



Multisystemic Therapy for Reducing Recidivism Rates in Juvenile Sexual Offenders

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Introduction

Multisystemic therapy (MST) is an effective method for reducing recidivism rates and improving overall mental health of juvenile sexual offenders (Henggeler, 2001). MST was developed as a comprehensive treatment model targeting juveniles who presented criminal behaviors ranging from drug abuse, violence, and sexual assault (Henggeler, 2008). MST incorporates caregivers into treatment to facilitate acceptance of the juvenile's offending behavior, resulting in increased knowledge, communication, and the removal of barriers in the adolescent's relationships (Borduin et al., 2009).

Hypothesis

- ❖ Families that receive multisystemic therapy have more positive outcomes than families that receive treatment as usual.

Current Research

- ❖ The goal of this presentation is to provide knowledge to judges, law enforcement, attorneys, and social service agencies of the effectiveness of MST which can serve as an initial treatment and as an intensive aftercare program post-incarceration.
- ❖ MST incorporates cognitive behavioral therapeutic techniques while using the social-ecological framework that emphasizes treatment for the juvenile and a successful family outcome by removing barriers to treatment (Henggeler, 2001).
- ❖ The purpose of MST is to integrate family functioning into the juvenile's treatment rather than focusing solely on the adolescent.
- ❖ Findings from Borduin et al. (2009) showed that MST participants experienced decreased psychiatric symptoms from pre- to post-treatment and increased adaptability and emotional bonding compared to treatment-as-usual participants.
- ❖ MST has a valuable purpose for juvenile sex offenders and has supportive evidence with reducing recidivism and deviant sexual behavior, and enhancing relationships, accountability, and cost-effectiveness.
- ❖ Juveniles charged with a sexual offense are at risk for recidivism, and MST can be a crucial part of their treatment program.
- ❖ Research findings on the intensive family treatment of MST demonstrate benefits and favorable outcomes essential to reducing recidivism in juveniles that commit sexual offenses.

Evidence-based Suggestions

- ❖ For juvenile justice agencies, attorneys, probation officers, caseworkers, and forensic psychologists to support and advocate for MST as an intensive intervention for juvenile sexual offenders.
- ❖ Research current programs that support re-entry back into the community from incarceration after completing an MST program.
- ❖ Partner and collaborate with mental health professionals to provide intensive group therapy.
- ❖ Recognize that family engagement is a critical factor for family preservation.
- ❖ Use MST as an early intervention for juveniles as an alternative to incarceration.
- ❖ Provide outreach for families with high-risk youths who are juvenile offenders.



References

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