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Editorial

Practitioner Reviewers

Kristy L. Archuleta, Ph.D.

Recently, I have received some important questions about practitioners' roles in the *Journal of Financial Therapy (JFT)*. The main question comes specifically from practitioner reviewers. In general, the question typically goes something like this: "I am not sure how I can contribute or what I am supposed to contribute, as I am not an academic and I have never reviewed this type of paper before. I am happy to review it, but could you provide me some guidance?" This issue's editorial is inspired by questions like this – and the emphasis is on the importance of practitioners' involvement in a scholarly publication like the *JFT*.

To begin to address the importance of practitioner involvement in *JFT*, it is imperative to understand why *JFT* was created and its mission. The *Journal* was established in 2010 as a way for scholars and practitioners to communicate to each other about empirical and theoretically-supported information, especially in regards to outcome-based or evidenced-based clinical, experimental, and survey research (both qualitative and quantitative) (see Volume 1, Issue 1 Editorial). In order to build a field, it is essential to be grounded in empirical research and theory. Britt, Archuleta, and Klontz (2015) just published a chapter in their *Financial Therapy: Theory, Research, and Practice* textbook on the importance of the integration among theory, research, and practice where theory informs quality research and practice, research guides theory development and informs the applications in practice, and practice informs theory development and what needs to be researched. This approach has become a central focus of financial therapy as practitioners and researchers collaborate on projects that develop the field.

When *JFT* was first initiated, a conscious decision was made to develop an open access journal where information could be accessed by anyone anywhere, without barriers. This was a way to not only serve the members of the Financial Therapy Association, but also any scholar or practitioner who was interested in the intersect between money and behavior, cognitions, and relationships. As a result, *JFT* publications are widely downloaded by both scholars and practitioners, and have even been featured in the mainstream press. Many hear about financial therapy for the first time as a result of accessing *JFT's* articles.

At the core of the question posed at the outset of this Editorial is that academics and practitioners often speak two different languages. For these two types of professionals to truly communicate with each other both scholars and practitioners are needed to review the manuscripts so that articles are relevant and helpful to both types of readers. For *JFT* to

be a credible source in the academic community, articles must achieve a high level of methodological and statistical rigor that applies to the scholarly development of the financial therapy field. For *JFT* to be a useful publication to the practitioner community, articles must also provide pertinent information that aids in understanding clients and/or can be implemented into practice. In the past, *JFT* has published articles that are geared more towards the academic audience, and some articles that have been directed more towards the practitioner audience. Yet, the overall goal is to publish articles that are significant for both audiences. In order to do so, the *Journal* strives to have at least one practitioner review scholarly submissions.

If you are a practitioner, you may be asking the same question: “What do I do as a reviewer?” Depending on your expertise and what you feel comfortable addressing, constructive feedback on the following items is appreciated:

1. Is the purpose of the paper clear? If not, explain.
2. Is the purpose of the paper/research question/theoretical piece/literature review relevant to practitioners (e.g., mental health or financial) associated with financial therapy? Is the paper appropriate for *JFT* readers?
3. Is the paper well-organized (*JFT* follows APA guidelines)? Explain.
4. Is the literature review helpful, relevant, and understandable? Explain.
5. Do the methods, statistics, and results make sense? Explain.
This is a question that will depend upon the reviewer’s familiarity with research methodologies and statistics. Regardless of experience and whether the scientific methods and statistics are fully understood, what the authors are trying to convey should be clear to any reader.
6. Does the discussion section highlight relevant findings in a way that can be understood to the practitioner community? Explain.
7. Are limitations of the study or practice model presented and clearly articulated? Explain.
8. Are the implications clearly identified and described? In other words, have the ways the findings can be applied been clearly and coherently communicated? Are the implications relevant to practitioners, educators, scholars, and/or policymakers (will depend upon the purpose of the study)?
The implications section is the most important section of the entire paper. Research and theory development should aid practitioners’ work with clients, scholars’ research and theory development, educators’ tutelage of students, and/or policymakers’ development of laws and guidelines.
9. Are all references cited within the paper and in APA format?
10. Is the grammar and spelling excellent? How or how not?
11. Are APA style guidelines followed? How or how not?
12. Does the paper as a whole make sense? Why or why not?

Although they may not be able to comment on each of these questions, it is suggested that practitioner reviewers focus on the areas they can address. A practitioner’s review of the readability, coherency, and implication sections are the most important, so begin with those items.

If you are a practitioner, you are invited to become a reviewer. You are strongly encouraged to identify your specialty area, which may be financial counseling, financial coaching, areas of financial planning (i.e., tax, estate planning, insurance, investments, comprehensive planning), financial social work, mental health issues as they relate to money, couple relationships, financial socialization, financial education, financial literacy, client-practitioner communication, family relationships, etc.—the list is ongoing. You are not only invited to be a reviewer, but you are also encouraged to work with a scholar to conduct empirical research relevant to practitioners, such as testing a treatment model or intervention, writing a manuscript that is descriptive about your practice model and its theoretical underpinnings, or a literature review that provides new information to the field. You could also start by submitting a review about a book that you read that was helpful to you and your work with clients.

Whether you are a scholar or a practitioner, please join us as an author or reviewer in our efforts to communicate across disciplines with both practitioners and academics! We continue to solicit quality papers that feature financial therapy practices, experiments, and other research related to financial therapy. For those who reviewed in 2014, THANK YOU! Your time and diligence is acknowledged and much appreciated!

In closing, I invite you to submit a proposal to the next annual conference of the Financial Therapy Association, July 9-11, 2015. The deadline for submissions is February 9. This is a great forum to network with and learn from other scholars and practitioners who have a passion for financial therapy and related issues. This year's conference is sure to be a hit as it will be hosted by one of our practitioner reviewers and a member of the FTA Board of Directors, Marcee Yager, along with her conference committee team. The conference is currently (at the time of the writing of this Editorial) planned to be held in beautiful San Jose del Cabo, Mexico. For conference information, please go to: www.financialtherapyassociation.org.

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Jennifer Brown, M.S., graduated with a B.S. degree in Personal Financial Planning from Kansas State University in 2008. It was there where she was first introduced to the concept of financial therapy. In 2012, she went on to obtain an M.S. degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Friends University. Currently, her research interests include money and relationships, family of origin influences on financial decision-making, and behavior economics.

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Financial Therapy Network

The following individuals have identified themselves as providing services that promote a vision of financial therapy. The Financial Therapy Association cannot guarantee the services of those listed in the FTA Network. For more information and to view these professionals' profiles, visit <http://www.financialtherapyassociation.org>.

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