

What is MST?

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is a unique, goal-oriented, comprehensive treatment program designed to serve multi-problem youth in their community. MST is the only family-focused and community-based treatment program that has:

- been the focus of several major research studies, and
- demonstrated clinical- and cost-effectiveness for youth with complex emotional, social, and academic needs.

MST was developed at the Family Services Research Center at the Medical University of South Carolina, and uses only treatment strategies that are supported by research.

Who should receive MST?

MST is effective in helping youth with chronic, violent delinquent behavior and youth with serious emotional problems, including:

- truancy and academic problems
- serious disrespect and disobedience
- aggressive behavior (fighting and property destruction)
- criminal behavior
- drug and alcohol problems
- running away

What makes MST work?

Research studies of youth who break the law repeatedly and/or abuse illegal substances are clear. The causes of juvenile offending are difficulties in the following areas:

- family relations
- school performance
- peer relations
- neighborhood and community relations

MST interventions focus on key aspects of these areas in each youth's life. All interventions are designed in full collaboration with family members and key figures in each of the child's life -- parents or legal guardians, school teachers and principals, etc.

What does MST do?

- a complete functional assessment of youth in the context of their family, school, and community
- seeks to understand the "fit" between the child's problems and the factors which contribute to them
- focuses on helping parents build supportive social networks
- empowers parents to address the needs of the youth more effectively
- emphasizes long-term change that families can maintain after the program

How does MST use a "home-based" model?

- MST Therapists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- services are provided in the home, school, neighborhood and community
- caseloads of therapists are small (4-6 families per therapist) and treatment is intensive, often including multiple contacts with family and other participants every week
- length of treatment averages 2-5 months
- therapists are fully trained in MST
- therapists work in teams and provide coverage for each other's caseloads
- Each team has a supervisor and an expert consultant from Multisystemic Therapy Services, Inc. in Charleston, SC, who consults weekly on all cases.

What can I expect from my MST therapist?

Any combination of the following services could be provided to the youth and her/his family, as needed, within the MST program:

- family therapy
- marital therapy
- individual sessions with youth
- individual sessions with parents
- chemical dependency assessment and treatment
- evaluation of the youth's peer network and arranging alternative activities
- consultation with schools
- coordinating activities with school systems, court, and/or other social service agencies
- arranging a psychiatric consultation

Where can I get MST services in my community?

The Toledo MST team provides services in Lucas County through The Zepf Center. Our therapists are diverse in age and cultural background and are thoroughly trained and supported in the MST model. You can reach Tiffany McBride, the team's supervisor, at 567-694-3378.

