

Multisystemic Therapy: Principles and Process

1. FINDING THE FIT

The primary purpose of assessment is to understand the “fit” between the identified problems and their broader systemic context.

2. POSITIVE & STRENGTH-FOCUSED

Therapeutic contacts should emphasize the positive and should use systemic strengths as levers for change.

3. INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY

Interventions should be designed to promote responsible behavior and decrease irresponsible behavior among family members.

4. PRESENT-FOCUSED, ACTION-ORIENTED, & WELL-DEFINED

Interventions should be present-focused and action-oriented, targeting specific and well-defined problems.

5. TARGETING SEQUENCES

Interventions should target sequences of behavior within or between multiple systems that maintain the identified problems.

6. DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

Interventions should be developmentally appropriate and fit the developmental needs of the youth.

7. CONTINUOUS EFFORT

Interventions should be designed to require daily or weekly effort by family members.

8. EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Intervention efficacy is evaluated continuously from multiple perspectives with providers assuming accountability for overcoming barriers to successful outcomes.

9. GENERALIZATION

Interventions should be designed to promote treatment generalization and long-term maintenance of therapeutic change by empowering caregivers to address family members’ needs across multiple systemic contexts.

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