Multisystemic Therapy: Theory, Principles and Practice with Young People and Families: Facilitator Pack

THE TALKING THERAPIES UK FACILITATOR PACKS



Multisystemic Therapy: Theory, Principles and Practice with Young People and Families: Facilitator Pack

Teaching the course to a group

A facilitator pack · 6 sessions · for trainers

TALKING THERAPIES UK

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First edition, 2026.

This pack accompanies the course “Multisystemic Therapy: Theory, Principles and Practice with Young People and Families” on Talking Therapies UK Training & CPD and its course book. It is drawn from the course and is kept current with it: whenever the course changes, the pack is set again.

This printing was set on 27 October 2026 from the course as it stood that day.

A note on teaching from this pack. It supports qualified trainers and supervisors teaching within their competence. Running the course from it does not award the course’s CPD certificate, which participants gain by completing the course online.

Set in Poppins and Roboto, the Talking Therapies UK typefaces.

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How to use this pack

This pack is for trainers and supervisors who teach the Talking Therapies UK course “Multisystemic Therapy: Theory, Principles and Practice with Young People and Families” to a group: a session for each of its 6 modules, with timed plans, the points to draw out, group activities and discussion questions, the course’s assessment with answers, an attendance register and an evaluation form.

Part 1 sets out the course and how to plan it. Part 2 has a timed plan for each session, built from the course’s own modules, lessons and practice tasks; read it with the module it teaches. Part 3 holds the course’s assessment with its answers, an attendance register and an evaluation form.

What this pack covers

- Plan the course as 6 sessions
- Follow a timed plan for each session
- Draw out each lesson’s key points
- Run each lesson’s practice task as a group activity
- Check understanding with the course’s own questions
- Keep a register and gather evaluations

PART 1

Planning the course

What the course covers, who it is for, and how to run it.

CHAPTER 1

About Multisystemic Therapy: Theory, Principles and Practice with Young People and Families

This premium programme is a comprehensive, practice-focused course on Multisystemic Therapy for family therapists, social workers, youth justice practitioners, psychologists, counsellors, child and adolescent mental health practitioners, school staff, supervisors and commissioners who work with young people whose serious antisocial behaviour places them at risk of care or custody. It explains what the model is, why it was developed, how it works in practice, what the evidence shows and how its ideas can be used honestly in other services.

The course is a programme of continuing professional development. It does not license or certify anyone to deliver Multisystemic Therapy, which is a licensed model delivered by teams that are trained, supervised and quality assured within a licensed network. Practitioners who want to practise the model should apply to work in a licensed team. Multisystemic Therapy and MST are registered trademarks of MST Services, LLC in the United States. This course is independent of, and not endorsed by, MST Services, and it does not reproduce any manuals, forms or adherence measure items; it describes principles and processes in its own words, as the published literature does.

The course is current to October 2026. It teaches the evidence with balance, including the early trials in the United States, the meta-analyses and Cochrane review that reached different conclusions, the London trial with young offenders, and the START trial in nine English sites, which found no advantage for MST over management as usual on out-of-home placement or offending, together with its five-year follow-up. Safeguarding content reflects Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the information sharing duty in force from 30 September 2026.

Across six modules and thirty lessons you will study the origins of the model, social ecology, the evidence, fidelity and referral criteria; the nine treatment principles and the analytic process; engagement, assessment across systems, case conceptualisation with testable hypotheses, supervision and consultation, and safety and safeguarding in home-based work; interventions with parenting and monitoring, family relationships, peers, school, and individual and caregiver difficulties; adaptations for substance misuse, child abuse and neglect, problem sexual behaviour, psychiatric crisis, health care, transitions and emerging adults, together with culture, diversity and equity; and implementation in UK services, outcome measurement, discharge and relapse prevention, ethical borrowing in non-MST practice, and supervision-level ethics and wellbeing.

Every lesson contains a worked clinical example, the common pitfalls in practice and a reflective question, together with key points, a practice task for the week, study activities and further reading. The course includes an extended case study, a glossary and a 25-question assessment with a pass mark of 80 per cent. Every reference has been checked against its publisher, its digital object identifier, legislation.gov.uk or the issuing body.

Throughout, the course treats caregivers as the people best placed to change a young person's world, treats engagement and progress as the practitioner's responsibility, and asks you to face the evidence honestly, including where it is disappointing.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to

- Explain the origins, purpose and social ecological foundations of Multisystemic Therapy and its status as a licensed programme.
- Summarise the evidence for MST with balance, including US trials, meta-analyses, the London trial and the START trial and its five-year follow-up.
- Describe the nine treatment principles and the analytic process, and apply them to the formulation of a young person's behaviour.
- Engage caregivers and families, assess strengths and needs across systems, and combine the desired outcomes of key participants into measurable overarching goals.
- Develop specific, testable hypotheses about the drivers of behaviour, prioritise them and link them to intermediary goals while guarding against confirmation bias.
- Describe interventions with parenting and monitoring, family relationships, peers, school, and individual and caregiver difficulties, integrated within the principles.
- Explain in general terms how MST has been adapted for substance misuse, child abuse and neglect, problem sexual behaviour, psychiatric crisis, health care, transitions and emerging adults.
- Apply safety planning and safeguarding duties in home-based work, including responses to exploitation, domestic abuse and risk to the practitioner.
- Practise in a culturally responsive way that recognises disparities, uses interpreters properly and avoids deficit framing.
- Evaluate outcomes honestly, plan for discharge and sustainability, borrow ideas from MST ethically and identify the route to training in a licensed team.

Who it is for

The course is pitched at experienced practitioners working with complex presentations, who already use the approach in their practice.

At a glance

- 6 sessions of about 210 minutes, one for each of the course's modules.
- The online course is accredited for 30 hours of CPD.
- Each participant needs the course book, or access to the online course, for reading between sessions.

CHAPTER 2

Planning the sessions

Run one session for each module, a week or a fortnight apart, so that participants can read the module and try its practice task between sessions. The sessions can also be run as a block over two or three days.

OVERVIEW

The course at a glance

Session	Module	Lessons	Time
1	Foundations: theory, evidence and the licensed model	5	210 minutes
2	The nine principles in practice	5	210 minutes
3	Engagement, assessment and the clinical process	5	210 minutes
4	Intervention strategies across systems	5	210 minutes
5	Complex presentations and adaptations	5	210 minutes
6	Implementation, outcomes and professional practice	5	210 minutes

The group

- Six to sixteen participants: enough for small-group work, few enough for everyone to contribute.
- Agree ground rules at the first session: confidentiality, respect for different experience, and how participants will speak about their own clients (with nothing that could identify them).
- Ask before the course about access needs, and send any reading a week ahead.

What you need

- A copy of this pack, and the course book or the online course for each participant.
- A flipchart or whiteboard, and space for groups of three or four to work.
- Printed copies of the attendance register and the evaluation form in Part 3, which you may copy for the groups you run.

Keeping it safe

Training about psychological difficulties can bring up participants' own experience. Say at the start that anyone may step out, have someone available to talk to afterwards, and know where to point a participant who is struggling: their GP, their own supervisor or employee assistance programme, or Samaritans on 116 123.