



Behavioral Management Programs for Adolescents in Child Welfare

Definition:

The CEBC defines **Behavioral Management Programs for Adolescents in Child Welfare** as programs that help manage the behavior of adolescents in the Child Welfare system. Behaviors targeted include general disruptive behaviors (e.g., arguing and back talk), delinquent behaviors (e.g., petty theft and vandalism), truancy, and running away from out-of-home placements (commonly called being AWOL). In essence, these are the behaviors that may lead to a foster caregiver or group home asking the social worker to find a different placement for the child that is exhibiting these behaviors. Programs may work directly with youth and families, or train caregivers and staff on ways to handle behavior problems more effectively.

Studies have shown that youth involved with child welfare have higher than average rates of behavior problems in general, and are more likely to exhibit externalizing behaviors. Among youth in foster care, at least one study has shown that rates of delinquent and aggressive behavior were twice as high as those in the general youth population. Behavior problems among adolescents involved in child welfare are both a cause and a consequence of placement changes, often leading to multiple placement changes and movement to higher levels of care. By addressing these problem behaviors, and de-escalating difficult situations when they do arise, youth can be maintained safely and stably in the lowest level of care needed.

Topic Area Criteria:

- **Target population:** Adolescents involved with the Child Welfare system who exhibit behaviors such as general disruptive behaviors (e.g., arguing and back talk), delinquent behaviors (e.g., petty theft and vandalism), truancy, and running away from out-of-home placements (commonly called being AWOL)
- **Services/types that fit:** Outpatient, day treatment, and residential services in individual or group formats that may target youth directly or adults (caregivers, teachers, etc.) who work with these youth
- **Delivered by:** Mental health professionals or trained paraprofessionals
- **In order to be included in this topic area on the CEBC:** Program must specifically address behavior management for adolescents as a goal
- **In order to be rated in this topic area by the CEBC:** There must be research evidence (as specified by the Scientific Rating Scale) that examines behavior-related outcomes, such changes in behavior, symptom levels, and/or functioning

Programs

The table below provides a summary of the rated programs currently listed in the **Behavioral Management Programs for Adolescents in Child Welfare** topic area. More detailed information can be found on the [CEBC website](#).

Program	Target Population	CEBC Scientific Rating	CEBC CWS Relevance Level
Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT)	Adolescents 11 to 18 with the following symptoms or problems: substance use or at risk, delinquent/conduct disorder, school and other behavioral problems, and both internalizing and externalizing symptoms	1	Medium
Multisystemic Therapy (MST)	Youth, 12 to 17 years old, with possible substance abuse issues who are at risk of out-of-home placement due to antisocial or delinquent behaviors and/or youth involved with the juvenile justice system and their parents/caregivers (some other restrictions for youth exist, see the Essential Components section for more details)	1	Medium
Treatment Foster Care Oregon – Adolescents (TFCO-A)	Boys and girls, 12–17 years old, with severe delinquency and/or severe emotional and behavioral disorders who were in need of out-of-home placement and could not be adequately served in lower levels of care, and their caregivers	1	High
Functional Family Therapy (FFT)	11-18 year olds with very serious problems such as conduct disorder, violent acting-out, and substance abuse	2	Medium
KEEP SAFE	Caregivers of youth 10 to 18 years of age in foster or kinship care placements and the youth themselves	2	High
Communities in Schools (CIS)	Adolescents, especially those at-risk, and youth-serving organizations	3	Medium

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Program	Target Population	CEBC Scientific Rating	CEBC CWS Relevance Level
Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI)	Adults working and living with children and youth who escalate incidents into no-win power struggles, distort reality, are self-abusive, engage in destructive peer relationships, lack social skills, and show little conscience for aggressive behavior	3	Medium
Teaching-Family Model (TFM)	Youth who are at-risk, juvenile delinquents, in foster care, mentally retarded/developmentally disabled, or severely emotionally disturbed; families at risk of having children removed	3	High
Wraparound	Designed for children and youth with severe emotional, behavioral, or mental health difficulties and their families where the child/youth is in, or at risk for, out-of-home, institutional, or restrictive placements, and involved in multiple child and family-serving systems (e.g., child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice, special education, etc.)	3	High