



**LINCOLN  
FAMILIES**  
CHANGING LIVES | STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES



## **FAMILY: MULTI-DIMENSIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (MDFT)**

### **Program Summary**

- Purpose: Providing short-term intensive therapy for youth struggling with mental health and substance use issues.
- Serves approximately 140 youth and their families throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties annually.
- Provides culturally responsive, trauma-informed, relationally-based services in the home, at school, or juvenile hall through a variety of therapeutic and behavioral supports focused on:
  1. Youth Therapy – Providing individual therapy to improve self-awareness and confidence, set goals, build communication and social skills, and reduce substance use and problem behaviors.
  2. Parent Supports – Assisting parents to regain parental role with their child.
  3. Family Coaching – Coaching and modeling to improve family problem-solving and increase feelings of love and connection.
  4. System Navigation – Improving access to community systems such as school and probation for decreasing barriers to treatment
- Budget: \$1,892,797; Funding: Government Contracts – Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (ACBHCS), Alameda County Probation, and Contra Costa County Behavioral Health.

### **The Need/Gaps We're Addressing**

Youth with substance use issues are at a higher risk for mental health problems, including depression, behavioral issues, and suicide. It affects their physical and emotional health, development, academic success, and the relationships they have with family and friends. From alcohol and marijuana to vaping and opioids, adolescent addiction rates are growing at an alarming rate. Many youth and families are referred to us after being unsuccessful in other programs. The evidence based practices of the MDFT model combined with Lincoln's unique team approach is a critical intervention for many.

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## The Leadership Team

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## MDFT Webpage

<http://lincolnfamilies.org/programs-services/family/multidimensional-family-therapy>

**For more information please call**  
510.273.4700



## Outcomes/Impact

- 92% of youth improved truancy issues;
- 95% of youth improved delinquency issues, with no new offenses or violations of probation within six months of completing the program, a critical landmark of success.

## Call to Action

- A \$500 gift provides a laptop to support educational engagement for a youth transitioning from treatment
- A \$2,000 gift provides summer enrichment programming for 4 youth
- \$100,000 in funding would support a therapist being available to students who are uninsured or not Medi-Cal eligible.

## Rico and Edgar's Story:

MDFT usually works with families for six months helping teens and young adults who are on probation, navigate the court system. During one situation, MDFT began working with Rico, the oldest son of a family who had an intense legal case, was charged as an adult, and is still fighting his case to this day. Although the parents Maria and Ricardo were not very engaged with therapy, Rico, through working with MDFT, progressed, and is now working, decreased his substance abuse, and has a much better relationship with his mother, Maria.

While wrapping up services for Rico, they became aware of problems that the younger son, Edgar was having, causing him also to be placed on probation. Because of this unique situation, MDFT was able to work with this family for a year. This family had multi-generational gang affiliation, both the grandfather and father Ricardo had been through the prison system because of their gang involvement. The second time around, MDFT was able to prove to Maria and Ricardo how beneficial the program was to their oldest son, Rico, convincing them to play a more active role in therapy with Edgar. Although Edgar showed more resistance to accepting help and had a very tough exterior, the added support of Maria, and her ability to admit to her flaws helped to reinforce structure for her children, helping to reunify the family. Ricardo, although in the picture, was very passive and not involved in therapy. During this second MDFT intervention, Ricardo joined in co-parenting sessions, supported his family in creating a more stable relationship, which allowed Edgar to have a breakthrough, shedding tears and communicate his emotions and feelings. Edgar was able to communicate that although gang life was a family tradition, he felt that he was destined for greater things. This experience allowed Maria and Edgar to return to school together and earn their GED's together.