



Multisystemic Therapy Fact Sheet

MST Program Description

- Intensive treatment for youth with complex issues
- Treatment in families' natural environment – homes, schools, community
- Present focused multisystemic assessment and evidence-based interventions – individual, family, peers, school and community
- Highly targeted treatment planning and implementation
- Emphasis on increasing responsible behavior on the part of families and promoting generalization of treatment
- Therapist is primary service provider – family therapy versus linkage to services
- Multiple sessions/contacts weekly; Minimum of 3 sessions per week
- 24 hour on-call availability for crisis intervention/support
- Low case loads – 4-5 families per counselor
- Treatment lasts 3-5 months to ensure long term change
- Randomized, controlled clinical trials demonstrating model efficacy
- Commitment to coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders (including schools, courts, and other key players)

Child and Family Characteristics

- Children between ages of 10 and 17 according to MST Services research.
- Children living with or returning to family (may be parents, extended family or kinship care) whom are willing to assume a long-term parenting role
- Primarily children with behavioral misconduct, but may have co-morbid psychiatric illness – behavioral issues must be the primary reason for referral (e.g. theft, property destruction, assault, runaway, truancy, illegal activity, substance use/abuse or juvenile sex offense when in conjunction with other delinquent behaviors)
- Child must have an Axis I diagnosis (e.g. Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Substance Abuse/Dependence Disorder, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, or Disruptive Behavioral Disorder)
- Children engaging in behaviors that place them at imminent risk of out of home placement including residential treatment, juvenile detention, group home, foster care, etc.
- Children returning home from an out of home placement (residential, foster care, detention, group home, etc) within 30 days of referral. There must be a firm discharge date from out of home placement at point of referral and this date must fall within first 30 days of treatment with MST
- Children who have been in residential treatment 12 months or less
- Family not in crisis (able, willing to participate in treatment)
- Parents/caregivers must be willing to meet several times per week with MST therapist
- Child and parents may have substance abuse, addiction issues and require treatment
- Child, parents may have problem sexual behaviors, but treatment for sexual offenses required prior to referral

Exclusionary Criteria

- Children who are actively suicidal, homicidal, or psychotic without medication stabilization
- Children without a viable family placement
- Children placed in a non-family foster home
- Children who will not be returning home within 30 days of the referral