

**For MST program information,
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Mission Statement

River Oak Center for Children is committed to helping children and families successfully manage life's challenges through a wide range of behavioral health and social services by providing prevention, treatment, and caring support.

River Oak advocates to bring outstanding and innovative programs to children and families in need.



Key Features of MST

- The goal is to prevent out-of-home placements by empowering the youth's primary caregivers with the skills and resources needed to independently address difficulties that arise in raising a child with behavioral problems.
- MST empowers the youth and family to cope with problems that arise in multisystems such as peer, school, and neighborhood problems.
- Treatment duration is about 3-5 months, with multiple meetings of the family and therapist each week.
- MST places an extremely strong focus on provider accountability.
- Therapists use interventions with immediate and powerful impact on the problem behavior by building on the strengths of the family and other indigenous systems.
- Staff is available 24/7.



A Place for Children and
Families
to Grow

Established in 1966. Awarded Gold Seal of Approval™ by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

Administrative Offices

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**Multisystemic Therapy
(MST)**

*In collaboration with Sacramento County Department of Health
and Human Services Division of Mental Health.*

MST Therapy Principles

An Overview



Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is a specialized treatment approach to providing services to children and youth through the Intensive In-Home Program.

The MST approach views individuals as being nested within a complex network of interconnected systems that encompass individual, family, and extra-familial (peer, school, neighborhood) factors.

In MST, this “ecology” of interconnected systems is viewed as the client.

- The primary purpose of assessment is to understand the ‘fit’ between the identified problems and their broader systemic context.
- Therapeutic contacts emphasize the positive in the relationship with the client and use the systemic strengths as levers for change.

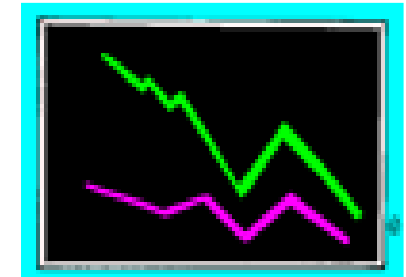
Interventions ...

- Promote responsible behavior and decrease irresponsible behavior among family members.
- Are present-focused and action-oriented, targeting specific and well-defined problems.
- Target sequences of behaviors within or between multiple systems.
- Are developmentally appropriate and fit the developmental needs of the youth.
- Require daily or weekly effort by family members.
- Are evaluated continuously from multiple perspectives.
- Promote generalization and long-term maintenance of therapeutic change.



Evidence of Program Effectiveness

Evaluation results from four randomized trials with serious juvenile offenders reflected the following:



- Studies with violent and chronic juvenile offenders showed that MST reduced long-term rates of re-arrest by 25% to 70% compared to control groups.
- Long-term follow-up studies showed that MST reduced days in out-of-home placements by 47% to 64% compared to control groups.
- Studies involving self-reported offending reflected a decrease in criminal activity.