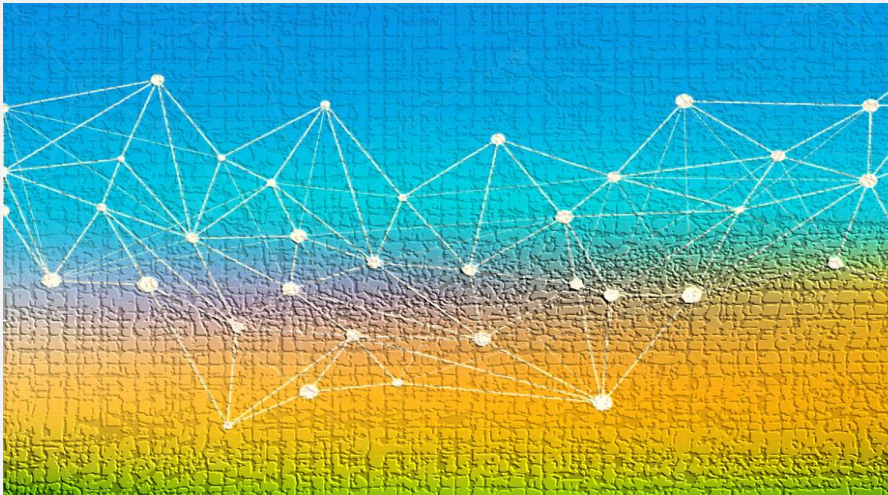


# UNDERSTANDING MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

MAKING CONNECTIONS  
TO SERVE TRIBAL YOUTH



RESOURCE SHEET



## Understanding the Multidisciplinary Team Approach:

### *What is a Multidisciplinary Team?*

A multidisciplinary team (MDT) is a collaborative team composed of differing system representatives from multiple disciplines in a particular jurisdiction or region.

An MDT may operate as a small core service team being comprised of tribal only personnel. An MDT may also operate as an ever growing or changing body of individuals from a variety of disciplines, education and community backgrounds, and may or may not include, state, county, federal, or other tribal partners.

## Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Tribal Youth Training and  
Technical Assistance Center



### **Request Training and Technical Assistance:**

**Web:**

<https://www.tribalyouthprogram.org/>

**Phone:**

405-271-8001 ext. 42116

**Email:**

[TribalYouthTACenter@ouhsc.edu](mailto:TribalYouthTACenter@ouhsc.edu)

### What is the purpose of a Multidisciplinary Team?

The MDT purpose and scope will directly relate to the purpose and scope of the system or program for which it is created:

- **Court Service MDTs** are implemented to support judicial service offerings and case management processes for tribal youth.
- **Youth Diversion Program MDTs** collaborate to identify community resources and strategize methods and practices to further engage youth or enhance program services.
- **Youth Crisis or Victim Service MDTs** operate to support immediate services or intervention needs for tribal youth.

### What are some of the ways the MDT will engage?

MDTs work toward effectual and impactful services for a target audience through:



Figure 1: MDT Practices for Effective Change

- **Collaboration-** MDTs create a forum for system change and quality improvement through active collaborative efforts.
- **Cooperation-** Collective case management strategies will incorporate a variety of services to clients and community members and are a mechanism for buy-in and mutual partnership.
- **Communication:** Information sharing processes and accountability are core elements for an effective MDT.

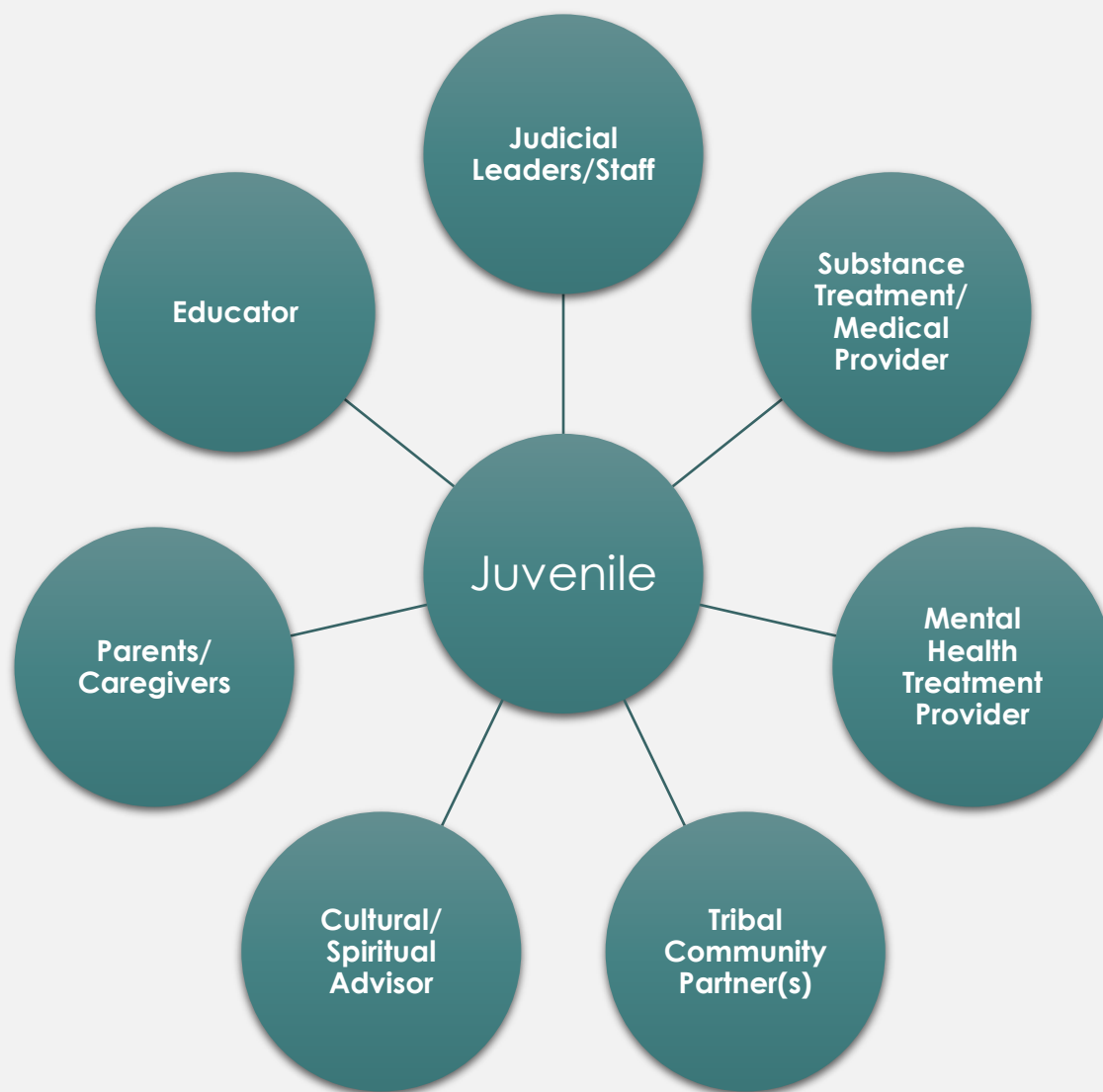
**What are some issues that may arise developing an MDT? What should tribes consider?**

There are many considerations when developing an MDT to support tribal community efforts. Several considerations are listed below. Tribal communities differ, therefore issues to consider will vary based on the unique community. Tribes have differing needs, system supports and programmatic efforts. See the following table of considerations:

**Table: MDT Development-Example Issue Topics and Considerations**

<b>Community Standing and Background</b>	Will membership rely on ties or affiliation with the tribal community? Are Non-tribal community partners essential to completing successful objectives?
<b>Professional Licensure/Lay Advocates</b>	Does the scope or purpose of the MDT require expertise or the input of professionally licensed providers? Will lay advocates be a part of the MDT?
<b>Culture and Spirituality</b>	Culture and spirituality are integral to the support of tribal community youth. How will the MDT incorporate tribal culture and spirituality?
<b>Legal and Political Considerations</b>	Are there legal or political issues that may support and/or hinder the work of the MDT?
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	Does the MDT have a strong knowledge of tribal jurisdictional issues? Will the outcomes or work of the MDT be impacted by jurisdictional authority?
<b>Existing Cooperative Relationships/Community Dynamics</b>	Are there existing cooperative teams within the community or region? How can the MDT connect or build upon present efforts?
<b>Administrative Issues/Ethics</b>	Will partnerships be formalized through Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Letters of Support (LOS) or other administrative documents? Will an MDT charter be established? Are there ethical considerations for individual team members such as confidentiality or other necessary administrative forms?

Figure 2: Youth at the Center- The Formalized Multi-Disciplinary Team



*In the model above, the youth remains at the center of the work. The MDT is comprised of a balanced framework through the engagement of professionals, lay advocates, community members, and cultural leaders. MDTs may range in size based on the objectives set forth by the team and the need for the further addition of MDT members.*

### *Successful MDTs- Supportive Practices:*

- Look to community strengths and resources, develop a community asset map to support the work of the MDT. Use culturally appropriate or community appropriate assessment tools to gauge community needs.
- Collaborate with partners that are in mutual agreement with the goals and objectives of the MDT.
- Engage with program partners in strategic planning processes, general system support, and effective evaluation practices.
- Encourage input from a wide range of professionals and include licensed professionals, service providers, cultural leadership and lay community advocates. Do not overlook the community. Grandmothers, Grandfathers, Mothers, Fathers, and Children will provide powerful input to community leadership efforts.
- Create a formal charter support the long-term sustainability of the MDT. Ensure that meetings are fruitful through the development of targeted agendas with action items identified for each team member.
- Acquaint non-Tribal partners with Tribal leadership and the MDT early on, build relationships through team building and honest dialogue about community issues.
- Build team skills through cross-training, communication and resource identification.
- Identify team members that are informed in the developmental, social and educational needs of today's tribal youth.



### Learn more:

- Visit the OJJDP Tribal Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center at [www.tribalyouthprogram.org](http://www.tribalyouthprogram.org) to learn more about resources and technical assistance that can support your tribal community. Communities may also request technical assistance to support MDT development.
- Read more about interdisciplinary teams in this 2016 article from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention here: [https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Family\\_Drug\\_Courts.pdf](https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Family_Drug_Courts.pdf)
- Read more about community asset mapping here: <http://www.courtinnovation.org/research/facilitating-community-asset-mapping-exercise>
- There are many processes that support community engagement, one process called "The Community Readiness Process," is supportive of tribal community engagement and awareness on various topics.  
Learn more here: <https://tribalinformationexchange.org/index.php/component/k2/item/94-community-readiness-model>  
Additional archived training on the "Community Readiness Process" within Tribal communities is available from the OJJDP Tribal Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYVmAYo6Hew&list=PLEYI\\_nJGyPIH6TQxvxbGW6QzKVt71xSjt&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYVmAYo6Hew&list=PLEYI_nJGyPIH6TQxvxbGW6QzKVt71xSjt&index=3)

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