

MULTIDIMENSIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (MDFT)



OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant (JJIG) program is a statewide competitive grant administered by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). The program offers funding and technical support for juvenile courts to implement nationally recognized community-based treatment programs appropriate for youth scoring moderate- to high-risk on the Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA).

Evidence-based programs (EBPs) provide support and supervision to address youth needs; promote a positive relationship among the youth, their families, and their communities; and ultimately reduce out-of-home placements, associated higher costs, and recidivism while maintaining public safety.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

EBPs target specific risk and protective factors that influence the problem for their target population. **Risk factors** are aspects of a person or their environment that increases the likelihood they will experience a negative outcome. **Protective factors** are aspects of a person or their environment that have a positive influence and serve as a buffer against negative outcomes. The main goal for EBPs is to strengthen existing protective factors or build new ones and reverse risk factors in youth.

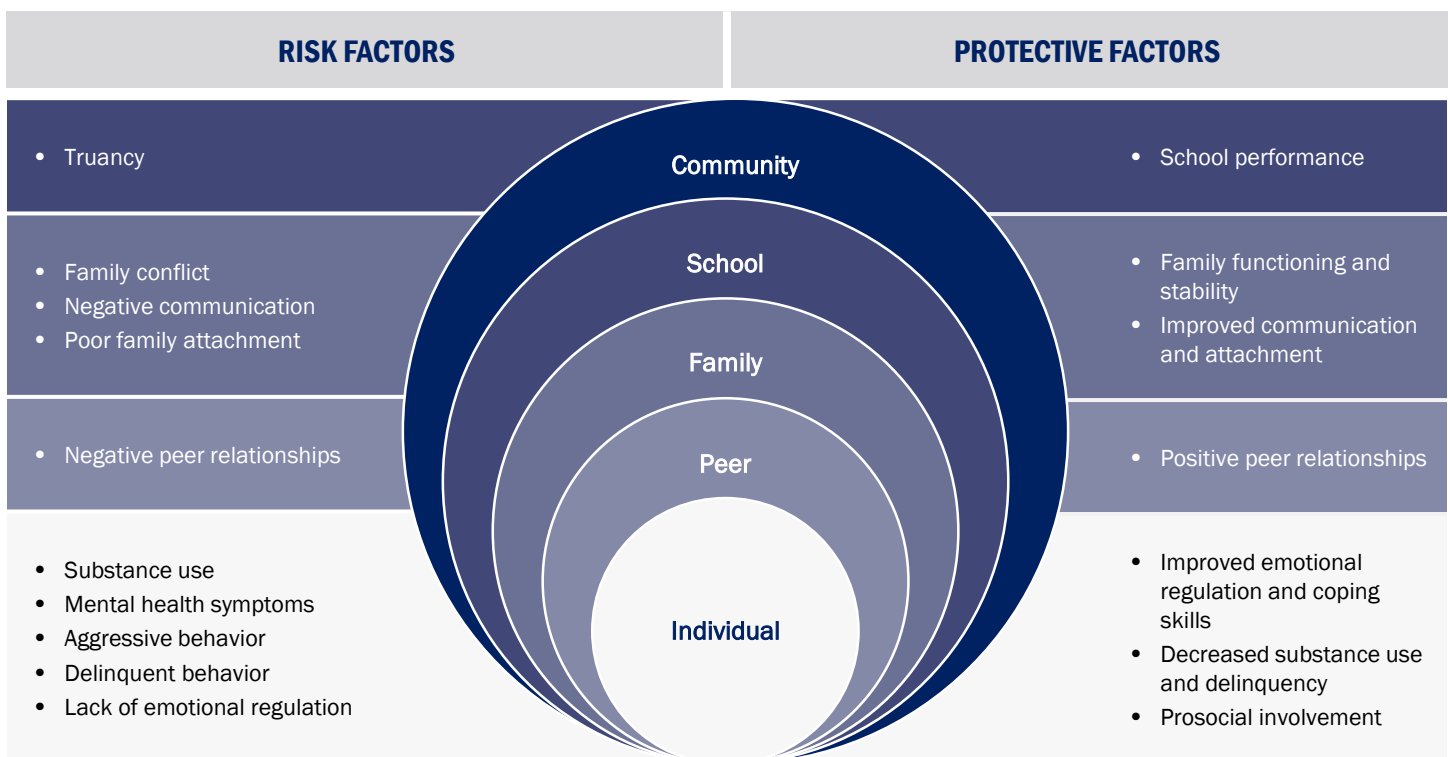


A youth with risk factors is more likely to experience more risk factors and less protective factors.

Each protective factor a youth has reduces the impact of one or more risk factors.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (FFT) PROGRAM SUMMARY

Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) is an individual-based family intervention that addresses substance abuse, delinquency, and behavioral/emotional problems, while promoting positive attachments to pro-social supports.



MULTIDIMENSIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (MDFT)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

What is MDFT?

- Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) is a manualized, family-centered treatment and substance misuse prevention program for youths with substance use disorders and problem behaviors (such as aggression, truancy, and other mental comorbidities).
- Using a multidimensional approach, the MDFT intervention focuses on improving four major domains for youth. These life domains are 1) the youth, 2) parents, 3) family, and 4) the community (peers, school, etc.).

What is the main goal of MDFT?

- The overarching goal of MDFT is to improve youth emotional regulation, coping, and problem-solving skills. Also, reduce youth substance use and problem behaviors.

Is MDFT evidence-based?

- The foundation of MDFT is based on numerous randomized clinical trials (RCTs) conducted in both the United States and Europe with diverse populations and settings. The level of proven effectiveness demonstrated is unsurpassed in youth treatment.

How long is the MDFT program?

- The average treatment time is four to six months, although there is no designated length of time.
- The MDFT curriculum consists of three stages, with trained therapists conducting weekly therapy sessions (at least two sessions per week).
- MDFT is typically delivered in an outpatient setting, although it can be delivered in an inpatient setting. Therapists hold weekly sessions alone with the youth, alone with the parent, and with the youth and parent combined, at various times throughout the treatment but in equal proportion to one another.

What is the target population for MDFT?

- MDFT serves youth with a wide array of challenges between the ages of 10–26 and their families. MDFT does not exclude families with domestic violence or parents with substance use or mental health disorders. It broadly defines the “parent/caregiver” role to reflect the variety of family situations and dynamics.
- MDFT is appropriate for both males and females and all race and ethnicities.

What is the implementation process for MDFT?

- One supervisor can support a team at a minimum of 2 therapists and a maximum of 8 therapists. A full-time therapist can provide MDFT to 6–10 families, if conducting sessions in the home.
- The Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) curriculum is implemented by trained MDFT therapists who received training from MDFT developers. Training is delivered according to the original training model and the MDFT manual.

How many counties are using MDFT in Georgia?

- Through the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant, one county is currently providing MDFT.

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