

Researcher Profile

An Interview with D. Bruce Ross, Ph.D.

D. Bruce Ross, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Family Sciences Department at the University of Kentucky. He has a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy, and a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Science with an Emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy and a specialization in financial counseling and financial therapy practices. Dr. Ross' professional and research interests primarily focus on personal and family financial well-being. At the University of Kentucky, he is currently helping to develop a new undergraduate program of Consumer Economics and Personal Finance within the Family Sciences Department. Also, Dr. Ross is the current Treasurer of the Financial Therapy Association, where he also sits on the Regulatory Committee, Conference Planning Committee, and Chairs the Business Development Committee.



Q. Define what you do professionally.

A. I am an assistant professor in the Family Sciences Department at the University of Kentucky.

Q. What activities encompass your professional responsibilities?

A. My professional activities consist of teaching, research, and service. My current teaching responsibilities encompass both marriage and family therapy course work at the Master's level, and family financial counseling course work at the undergraduate level.

Q. How long have you been engaged in your professional activity?

A. I have been engaged in clinical and therapeutic education and practice for the past 7.5 years, and engaged in financial therapy practices and research for the past 5.5 years. I have also been teaching for the past 2.5 years in Marriage and Family Therapy Master's programs, and am currently teaching family financial counseling course work. In addition, I have been actively working with the Financial Therapy Association for the past 5.5 years.

Q. What led you to your professional calling?

A. I grew up in a financially-oriented family with parents having careers related to trusts, estate planning, and family finances- so my family financial interests were really always there. As I pursued a Master's degree, and then a Doctoral degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, I grew to understand the strong relationship between finances, financial stress, and family dynamics. Through my desire to help individuals, couples, and families, I became more interested in combining my therapeutic training with my financial education, and so pursued financial therapy as a discipline.

Q. How are you paid?

A. I am a 12-month salaried faculty member.

Q. Do you work alone or do you have a team?

A. I work alone, as well as in teams. I have student assistants which help with teaching and research, but also conduct research with additional colleagues at various universities. I believe that all aspects of the research process are enhanced through a collaborative and inter-disciplinary approach.

Q. What theoretical framework guides your work when dealing with clients?

A. The primary theoretical frameworks which guide my practice with clients are cognitive behavioral financial therapy and narrative financial therapy. Additionally, being trained in marriage and family therapy, family systems theory is always an overarching guide for any work that I do.

Q. What needs to happen so that 10 years from now we can say that financial therapy is a respected field of study?

A. The discipline of financial therapy is a fast growing and developing field that is gaining respect from both mental health and financial disciplines. I believe the Financial Therapy Association, as well as the Journal of Financial Therapy, and their awesome contributing members have been doing an incredible job in spreading awareness, practice techniques, application, and research on financial therapy. So, first and foremost, is to keep doing the great work our membership and contributors are already doing. Second, the Financial Therapy Association will continue to grow and gain support through its members becoming Certified Financial Therapists™ in the next couple of years. And third, pursuant to the integrated benefits financial therapy practices provide, all academic and educational programs in mental health and financial disciplines should adopt financial therapy techniques, education, and practices.

Q. What benefits can the financial therapy association provide to others doing work that is similar to your professional activities?

A. The Financial Therapy Association provides a way for like-minded professionals, academics, practitioners, and researchers to network, connect, and collaborate with each other across a variety of disciplines. These opportunities occur through conferences, webinars, committees, and on the FTA website.

Q. If others are interested in finding out more about you personally and professionally, where can they obtain this information?

A. Please feel free to visit my profile on the University of Kentucky website at: <https://hes.ca.uky.edu/person/donald-ross> or email me at bruce.ross@uky.edu.