

M D F T

5 Reasons to Implement MDFT



What is MDFT?

Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) is a family intervention that helps youth ages 10-26 achieve and remain on a safe and healthy developmental trajectory. It effectively reduces substance use, violence, criminal behavior, mental health symptoms, as well as improving school/vocational and family functioning.

01. *Clinical and Cost Effective*

It works: MDFT is proven effective in over 25 years of research and over 20 years of implementation efforts in the United States and Europe ([MDFT](#), [CEBC](#)).

It saves money: MDFT lowers costs by reducing hospitalizations, residential/inpatient treatment, emergency department visits, and short- and long-term incarcerations.

After MDFT training and implementation:

- ✓ The state of Connecticut saw a 50% reduction in hospitalizations.
- ✓ Riverside County, California saw an 81% reduction in mental health emergency department visits.

Research shows that MDFT costs 64% less than residential treatment ([Zavala et al., 2005](#))

02. *Efficient and Holistic*

MDFT is a “One-Stop Shop”:

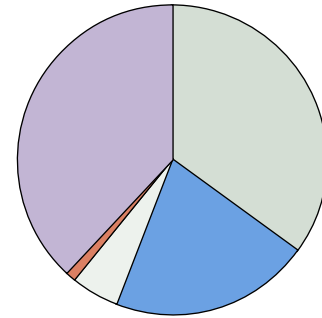
- ✓ It is an “all-in-one” effective mental health and substance use treatment.
- ✓ It provides individual therapy for youth, parent education and support, family therapy for youth and parents together, and community services to help families.
- ✓ It achieves significant, life-transformative changes in less than 6 months
- ✓ Its effects are long lasting: Studies indicate that youth and families in MDFT maintain and even build on treatment gains for many years after treatment ends.

03. *Proven to be Effective with Diverse Populations*

- ✓ MDFT stands out as the most effective substance abuse treatment for youth of color particularly African American young men ([Huey & Polo, 2008](#); [Greenbaum et al., 2015](#)).
- ✓ MDFT successfully engages and effectively treats very diverse populations of youth and families across the U.S. and Europe.

Race/Ethnicity of MDFT Participants, 2020

- 38% Hispanic
- 35% White Non-Hispanic
- 21% Black / AA
- 5% Mixed Race
- 1% Other



04. *Works with All Youth and Families*

- ✓ It serves youth with a wide array of challenges and has few exclusion criteria.
- ✓ It does not exclude families with domestic violence or parents with substance use or mental health disorders; it is particularly well suited to address family conflict.
- ✓ It defines “parent/caregiver” broadly to include parents, foster parents, older siblings, grandparents, and other family members/mentors in guardian roles.

05. *Implemented in Community and Residential Settings Worldwide*

- ✓ MDFT has been implemented for 20+ years in the United States and Europe.
- ✓ MDFT implementation began in the State of Connecticut with 5 programs. Today, Connecticut has 20 MDFT programs.
- ✓ There are currently over 70 licensed MDFT programs in the United States and nearly 50 programs in Europe.
- ✓ In 2020, MDFT treatment outcomes with 1,100+ families in the U.S. were excellent:
 - 88% of families had no new child abuse/neglect reports
 - 80% were in school or working
 - 90% of youth were living at home
 - 90% were abstinent from “hard” drugs
 - 86% had stable mental health
 - 88% had no new arrests