



Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT)

Part of the Cannabis Youth Treatment (CYT) Series

Description:

Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) encompasses treatment within four areas: including the individual adolescent, the adolescent's family members as individuals, the family unit, and how the family unit interacts with the social environment. It is solution-focused and strives to provide immediate/practical outcomes that apply to all aspects of the adolescent's life.

MDFT is a community and home-based therapy that works within the youth's everyday environment in several domains. Key points for interventions in each domain are as follows:

Individual

- Youth's current difficulties
- Motivation is enhanced
- Skills are introduced and practiced

Peer

- Peers are accessed through youth
- Discuss the maladaptive nature of drug-using and delinquent peers

Family

- Everyday events in family
- Improvement of family relations
- Important past events are explored

School

- Mediating and advocating on behalf of youth
- Creating new opportunities in school

Community

- Help families become more vigilant about negative influences
- Accessing resources available

Critical components of the program include community service, community collaboration, parent training, school collaboration, skill development, substance abuse/prevention education, and therapy. If youth are involved with the court, the court system may be involved as well.

Treatment Logistics:

Appropriate Age Range: 12-17

Participants: Treatment is for child and family primarily, with possible involvement of school and community personnel.

of Sessions: 3-6 months of treatment, sessions vary according to needs and can be 1-2 hours in length.

MDFT has been adapted and manualized as part of the Cannabis Youth Treatment Series (CYT). They suggest the following progression for therapy (see manual for more specific info about each stage):

Stage 1: Build the Foundation (3 weeks) - Use distress to motivate/focus, create expectations, visit school/neighborhood.

Stage 2: Prompt Action & Change by Working the Themes (5 weeks) - Mobilize, make small steps toward progress, think in stages, use mistakes as opportunities.

Stage 3: Seal the Changes & Exit (4 weeks) - Appraise current status honestly, except imperfect outcomes, emphasize all changes made, assess future needs and next steps.

Evidence-Base:

Refer to Appendix B for a matrix that lists the organizations that have approved MDFT as an EBP or go to <http://www.uncg.edu/csr/asatp/ebpmatrix.pdf> to view it online. Studies have shown the following:

- 41% to 66% reduction in substance abuse intake to completion. Gains were maintained up to 1-year post-treatment.
- 93% of youth receiving treatment reported no substance-related problems at 1-year post-intake.
- It has been shown to reduce negative attitudes/behaviors and improve school functioning.
- MDFT parents increased their involvement in their teen's life, improved their parenting skills, and decreased their stress.

Reference to Treatment Manual:

Liddle, H.A. (2002). *Multidimensional family therapy treatment (MDFT) for adolescent cannabis users: CYT series, volume 5.* (BKD388) Rockville, MD: CSAT, SAMHSA. <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/cyt/>

Additional References:

SAMHSA. "Multidimensional Family Therapy." <http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/model/multi.pdf>



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