



What is MDFT?

Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) is an integrated, comprehensive, family-centered treatment for teens and young adults. MDFT simultaneously addresses substance use, delinquency, antisocial and aggressive behaviors, mental health disorders, and school problems. It improves parental and family functioning and prevents out-of-home placement. MDFT has been researched in over ten studies. Since 2001, MDFT has been implemented in over 150 programs in North American and Europe.

An Evidence-Based Practice

MDFT has demonstrated strong and consistent outcomes in 9 randomized controlled trials, the most rigorous test of intervention effectiveness. These studies have been conducted with diverse populations and settings in the United States and Europe by the model developer as well as independent researchers. The level of proven effectiveness for MDFT is unsurpassed.

MDFT is proven to DECREASE:

- Substance Use
- Crime & Delinquency
- Violence and Aggression
- Anxiety and Depression
- Out-of-Home Placement
- Sexual Health Risk

Proven to INCREASE

- School Attendance
- Academic Grades
- Family Functioning
- Pro-social Functioning
- Effective Parenting Practices
- Positive Peer Affiliation

Why choose MDFT?

- **Proven effectiveness**
MDFT has over 30 years of supporting research in U.S.-based and international studies presenting significant and consistent clinical outcomes across 10 separate studies.
- **Rewarding for clinicians**
MDFT receives high satisfaction ratings from clinicians and agencies. 85% of MDFT clinicians report that MDFT training gave them skills to be more effective therapists.
- **Fits well into existing clinical settings**
MDFT can be tailored to any program. It has been integrated into substance abuse, mental health, juvenile justice, and child welfare sectors of care, and in outpatient, in-home, partial hospitalization, residential, drug court and detention/incarceration settings.
- **Learnable and sustainable**
Since 2001, MDFT has been implemented in over 150 programs, 90% of which sustained for at least two years.
- **Lowers service costs**
MDFT costs significantly less than standard outpatient treatment delivered across the U.S. and is a third of the cost of residential treatment. It also saves costs by preventing out-of-home placements and the costs to the juvenile justice system of re-arrests/incarcerations.
- **Lowers training and implementation cost**
Initial training and ongoing implementation and fidelity services provided by MDFT International, Inc. is significantly lower than comparable programs.
- **Fosters agency autonomy**
MDFT International, Inc. trains trainers in order to lower program costs, increase sustainability, and foster agency autonomy.
- **Puts families first**
MDFT International, Inc.—the organization that promotes, trains, and certifies clinicians in MDFT treatment—is a 501(c)(3) public charity. Providing the best possible treatment for youth and families is our only priority.

How does it work?

Goals Within the 4 MDFT Domains

ADOLESCENT DOMAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve self-awareness and enhance self-worth and confidence • Develop meaningful short-term and long-term life goals • Improve emotional regulation, coping, and problem-solving skills • Improve communication skills • Promote success in school/work • Promote pro-social peer relationships and activities • Reduce substance use, delinquency, and problem behaviors • Reduce and stabilize mental health symptoms
PARENT DOMAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen parental teamwork • Improve parenting skills and practices • Enhance parents' individual functioning
FAMILY DOMAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve family communication and problem-solving skills • Strengthen emotional attachment and connection among family members • Improve everyday functioning and organization of the family unit
COMMUNITY DOMAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve family members' relationships with social systems such as school, court, legal system, workplace, and neighborhood • Build families' capacity to access and utilize needed resources

Best Practice Recognition



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