

# MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY

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**Placing a caring therapist  
in the life of every hurting child**

# MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY

EVIDENCE BASED SOLUTIONS  
ADDRESSING THE COMPLEXITY  
OF YOUTH NEEDS

## Children

should be loved  
**for who they are...**  
not for what they do.



*Touching Lives for Greatness*

## What is Multisystemic Therapy (MST)?

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is an exciting treatment modality proven to have positive effects on juveniles who demonstrate external antisocial behaviors. Studies show that youth who commit crimes have a better chance of changing their behavior when therapeutic interventions are combined with naturally occurring legal ramifications. MST is known for its lasting positive outcomes which are well documented. The program works with youth, family, and all pertinent systems. MST focuses on improving and strengthening those systems with a goal of keeping the youth out of placement and facilitating achievement of other behavioral objectives.

## What does MST do?

The MST therapist focuses on understanding the family and youth in the context of their "system." MST uses a home based model of service delivery doing "whatever it takes" to provide services to families. Therapists have small caseloads of four to six families. Teams are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The average treatment length is three to five months.

The family-therapist collaboration allows the family to take the lead in setting treatment goals. The treatment model incorporates strategies which encourage cooperative partnering. MST therapists help accomplish goals by working to understand the factors of each system which contribute to the client's problems and difficulties. Therapists work as a team to provide services during times that are most convenient to each family.

## Who is MST for?

MST is geared toward at-risk juveniles who demonstrate external antisocial behaviors and who may be at risk for out-of-home placement. MST also serves as a re-entry and re-unification service in that it supports the client and his/her family as the youth returns home from foster care, shelter, or residential placement.

## How can I access MST Services?

Youth are referred to the program through the county's Juvenile Probation Department or Children & Youth Services. Clients must be covered by Medical Assistance or have funding through Children & Youth Services or Juvenile Probation to be eligible for this service. To find out more about how to obtain Medical Assistance, contact your local Department of Public Welfare.

MST has demonstrated the following outcomes with at risk juveniles:

- Reduced long-term rates of criminal offending
- Decreased recidivism and re-arrests
- Reduced rates of out-of-home placements
- Extensive improvements in family functioning
- Decreased behavioral and mental health problems
- Cost savings in comparison to traditional mental health and juvenile justice services

