



MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY

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Essex MST

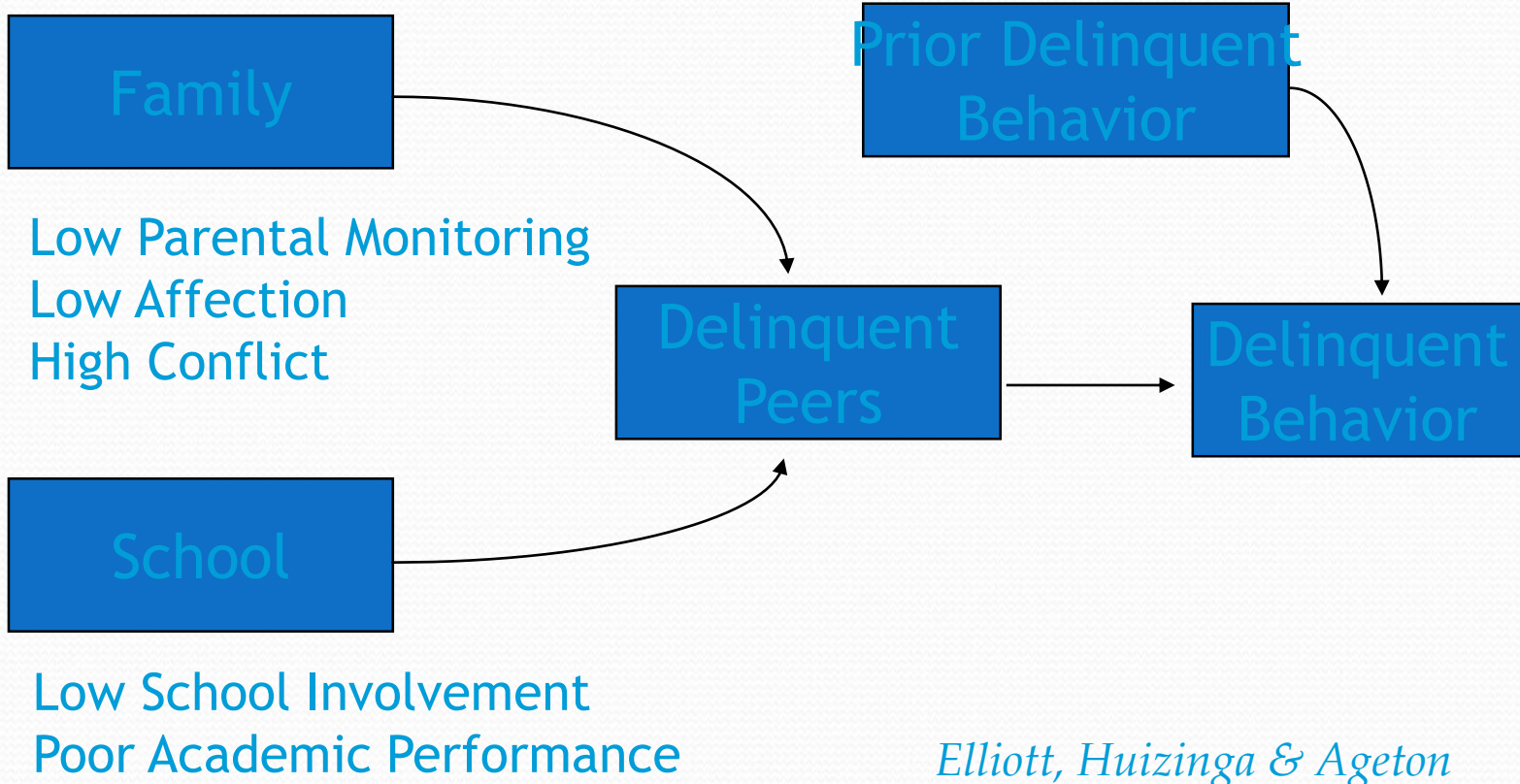
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What is MST?

- Community-based, family-driven treatment for young people with complex clinical, social and educational problems such as violent behaviour, substance abuse and school exclusion
- Focus in on “empowering” caregivers (parents) to solve current and future problems
- MST “client” is the entire ecology of the youth-family, peers, school, community
- Highly structured clinical supervision and quality assurance processes

Causal Models of Delinquency and Drug Use

Condensed Longitudinal Model



Elliott, Huizinga & Ageton (1985)

How is MST Implemented?

- Single therapist working intensively with 4 to 6 families at a time
- “Team” of 2 to 4 therapists plus a supervisor
- 24 hr/ 7 day/ week team availability
- 3 to 5 months is the typical treatment time (4 months on average across cases)
- Work is done in the community: home, school, neighborhood, etc.
- Aim is to increase parental warmth, authority and presence, and to build relationships between parents, schools and communities

MST Essex Family Feedback

- Detailed family feedback collected over an 18 month period from 49 families (approx. 50% of the total number)
 - How satisfied are you with the support you received from your therapist (from 0 'not at all' to 10 'very satisfied') – Mean **9.3**
 - To what extent has MST helped you to deal more effectively with problems that arise in your family (from 0 'MST has not helped at all' to 10 'MST has helped us a lot') – Mean **8.4**.
 - How would you rate your child's behaviour at this point in time (from 0 'much worse' to 10 'much better') – Mean **6.8**.

MST Essex – Parent Feedback Themes

- Importance of therapist validating and empathising with parent's position in order to be able to then challenge and create change
 - 'Our therapist wasn't judgemental, and I felt like she has respect for us which is unusual. I felt supported rather than blamed'
 - 'She would tell us how it is, and I liked that because I felt like she was being truthful, and was also able to challenge us on some of the things we were doing.'

MST Essex – Parent Feedback Themes

- Parents identified learning new skills as paramount in effecting changes in their child's behaviour
 - 'I think me recognising when things are going to kick off and then do something different before there is an escalation has led to some really big changes'
 - I learnt how to problem solve and hadn't even realised that I could'
 - (The therapist) helped me to understand how E might perceive things...I'm a lot more understanding...stopping and thinking before going off at the deep end'

MST Essex Parent and young People Feedback

- Both parents and young people identified improved family relationships
 - (Parent) 'I would say there is a better family dynamic as we understand each other more. We can talk more rather than shout'
 - (Young person) 'Mum listens to me now and that is nice. I think my mum understands me more and some of the things I have been through, and I like that she knows these things now'

MST Essex SDQ scores

- 171 parents completed pre and post SDQ scores
- A statistically significant decrease in total SDQ scores from 22.4 to 17.8
- Some young people still present with challenges in their behaviour, as indicated by the SDQ scores.
- This is mirrored in the family feedback
- Hypothesis - parents feel less overwhelmed by and more confident in managing their child's difficulties, despite ongoing issues.