

Ackerman Institute for the Family 2025



Mission

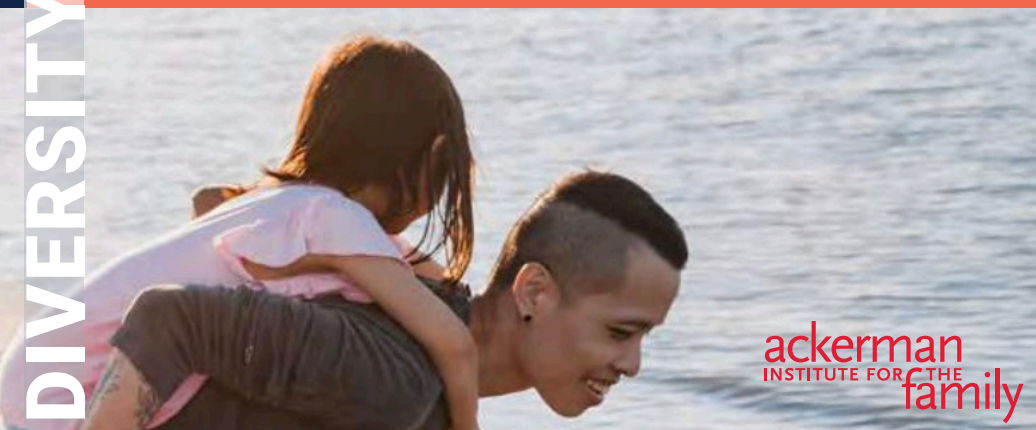
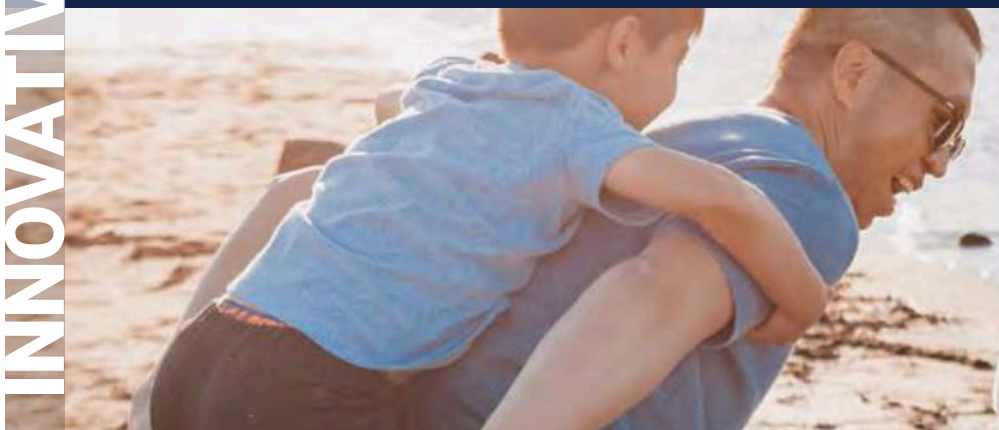
Transform families through service, training & innovation

We strengthen families and communities through transformative clinical services, train professionals with focus on equity and excellence, and advance the field of family therapy.

Vision

Global leadership in family therapy

Delivering impactful solutions for diverse families while ensuring sustainable growth, accessibility, and thought leadership in mental health care.



What We Do

- Clinical Services
- Professional Training
- Certificate Programs
- Innovation
- Research
- Projects and Centers



Why Family Therapy? Why Ackerman?



FAMILIES FACING CHALLENGES TOGETHER

Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) is based on the well-established science showing that close relationships impact mental and physical health and that relationship dynamics can change to improve troubling symptoms. By examining individuals in the context of their own environments and relationships, CFT can provide couples and families with the tools they need to come together and confront whatever challenges they face.

The evidence base for CFT has flourished in recent years and continued research and clinical practice can ensure that all families receive the most efficacious and culturally appropriate care.

STRENGTHENING AND CLARIFYING RELATIONSHIPS: THE ACKERMAN RELATIONAL APPROACH

As a way of thinking about and providing CFT, the **Ackerman Relational Approach (ARA)** is a systemic approach to therapy designed to strengthen and clarify relationships between couples and family members and empower them to envision and create desired lives with the active support of those closest to them.

A unique strength of the ARA is its ability to harness the power of documented evidence-based family therapies while being grounded in a training and treatment prerogative of collaboration, flexibility, transparency, and trust.

ARA-trained therapists can build links between theory and clinical practice; maximize therapeutic opportunities to validate, empower, and understand families and couples within their own contexts; and explore, develop, and expand their personal capacities for authenticity and accountability to families and couples.

COPING, HEALING, TRANSCENDING

Couples and families who are served by a therapist practicing the ARA can come together to cope with, heal from, and sometimes even transcend the challenges presented by physical and mental illness, developmental difficulties in childhood, migration and acculturation, poverty, substance use, violence, incest, relational trauma, and oppression based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, or sexual orientation.

IDEAS AND VALUES

The ARA reflects the following ideas and values of the Ackerman Institute:

- A commitment to inventing and developing *clinical innovations* for specific problems facing families and couples, and introducing these techniques and approaches into the mainstream of family and couple therapy
- A practice of thinking and working within *multiple theoretical frameworks*
- A *sensitivity to context and culture*, including an awareness of the effects of oppression on family and couple relationships
- A clinical stance that embraces *collaboration, empowerment, and working from strengths*
- A perspective that views the *self of the therapist* as central to the efficacy of therapy

Pioneers of Family Systems Therapy



A LEGACY OF FAMILY-CENTERED HEALING

- At the heart of our mission lies a fundamental belief: families are the cornerstone of individual and societal well-being.
- Ackerman has been at the forefront of transforming therapy through our pioneering work in Family Systems Therapy.
- Unlike traditional therapeutic approaches that focus solely on individuals, we recognized early on that true healing and long-term mental health success can only be achieved when the entire family system is engaged.
- This perspective revolutionized the field of mental health and continues to shape how we address some of the most challenging issues facing families today.

As we look to the future, your support is crucial in expanding our reach and advancing our programs, ensuring that more families—especially those in underserved communities—can benefit from this transformative approach.

WHY FAMILY SYSTEMS THERAPY?

A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH

- The traditional approach to therapy often focuses on treating individuals in isolation, ignoring the complex web of relationships that influence their behaviors and mental health.
- At Ackerman, we were among the first to approach therapy from a systemic perspective, which views the family as an interconnected unit where the behavior and mental health of one member affect all others.
- Our approach recognizes that families are living systems where each member's actions and well-being are deeply intertwined with those of others.
- Problems within the family unit—such as poor communication, unresolved conflict, and unhealthy dynamics—can manifest as emotional and psychological difficulties for individuals.

By focusing on the family system rather than just the individual, we have developed more effective interventions that lead to lasting change. Family Systems Therapy acknowledges that healing one member requires attention to the whole unit, and our research-backed methodologies emphasize the role of a family in recovery, healing, and resilience.

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Pioneers of Family Systems Therapy

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IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

The success of the **Ackerman Relational Approach** is not theoretical; it is well-documented. Over the decades, we have helped thousands of families address a range of issues, including:

- **Mental Health Disorders:** Depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges are often exacerbated by family dysfunction. Our approach addresses the root causes within family dynamics, not just the symptoms in individuals.
- **Trauma and Recovery:** Trauma affects entire families, not just the person directly impacted. Through Family Systems Therapy, we help families process trauma together, building stronger, more supportive environments for recovery.
- **Addiction and Substance Abuse:** Addiction is often described as a “family disease,” and our systemic approach engages the whole family in recovery, leading to more sustainable outcomes.
- **Parenting Challenges and Adolescent Issues:** From managing behavioral issues to navigating complex relationships between parents and children, our methods provide the tools families need to thrive during challenging times.

BY THE NUMBERS

80% of families who participate in our programs report improved communication, conflict resolution, and overall family cohesion.

75% of individuals treated within the family system report a reduction in symptoms of mental health disorders after six months of treatment.

90% of participating families express a greater sense of support, empowerment, and unity after completing our programs.

Projects & Centers

- Gender & Family Project
- Center for the Developing Child & Family
- LatinX Youth & Family Immigration Project
- Ackerman Relational Approach Project
- Substance Use Disorders Project



Gender & Family Project

LEADING WITH INNOVATION

The Ackerman Institute's **Gender & Family Project (GFP)** strives to empower youth, families, and communities through gender-affirmative services and support, professional training, and research. Using Ackerman's family-based approach to focus on transgender and nonconforming youth (TGNC), GFP's innovative services are unique both in NYC and nationally—and the Ackerman Institute remains among the few organizations in New York City offering such services. During the pandemic, and now in its wake, GFP has persevered in its support of this population.

VITAL SERVICES

- Community support groups for caregivers, grandparents, siblings, other family members, children and tweens 5 to 14 years old, and adolescents 14 to 18 years old
- A Spanish-speaking caregiver support group
- Family therapy and parental coaching
- Referrals for affirmative psychological and gender evaluation
- Advocacy groups for caregivers and youth
- Bilingual Spanish-English gender-inclusivity training for schools, community agencies, and health and mental health professionals
- Expanded services for TGNC foster youth—including supports tailored to youth involved with the NYC Administration for Children's Services—and designed for caregivers, families of origin, and extended chosen families
- Training and capacity-building services for corporate groups and organizations
- Research on gender identity development and family acceptance

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TRANSFORMING LIVES

Approximately **1,000** people served every year through:

50 annual workshops on gender inclusivity training and outreach in public schools, reaching over 500 faculty and parents

10 annual public support group sessions serving an estimated 70 families and 140 family members

15 families in therapy, plus 20 to 25 families participating in groups while waiting for a therapy slot to open

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Gender & Family Project

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FILLING UNMET NEEDS


TGNC youths are disproportionately burdened by poor mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation and attempts—likely owing to significant social rejection, such as a lack of parental support, bullying, and stigma and discrimination. Moreover, diminished access to social and mental health supports and delayed gender-affirming care during the pandemic had a particularly devastating effect on this population. Even now, well into our post-pandemic recovery, these youths and their families suffer unprecedented stress, while mental health care providers, school staff, and other youth-serving organizations struggle to meet the increased need for their services.

GFP's mental health services, family therapy, community groups, and wraparound education are designed to meet those needs. Its training programs educate New York City's teachers, families, service providers, and communities, strengthening support for TGNC youth, informing people about New York State's Gender Expression Nondiscrimination Act protections, and ensuring that TGNC youth know their rights and can access the help they need.


FUNDING PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS

TGNC youth tend to be isolated and often lack crucial social support networks. Additional resources would bolster GFP's capacity to reach many more vulnerable youth and families, to continue developing important new treatment models, and to address the growing need for gender-inclusive practices and policies by:

- Hiring new therapists and training associates, and expanding its online education to increase outreach to New York City schools and other organizations
- Reaching communities outside the New York City area, particularly states with harmful and negligent gender-related practices, by supporting online groups
- Engaging more group facilitators to run in-person community groups throughout the year—through, for example, GFP's creation of a BIPOC community group and increasing the frequency of its cisgender sibling group meetings
- Offering more clinical workshops to help local clinicians better understand best practices for gender-affirming care and methodologies for appropriate interventions



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Center for the Developing Child & Family

LEADING WITH INNOVATION

The Ackerman Institute's **Center for the Developing Child and Family** (CDCF) provides clinicians and parents with the knowledge, tools, and support they need to foster child development and parental self-growth. A leader in two-generational parenting programs with a proven track record of success, CDCF focuses on what children need to thrive and what parents need to continue their personal development and build strong, nurturing families.

VITAL SERVICES

- **For clinicians:** Equip childcare and family service staff with effective parenting knowledge and practices that improve their work with families.
- **For parents:** Offer opportunities for parents to reflect, grow, and develop in multiple roles—as caregivers, partners, workers, and individuals.
- **Two-generational parenting programs**
 - *Bright Beginnings:* A comprehensive 36-session parent-child group program that incorporates prenatal, video review, and home visiting components
 - *Personal Best:* A 16-session program (with a 22-session version for teen parents) focusing on stress management, relationship building, and productive parenting activities

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Center for the Developing Child & Family

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT: A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

- Pre- and post-program assessments of CDCF's two-generational parenting approach show significant gains in parent-child emotional connection, language development, social-emotional development, and reductions in parental stress.
- Studies and evaluations conducted by independent organizations like Mathematica have validated the effectiveness of CKCC programs.

Ongoing research will continue to assess long-term outcomes, focusing on expanding the program's reach while maintaining quality and fidelity.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

- Trained over 300 staff members across multiple organizations
- Reached over 20,000 children and families with high-quality, research-driven parenting programs
- Going forward, the CDCF aims to expand its impact, reach more families, and continue evolving its programs to meet the needs of its many distinct communities by:

- Hiring and mentoring a new generation of diverse faculty
- Translating *Bright Beginnings* and *Personal Best* materials into Spanish and Chinese to broaden their reach to underserved communities
- Hiring administrative support to manage the Center's growing activities
- Developing three new workshops for neurodivergent children, pregnant new mothers, and adult children and parents, online or in-person
- Launching a new *Reflective Practice and Group Supervision* module for professional clinicians
- Expanding on-site groups for parents in areas such as prenatal care and stress management

KEY PARTNERS

- NYC Public School Districts, Early Head Start programs, and community agencies
- Notable collaborations include agencies like New York Foundling, Rising Ground, and the Child and Family Services Agency of Washington, DC



CDCF provides
clinicians and parents
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Community Mental Health Outreach Center



LatinX Youth & Family Immigration Project



LEADING WITH INNOVATION

Using a specially developed framework of family therapy for first- and second-generation immigrants, the LatinX Youth and Family Immigration Project seeks to deepen the understanding of the Latinx family experience for both parents and adolescents across cultures. Through both direct care and training, LYFIP emphasizes a relational and culturally sensitive approach, joining families in their narratives of joy and pain and becoming the bridge to strengthen their bonds.

There are 3 key services:

- Family therapy through the Ackerman Clinic
- Workshops
- Support groups

VITAL SERVICES

- Family Psychotherapy with Ackerman clinicians delivered in Spanish.
- Curriculum-based support and psycho-educational groups co-facilitated in Spanish and held with partnering agencies: Brooklyn and Bronx Defenders; Cabrini Services; Life is Precious, Misteca, Nido de Esperanza
- Free annual training and case consultation with clinicians and staff at community agencies working directly with Latinx immigrant communities.
- Live supervision therapy training for clinicians using a curriculum including proven video recordings; training workshops directed at bilingual mental health workers and furnishing important continuing education accreditation promoting improved clinical work supporting families.
- Providing referral resources for families who need specialty treatment, matching them with clinicians and/or agencies providing bilingual mental health services that Ackerman does not offer directly.

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LatinX Youth & Family Immigration Project

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FILLING UNMET NEEDS

- Providing continuing education accreditation to improve clinical skills to support Latinx families in the community.
- Workshops on topics from Immigration trauma, cultural sensitivity, self-care, and pain management (for women).
- Participants impacted children (6-18), infants, pregnant mothers, and men.

Serving immigrant families that have suffered from trauma and other mental health issues during their migration to the United States, the LatinX Youth & Family Immigration Project is committed to promoting optimal mental health and well-being in the NYC Latinx immigrant community through the direct provision of psychotherapy, the training of bilingual community-based clinicians, and referrals to partner agencies providing culturally- and linguistically-sensitive mental health services.

LYFIP-sponsored therapy, support groups, outreach activities, and programming help remove the stigma associated with mental health issues by offering services from bilingual staff using the Ackerman model, which considers the role of the therapist as well as the mental health needs of the entire family—systemically and through a social justice lens—using culturally sensitive therapeutic approaches and language congruent with each family's needs.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

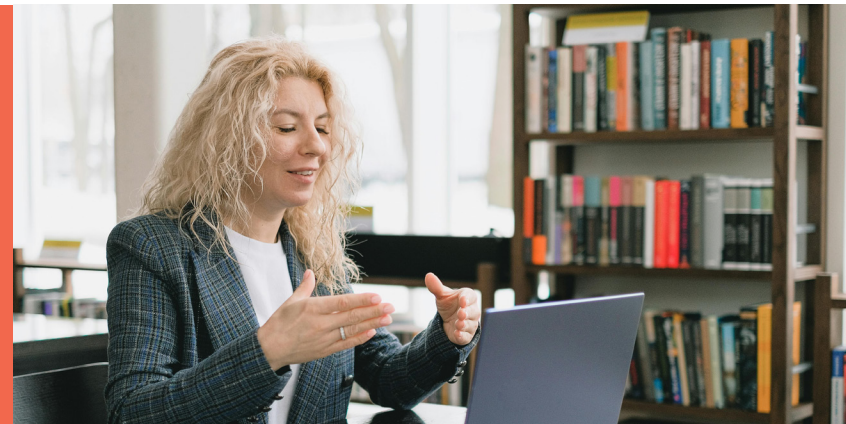
Training up to **75** **community clinicians** who work directly with Latinx immigrant communities and serving 350+ individuals every year

Up to **15** **families** receiving family therapy weekly

Group therapy for **10** **families** monthly

60 **bilingual mental health workers** taking training workshops annually

The Ackerman Relational Approach Project



SERVING FUTURE GENERATIONS

The **Ackerman Relational Approach (ARA)** is the result of over two decades of dedicated research and practice by the faculty at the Ackerman Institute. It synthesizes the most effective elements of family therapy into a singular, integrative model, providing a comprehensive framework that helps trainees, families, and therapists approach challenges with depth and clarity. The ARA emphasizes relational bonds, cultural awareness, and an evolving understanding of social justice. It is codified in a dynamic, living document that has helped countless families over the years.

However the ARA's potential remains largely untapped. Our goal is to fully develop, update, and memorialize the ARA into a published book or multimedia project that will preserve this valuable model for future generations. This endeavor will allow it to expand its reach, incorporating new knowledge as its use grows.

GROWING AND EVOLVING AS NEEDS CHANGE

Ackerman is embarking on an exciting new project to **memorialize the ARA**. This initiative will turn the current ARA manual into a comprehensive book or multimedia archive, preserving its rich content while

updating it to reflect contemporary issues like social justice and equity. This project will ensure that the ARA continues to shape the future of family therapy for decades to come.

ARA TOOLS FOR SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FAMILY THERAPY

- **Comprehensive Book/Multimedia Archive:** A living document with contemporary updates
- **Incorporation of Social Justice Issues:** Ensuring relevance for today's therapists and families
- **Clinical Supervision and Teaching Guidelines:** Expanding frameworks for therapy and training
- **Global Reach:** Sharing Ackerman's unique approach to family therapy with the international therapy community

INSPIRATION, INNOVATION, AND IMPACT: LEADING THE WAY IN FAMILY THERAPY

This project will solidify Ackerman's role as a leader in family therapy, establishing a robust, well-documented, and comprehensive resource that will continue to inspire therapists and families globally. It will create an updated, accessible format for the ARA manual and will expand the Ackerman Institute's influence globally through the memorialized ARA model.

The ARA emphasizes relational bonds, cultural awareness, and an evolving understanding of social justice. It is codified in a dynamic, living document that has helped countless families over the years.

Substance Use Disorders Project

CHAMPIONING FAMILY THERAPY IN SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

At the Ackerman Institute for the Family, we know that family therapy is not just beneficial—it is essential in the treatment of substance use disorders (SUDs). Families are often the first to witness the impact of addiction, yet they are too frequently left out of the healing process. Research shows that when families are engaged in treatment, recovery outcomes improve, relapse rates decrease, and the support network needed for lasting change strengthens. Despite this, family therapy remains on the margins of mainstream substance use treatment. The Ackerman Institute has responded with the following initiatives.

A Three-Part Workshop Series on Family Therapy and Substance Use

We will host a series of specialized workshops led by our talented substance use specialists, who are all Ackerman graduates with over a decade of experience working with families. Some have published in the field, most have directed family therapy services in substance use treatment institutes, and all teach at the Ackerman Institute, bringing extensive clinical expertise. These workshops will not only equip therapists with critical skills to integrate family therapy into substance use treatment, but they will also expand our reach and make our knowledge more accessible to a wider audience of mental health professionals.



Substance Use Disorders Project

Live Clinical Program on Family Therapy and Substance Use

We seek to establish a new live clinical training program where up to six trainees will receive foundational family therapy education, learning the history, context, and specific applications of the Ackerman Relational Approach (ARA) in substance use treatment. This program will provide hands-on experience working directly with families in our clinic under the supervision of leading experts in the field. Trainees will have the opportunity to put theory into clinical practice, ensuring that they develop the necessary skills to integrate family therapy into substance use care effectively.

Certificate Program for Non-Licensed Substance Use Professionals


Many professionals working in substance use treatment are not licensed therapists, yet they play a vital role in supporting individuals and families navigating addiction. Case managers, peer recovery coaches, harm reduction specialists, community outreach workers, and residential treatment staff are often on the front lines of care. However, they often

lack formal training in family systems, leaving a critical gap in how they support the whole family unit.


We are developing a certificate program designed specifically for non-licensed workers, equipping them with a foundational knowledge of family therapy and its role in substance use treatment. By understanding family dynamics, communication patterns, and relational healing, these professionals will be better prepared to engage families, improve outcomes, and create more sustainable recovery environments.

Expanding Our National and International Presence

We aim to increase the visibility of family therapy in the field of substance use treatment by supporting our specialists in presenting at key conferences nationally and internationally. With the right support, we could also explore sponsorship opportunities to position the Ackerman Institute as a leader in centralizing family therapy within substance use treatment programs.



Research shows that when families are engaged in treatment, recovery outcomes improve, relapse rates decrease, and the support network needed for lasting change strengthens.



Specialty Projects and Initiatives

- Workshops and Online Education
- Community Trainings
- Families and Wealth Management
- Families and Technology:
Unplug and Reconnect



Workshops & Online Education



OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE

Ackerman Institute for the Family is expanding its professional training and continuing education offerings through a comprehensive Workshops & Online Education Initiative. This initiative aims to:

- Provide high-quality, accessible training for mental health professionals, educators, and organizations.
- Enhance engagement through a mix of in-person, live online, hybrid, and on-demand learning options.
- Expand Ackerman's national and international reach, making our expertise available to a global audience.
- Strengthen Ackerman's reputation as the leader in family therapy education by showcasing our faculty's cutting-edge expertise in family, couples, and sex therapy.

STRATEGY & LAUNCH

Workshops & CE Learning: Expanding our portfolio of in-person, live online, and hybrid workshops with top faculty and experts.

Subscription-Based Learning: Launching a LMS-powered platform for on-demand, CE-accredited courses, offering flexibility and ongoing engagement.

Audience Segmentation: Tailored learning experiences for clinicians, corporate partners, parents, and international practitioners.

Marketing & Engagement: Strategic outreach via organic and paid digital marketing (social media, email campaigns, partnerships, and alumni networks) to drive enrollment and subscriptions.

Rationale & Audiences

Meeting Industry Demand: The demand for specialized training in family therapy, couples therapy, and sex therapy is increasing, particularly in areas like culturally responsive care, LGBTQ+ affirming therapy, and systemic interventions. Our workshops address these needs by providing expert-led training and CE credits in these critical areas.

Expanding National & International Presence: By increasing online and hybrid offerings, we extend our educational impact beyond NYC, making Ackerman's expertise accessible to clinicians, institutions, and mental health organizations worldwide.

Establishing Thought Leadership: Ackerman's faculty of nationally recognized experts ensures that our workshops stand out for their depth, clinical applicability, and innovation, reinforcing our position as a premier training institute in the field.

Supporting Career Growth: Our flexible learning options enable busy professionals to advance their skills while meeting continuing education requirements.

Community Trainings



Ackerman offers a diverse range of community trainings and workshops tailored to meet the learning needs of staff and mental health professionals in various settings, including agencies, clinics, private group practices, schools, hospitals, and community-based organizations.

Ackerman's community training workshops are specifically designed to address the learning needs of agency staff. These workshops can be delivered as one-time events or as more intensive series of full or half-day trainings. Case consultations and/or live case consultations can be integrated into any training series. All presentations incorporate ideas from family systems theory and the Ackerman Relational Approach. Teaching points are highlighted using videos of family therapy sessions. Trainings are available both in-person within the tri-state area and online.

Our workshop offerings cover a variety of specialized clinical themes and issues.

Ackerman has provided trainings to agencies throughout the tri-state areas including: JCCA, New Alternatives for Children, Children's Aid Society, Office of School Health, Green Chimney's, and ABC Mobile Crisis Unit to name a few.

The goal of the community-based training program is to equip frontline workers with the skills, strategies, and best practices necessary for engaging families in a respectful, non-pathologizing approach to therapeutic work. This approach ensures that families feel seen, valued, and respected while enhancing their family connections and overall well-being.

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Families and Wealth Management



A family systems approach to wealth management deeply invests in teaching about family development and functioning to resolve problems and effect positive change in wealth management. Knowledge of family systems theory can help the wealth manager to better understand, relate to and address the internal dynamics that shape the family's feelings, attitudes, and behaviors toward wealth management.

Family wealth is inextricably tied to emotional bonds, loyalty binds, identity status, origin stories, core values, transgenerational patterns, traditions and personal histories. A family systems approach to wealth management views the individual members as a collective unit and is based on the premise that what affects one member affects all and that one member's change can result in change in the entire family system. A family systems approach also emphasizes generational, social and cultural factors, which can influence the family's perspective on wealth.

Learning Objectives

- * Facilitate a healthy family relationship with wealth
- * Foster open, honest, and courageous family communication about wealth
- * Promote compassionate understanding and respect for individual family members' perspectives on wealth
- * Adopt a "both-and" view that supports family well-being and successful wealth management
- * Develop conscious, purposeful and disciplined use of self
- * Recognize importance of collaboration with family
- * Know when to refer the family for family therapy

Student Scholarships and Aid

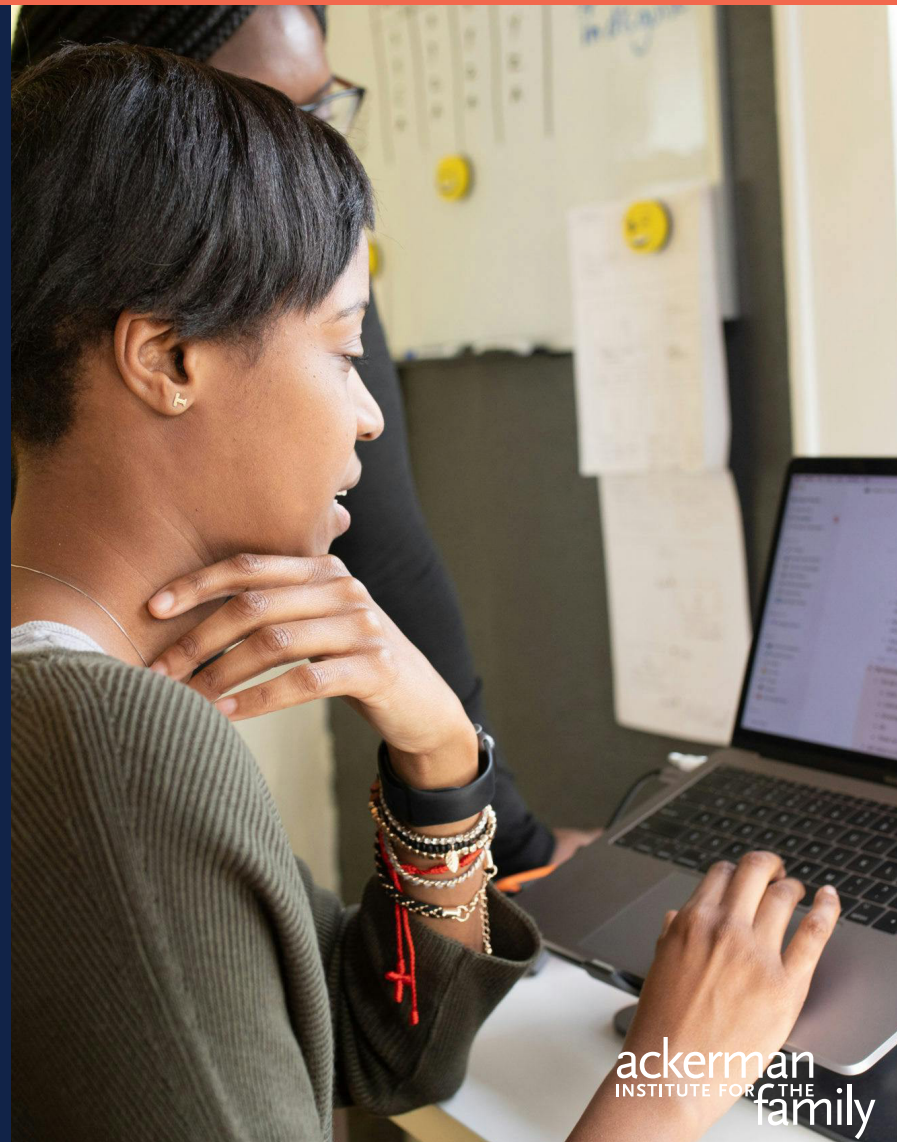
- Chernick Scholarship
- BIPOC Scholarship
- Social Work & Diversity Scholarship
 - NYU
 - Columbia
 - Hunter
- Financial Aid



Success & Metrics

Our tracking and success is measured by qualitative and quantitative metrics in 5 primary areas:

- Clinical Services
- Training
- Groups
- Outreach Activity
- Behavioral



Success & Metrics

Our tracking and success is measured by qualitative and quantitative metrics in 4 primary areas:

- Clinical Services
- Training
- Groups
- Outreach Activity.

In addition, each project sets customized goals with an action plan and tracks improvements and challenges.

Reporting includes:

- Number of Families and number of therapy sessions in Clinic
- Attendees and number enrolled in Support Groups
- Number of Trainings facilitated and Training Partners
- Surveys: pre and post data collected, to show significant gains. Examples include parents/child emotional connections, child language

development, social-emotional development, parental social support, decrease in stress, improved school attendance

- Ongoing Research Studies
- Number of Community Partners to support workshops
- Accomplishments and progress vis a vis Funders support and action plans

Growth and Impact: Ackerman's Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan is built on four interconnected pillars that support Ackerman's mission and future growth. Together, these four pillars represent a critical foundation for Ackerman's continued success and advancement in family therapy excellence.

- **Growth and Sustainability:** Building financial resilience through diversified revenue and optimized operations
- **Training and Programmatic Excellence:** Expanding innovative training programs aligned with market demands
- **Innovation Through Technology:** Enhancing operations and advancing research via technological solutions
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Developing sustainable collaborations to broaden impact and revenue
- **Governance and Leadership:** Strengthening board alignment with strategic goals while enhancing governance structures for greater growth and impact
- **Accessibility and Equity:** Embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion in all practices while fostering equitable benefits for stakeholders and communities served
- **Admissions and Enrollment:** Increasing program enrollment and enhancing processes to maximize reach, diversity, and revenue through improved training programs and workshops
- **Research and Community Engagement:** Positioning Ackerman as a global family therapy leader through research initiatives while fostering strong community connections and expanding educational outreach

