beyond-human world.

We are excited and honored to have her leadership, and we look forward to the journey ahead!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SFTA-K Annual AGM

November 10th 2025 - Virtual Meeting
(details will be sent to SFTA-K Members)

SIG In-Person Meetings

November 2025
Trademark Hotel, Village Market



GRIEF - Friday, November 7th



COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH - Friday, November 14th



SPIRITUALITY - Friday, November 21st



RELATIONAL HEALTH & TRAUMA - Friday, November 28th

Thank you for showing interest and for sharing your feedback on your journey for our SIGs. Meeting the leaders before diving into our 3rd round of SIGs added so much depth and engagement to the learning experience.

We explored both fun and important topics; like spirituality and sexuality (yes, still taboo in many spaces, but absolutely necessary to talk about). And as an association, we faced a beautiful challenge: how do we bring more people along as the interest in SIGs keeps growing? What a great challenge to have, isn't it?

We are so grateful to see how this continuing education is not only shaping your practice but also touching your personal lives. It inspires us to keep growing and doing more as a team. Thank you for walking this journey with us.



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