



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Multisystemic Therapy (MST) Implementation in Idaho

#### What is Multisystemic Therapy (MST)?

MST is an intensive family- and community-based treatment program that addresses all environments that impact high risk youth – homes and families, schools and teachers, neighborhoods, and friends.

MST is an evidence-based program that works to empower youth and their families. MST works to reduce delinquent and anti-social behavior, child maltreatment, and substance use.

MST interventions aim to:

- Improve how the caregiver disciplines
- Enhance family relations
- Decrease a youth's association with negative peers
- Increase a youth's association with pro-social peers
- Improve a youth's school or vocational performance
- Engage youth in positive recreational outlets
- Develop a natural support network of extended family, neighbors, and friends to help caregivers achieve and maintain changes

You can find out about MST in the following video: <https://info.mstservices.com/video-how-mst-works><sup>1</sup>

#### Who can receive MST?

Youth between the ages of 12-17 years of age at risk of severe system consequence due to serious externalizing, anti-social, and/or delinquent behaviors. Examples of behaviors include:

- Theft or other criminal behaviors
- Aggressive /violent/assaultive behavior
- Substance use
- Selling substances

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mstservices.com/mst-fact-sheets>



- Chronic school absences and or problem behaviors at school
- Sexual offenses in conjunction with other anti-social behavior

Youth with the same or similar behaviors above may experience system consequences such as:

- Out-of-home placement (via juvenile justice system, mental health, or child protection)
- Violation of probation
- School expulsion
- Child Welfare involvement

## What is required to become trained in MST?

Becoming a trained MST provider is approximately a four-month process. In the initial states, an agency will apply to MST services for a process of collaboration, needs assessment as a provider and site readiness. For organizations who become MST providers, staff hired to provide MST are required to attend an orientation training as well as quarterly booster trainings.

Once approved, the MST provider will receive a five-day training. After the training, the MST provider will receive ongoing training and coaching support from MST services to measure outcomes and receive continuous support and consultation.

## How can I determine the location for an MST program?

Location is best determined by geographic proximity to likely referrals. MST services also require clinicians to be within a 90-minute drive time to their clients.

**Questions to consider:** Where are the most instances of juvenile delinquency or risk of system involvement? Where is the highest population density? Where is the biggest need in terms of service gaps for at-risk juveniles and/or youth displaying anti-social behaviors?

MST Services can help identify a specific location, such as a behavioral health agency, or “home base” for the clinicians to operate out of. Although treatment is not done within this setting, it gives clinicians and other MST staff a place to coordinate as a team.

## Is MST a one-time training with certification?

MST is not a one-time training, but rather a licensed, ongoing intervention program that is evidence-based. Due to this, treatment model adherence is imperative. For organizations that become MST providers, staff hired to provide MST are required to attend an orientation



training as well as quarterly booster trainings. Organizations will also work with MST Services to measure treatment outcomes and receive continuous support and consultation.

## Who can provide MST?

Only providers or agencies licensed to provide MST can provide this intervention. MST is an evidence-based intervention with specially trained providers for model adherence and outcomes. Typically, MST providers only provide MST due to the intensity of the needs of the youth and families and for model adherence.

Trained MST providers:

- Travel to the youth and are on call 24/7
- Work intensively to empower parents and caregivers
- Work with caregivers to focus youth on school and gaining job skills
- Introduce youth to recreational activities as an alternative to hanging out with anti-social peers
- Participate in weekly staffing about cases
- Engage in coaching with MST Services
- Utilize standardized tools for evaluating fidelity and model adherence

## Do MST providers have to be licensed clinicians to provide MST?

MST is traditionally provided by master's-level licensed clinicians, however, based on the agency application to MST services, there may be opportunity for individuals that are master's prepared or hold a bachelor's degree to provide MST under the Optum Idaho supervisory protocol. The specifics for each agency would be addressed with MST Services during program evaluation. Agencies should also speak with Optum Idaho 1-855-780-5955 regarding the supervisory protocol.

## How are youth referred to MST?

MST's target population is young people that are at risk of severe system consequences, including but not limited to out-of-home placement due to serious externalizing behavior. This could look like a young person with a recent arrest history for theft or drug possession, or a defiant youth with behavior problems at home and/or in school, or a teen returning from an out-of-home placement such as foster care. A key component of a successful MST program is a clear pathway so that eligible youth and families can find their way into the program. Referral sources are at the forefront of this path, and it is imperative for MST teams to have a working relationship with these sources, which may include juvenile justice departments, child welfare departments, schools, psychiatric facilities, and credentialing.



## Who Pays for MST?

To provide MST, an agency typically pays the costs upfront with MST Services to be a licensed provider of MST. In Idaho, the Division of Behavioral Health, in partnership with the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections will be providing financial support for two years of the start-up costs for up to three MST teams across Idaho. This support includes:

- 40-hour training
- Program license
- Program development costs-start up assessment
- Program support costs-on going coaching from MST expert

MST is a billable service in the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) system of care. Agencies providing the service must connect with Optum Idaho and pass a credentialing audit to initiate the service. Once approved to provide the service, trained providers can use the billing code H2033. For further information about billing please contact Optum Idaho 1-855-780-5955.

## Can MST be used in conjunction with other services and supports?

MST may be used with other services and supports depending on the needs of the youth and the family. MST is an intensive home and community-based program and due to the intensity, youth and their family may prefer to focus on MST and put other services and supports on hold.

The trained MST professional often engages in care coordination activities through the course of the MST work. If the youth and family have another type of care coordination or case management service at the initiation of MST, both services cannot be provided and billed at the same time.