

March 1, 2016

From: Caitlin Crum, East Bay President

To EB-CAMFT eTree

Hi Everyone,

The East Bay CAMFT Board met this past Sunday for our annual retreat, an opportunity for reflection, strategic planning and strengthening our rapport as a Board. The key topic we reviewed was the Chapter Agreements. Over the past 5 months we have received considerable feedback regarding these agreements and the future of our status as a chapter of CAMFT. Many of you feel that we should disconnect from CAMFT, others feel that they need greater clarity around the content and others would like us to sign the agreements and move forward.

After considerable discussion, we have decided to sign the agreements and present a list of caveats and requests to CAMFT, with the plan to review our remaining a Chapter with CAMFT after a 6 month period. Please review the content below for the complete letter. We believe that we've acted on behalf of the best interest of our members and look forward to the coming dialog.

Respectfully,

Caiti Crum, MFT
EB CAMFT President

To the Staff and Board of CAMFT:

It is with significant trepidation that we, the East Bay CAMFT Board, agree to sign the Chapter Agreements. We are devoted to acting in the best interests of our membership and believe that in signing the agreements we are taking a step to secure the consistent services our members are accustomed to receiving through both the state and local chapter, while inviting dialog, transparency and progress for our field. We sign the agreements with several caveats.

Overall we are concerned that the Chapter Agreements are both confusing and place an unnecessary level of control over the chapters. First, we review the actual content and wording of the Agreements:

1. Section 2 – Relationship - *“Neither CAMFT nor CHAPTERS shall have the right or power to bind or obligate the other party in any manner, and shall not make, or represent that it has the power to make, any contract, agreement, representation, warranty or obligation,*

express or implied on behalf of the other party. Neither CAMFT nor CHAPTERS shall be liable for any act, error, omission, debt or other liability or obligation of the other.”

This statement appears contradictory given the remaining content in the agreements. It appears that CAMFT is placing significant obligation onto its Chapters and through the proposed requirements, exercising control over and on behalf of the Chapters. We request clarification of this statement as it appears to contradict the content of the remaining agreements.

2. Section 3 – Bylaws – The wording of this section appears subjective as the manner in which CAMFT interprets Chapter bylaws and potential revisions is not clearly defined. Additionally, the process that Chapters are required to participate in to revise Chapter bylaws presents as costly, time consuming and holds the best interests of CAMFT but not necessarily those of the Chapter members. We request clarification and consideration of the financial burden of these processes on smaller Chapters, in addition to the cultural implications this has on Chapter governance.
3. Section 4 – Membership – Again, this section presents as nebulous and allows CAMFT to define the actions and strategic planning for a Chapter, rather than relying on the Chapter Boards to recognize and plan in the best interests of their community. If a person wishes to be involved as a Chapter member and vote as a Chapter member, we are happy to provide them access. If a person does not wish to align with CAMFT and would like to participate in the community discussion, we do not have a problem providing that person with resources. We ask CAMFT to speak more clearly about their motivation and rationale behind the statements proposed in this section.
4. Section 6 - Annual Report – While we appreciate the requirement to provide financial accountability, we are concerned that smaller chapters may not be financially equipped to utilize online accounting services or consult a CPA. We ask that CAMFT consider providing support to ensure each Chapter has equitable access to accounting services. We also believe that the request for a member roster equates to policing of members, a practice that we do not agree with.
5. Section 9 – CAMFT Membership List Use – In the past we have utilized these chapter lists for marketing purposes and have experienced the request process to fluctuate and the format of these lists to be unwieldy. We've requested Excel spreadsheets with contact information and have received PDF mailing labels, which are not helpful for our online marketing strategy. We ask that the process to request these lists and the format in which they're delivered be consistent and useable.
6. Section 13 – Suspension or Termination – While we appreciate the clarity of this process and the opportunity for a Chapter to repair any suspected violations, we believe that the term “believe” used in the 3rd paragraph is vague and subjective. We ask for clarification

on how the CAMFT board would determine that a “belief” is enough to suspend and possibly terminate a Chapter.

Overall, we view the Chapter Agreements as containing standardized and ambiguous information. We have experienced a great amount of concern over the potential results of complying with these agreements. As a Board we have requested feedback from our members over the past 5 months and have deliberated our decision. Our concern is centered around the lack of trust we experience with CAMFT throughout different areas of the organization. We believe that CAMFT has historically not held our interests in mind, particularly around legislation, lobbying, insurance panels and furthering our profession.

We have not experienced CAMFT as fulfilling its mission and vision, rather we have seen the Board and Staff behaving in ways that we deeply question. We are concerned that the mission does not specify MFTs rather referencing “mental health care providers.” Finally, delivering these Chapter Agreements barely 6 months before requiring our signature simply does not place the Chapters in any place to adequately prepare for alternatives to remaining with CAMFT.

We ask that CAMFT consider our requests and feedback over both the Chapter Agreements and business practices over a 6-month probationary period, at which time we will review the appropriateness to remain with CAMFT or explore other options. We present our own vision statement (see below), adopted in 2011 as a platform for your operating in a more transparent and ethically aligned manner. We request greater transparency around your financial practices and content of your Board meetings. Much of your meetings are held in secret, a practice that simply does not foster trust or dialog.

We are using our signing of the Chapter Agreements with the outlined caveats and requests as a path to dialog and resolution. We see CAMFT as benefitting our members and we ultimately wish to see CAMFT utilize its resources to further our profession. We will be sending a communication out to our membership and the Chapter Leaders to announce our decision and rationale.

Thank you for your consideration,

The East Bay CAMFT Board:

Caiti Crum, President
Holly Forman, Past-President
Jenny Ireland Miller, Secretary
Craig Toonder, Member at Large
Ben Jones, Member at Large
Peter Carpentieri, Member at Large
Sorrenta Stuart, Member at Large

- East Bay CAMFT Vision Statement, Adopted June, 2011:

East Bay CAMFT is a unique, local community of professionals whose Board is continuously building an involved, active membership of Marriage and Family Therapists, interns, and trainees. We are responsive to our members' needs and provide support for their therapeutic practices.

East Bay CAMFT serves its members as a comprehensive source of quality information and training for best practices that include the most current clinical, marketing and business practices; and a compelling on-line presence for professionals and the public. It is our aim to be known for extensive community building and networking.

East Bay CAMFT is an efficient and transparent organization that uses its financial resources for maximum benefit to its members. The East Bay CAMFT Board encourages its members to be involved and contribute to their profession through participation in its working committees, its on-line newsletter, and its programs for the membership and the public. And finally, because of the way we conduct our chapter, East Bay CAMFT is a model that provides leadership to our parent organization, CAMFT, and to other state and national organizations.