

The Role of Cultural Factors in Engagement and Change in Multisystemic Therapy

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Outcome and Ethnicity

- It has been argued that MST is a culturally competent intervention (Brondino et al, 1997)
- Painter and Scannapieco (2009) found African American males were over-represented (15.5-80.6%) across 10 RCTs they reviewed
 - Majority of studies reported effectiveness of MST in improving family relationships, decreasing antisocial behaviour problems and improving psychiatric symptoms
 - Authors concluded that MST was a promising intervention in reducing disparities in mental health care for African American children in the child welfare system

Outcome and Ethnicity

Limitations

- Problems of generalisability across all minority ethnic groups
- Different cultural groups likely to have significant structural differences across important dimensions within the family and within culture specific value systems
- All studies reviewed were carried out in the US – again raises question of generalisability

Process and Mechanisms of Change in MST

- Studies have identified important moderators e.g. treatment fidelity (Henggeler et al, 1998)
- ...and treatment mediators e.g. improved peer relations (Huey et al, 2000) and family engagement (Schaeffer and Bourduin, 2003) of MST outcomes.
- Decreasing involvement with negative peers mediated by improvements in family relations and increasing caregiver consistency and discipline (Henggeler et al, 2009, Huey et al, 2000)

Process and Mechanisms of Change in MST

Qualitative research

- Several UK studies have examined the process of change from caregiver and youth perspective.
- Central importance of therapeutic alliance in families positive experience of the intervention (Tighe et al, 2012)
- Key mechanism of change is intervening in the multiple systems in the ecology
- A range of systemic, developmental and individual factors were further highlighted that sustained change up to 21 months post intervention (Paradisopoulos et al, 2015; Kaur et al, 2015)
- Ethnic minority participants within these studies (10 to 48%) – this was not explored specifically

Rationale for Study

- Common view that ethnic minority groups are typically referred to as 'hard to reach' groups (Begum, 2006) → pertinent to examine mechanisms of change but also consider factors that impact engagement
- No qualitative studies done examining ethnic minority user experiences of MST

Aim:

- Gain an understanding of what contributed to or hindered engagement and change with MST from the perspective of minority ethnic caregivers
- Generate a theoretical understanding of the processes of engagement and change and relate this to the structures that guide assessment, treatment planning and intervention

Recruitment Process

- Seven caregivers recruited from two London sites
- Parents from diverse range of backgrounds
- First generation families
- Interviews carried out in participants' homes

Demographic Summary of the Sample

	Demographic Information	Number of participants (n=7)
Gender	Male	1
	Female	6
Age	40's	2
	50's	4
	60's	1
Gender of adolescent	Male	3
	Female	4
Parent country of origin	Rwanda	1
	Jamaica	1
	Israel	1
	Ghana	2
	China	1
	Ireland	1
Reason for migration to UK	Education	1
	Work	2
	Family	3
	Refugee	1
Number of years in the UK	10-20	2
	20-30	4
	30-40	1
Time since completing MST	0-3 months	2
	3-6 months	0
	6-9 months	2
	9-12 months	3
Therapist Ethnicity	White British	3
	White Romanian	1
	Northern Irish	1
	Black Jamaican	1
Gender of therapist	Male	1
	Female	6

Grounded Theory Analysis

- Analysis starts early
- Theoretical sampling
- Three step coding process
- Memo writing
- Time consuming!

Main Findings

- Seven inter-related theoretical categories emerged
- Three relating to the process of engagement ‘environment of alignment and engagement’
- Four relating to the process of change ‘finding a new way forward’.
- Each theoretical code was composed of specific and interacting focused codes which capture its key dimensions

Environment of Alignment and Engagement

Theoretical Codes	Focused Codes	Properties of the codes (initial codes)
Considering cultural difference	Being culturally understood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not feeling judged • Therapist being curious about parents culture, religion and background, • Therapist checking out the meaning behind words
	Therapist taking a culturally sensitive approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapist considering cultural difference within the family • Cultural sensitivity of therapist determining engagement
	Therapist understanding and respecting difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalism of therapist more important than culture/ethnicity • Feeling better understood by a therapist who is a cultural/ethnic minority
	Considering role of culture in difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapist taking into account perceived relationship between culture and difficulties • Being disapproving of certain cultural practices in the UK

Considering Cultural Difference

Being culturally understood

- *‘I find it’s important to find out the meaning behind the words. Like when people talk about family here, I think that are talking about a different thing.’ Miriam*

Therapist taking a culturally sensitive approach

- *‘ She did respect my culture, she did respect my views. That was important. If she had not gone through that line, I wouldn’t have worked with her. So it was a really important part.’ Joy*

Considering Cultural Difference

Therapist understanding and respecting difference

- *‘...even if someone else who is English comes in, as long as they consider my background, my feelings, it would work but if they don’t see it that was, it probably would not work.’ Leila*

Considering the role of culture in difficulties

- *‘They should consider what is really causing this, what is the background? You know religion, culture, belief of the parents, ‘cos sometimes that could be the problem, as in my kids that was the problem...it would be like banging heads, so if she [therapist] didn’t deal with that...it was not going to work.’ Leila*

Finding a New Way Forward; The Process of Change

Theoretical Codes	Focused Codes	Properties of the codes (initial codes)
Therapist acting as a cultural broker	Facilitating perspective taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to see things from child's perspective • Therapist facilitating young person to see parent's perspective • Opening up new perspectives
	Negotiating cultural difference in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being helped to make sense of difficulties in light of dual cultures • Seeing the positives of adapting in spite of being uncomfortable • Being helped to find the threshold for compromising • Finding a way to meet in the middle
	Being helped to contextualise young person's behaviour in UK culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapist helping to distinguish between 'normal' and 'troublesome' teenage behaviour • Therapist appropriately normalising adolescent behaviour in cultural context • Learning from therapist about adolescent behaviour in the UK
	Therapist acting as cultural reference point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusting the therapist acknowledges both family cultures • Consulting the therapist about adolescents behaviour in the UK • Therapist accommodating the cultures within the family • Therapist representing possibility of two cultures being able to merge

Therapist Acting as a Cultural Broker

Negotiating cultural difference in family

- *'It was helpful for my daughter to know that I have a background, and it's as important to me as her background, you know, she probably has to start thinking about how do I feel about my own background, just as I feel about hers.'* Leila

Being helped to contextualise young person's behaviour

- *'So after that, even when I spoke to Mary [therapist], she said you know that's his age. You know he needs to go out with his friends. It's not so abnormal.'* Joy

Discussion

- Many codes emerged that were similar to previous qualitative findings, highlighting similarities across cultures – therapeutic alliance and a respectful and sensitive approach to working with families
- Specific cultural factors in alignment and engagement, conceptualisation of fit, and intervention development and implementation – can be mapped on to the MST Analytical Process

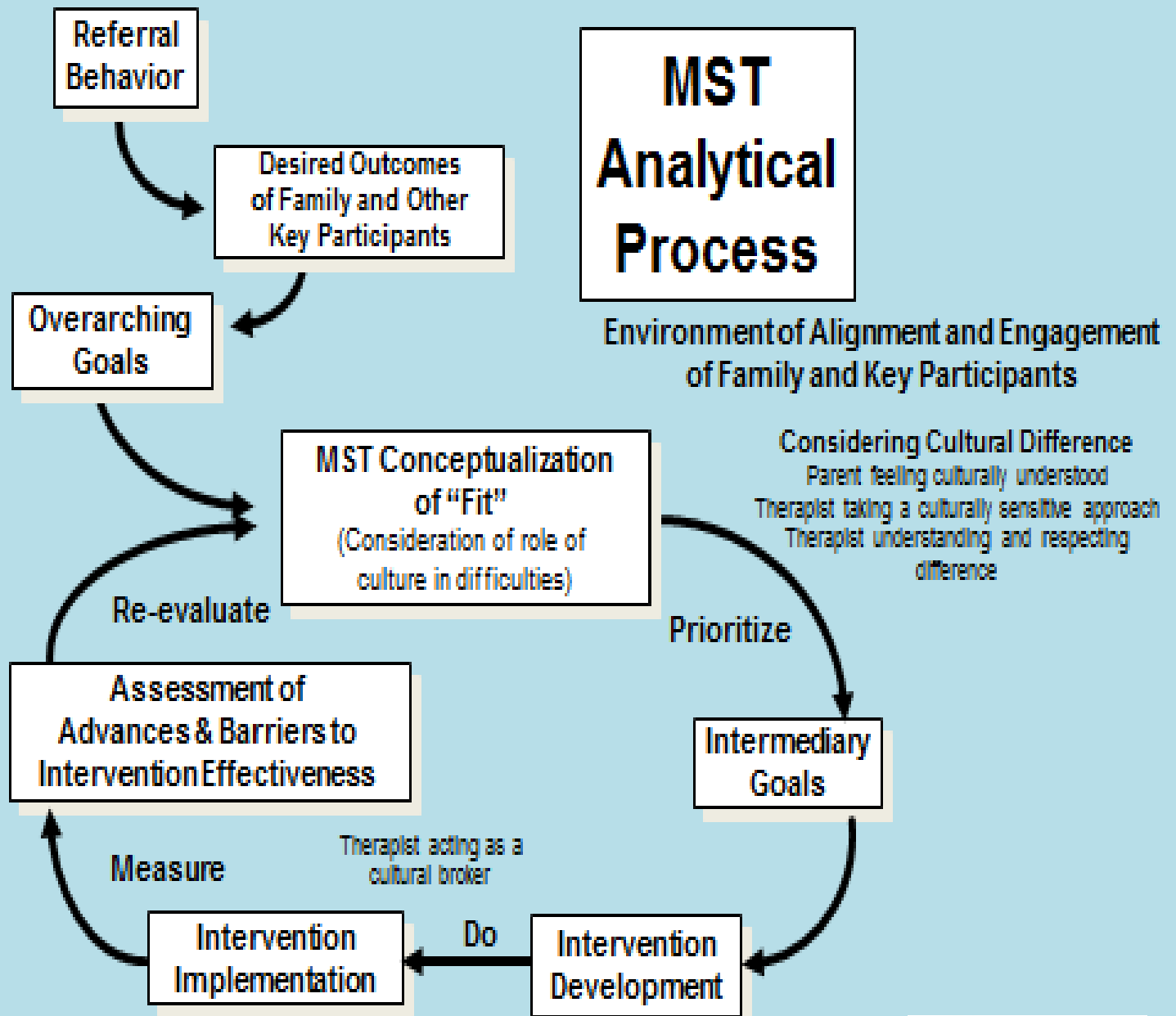


Figure 1: Significant cultural factors in the MST Analytical Process

Alignment and Engagement

- Talking about culturally salient and meaningful content encourages more active engagement and participation in therapy (Jackson-Gilfort et al, 2001)
- Therapist responding to cultural difference sensitively engendered sense of being understood
- Culturally competent therapists – mixture of generic skills that can be adapted to the individual needs and knowledge of specific issues such as oppression, discrimination and racism (Chang & Berk, 2009)

Cultural Factors in Assessment and Intervention

- Consideration of the role of culture in understanding the referral behaviour (fit)
- Making sense of difficulties in light of dual cultures
- Therapist acting as a **cultural broker** and ability to tailor interventions collaboratively taking into account the family's narrative world
- Facilitative function of opening up cross-cultural perspectives in families with dual cultures – facilitates behavioural change through the parent and young person being able to compromise
- Helped parent to contextualise behaviours in wider cultural milieu

Practitioner Points

- Skills in addressing ethnicity with the client – conversations about race, spiritual beliefs or cultural background
- Curiosity about cultural background
- Role of culture in the conceptualisation of difficulties
- For change to occur therapist may need to act as **cultural brokers** and **cultural reference points**

Limitations and Future Research

- Not generalizable to all populations - study excluded ethnic minority caregivers who were born in the UK
- Did not include those that refused treatment or did not complete treatment – may not have picked up factors that hinder engagement
- Did not include non-English speaking caregivers – sample biased towards a more integrated and acculturated cohort?
- Future research around voice of young person

Points for Thought

- How do we support therapists in this domain?
- Training – workshops/boosters?

Paper & Podcast

Journal article

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-6427.12134/epdf>

Podcast

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6XwwR7chQY&feature=youtu.be>

Social Media

Website:

- www.evidencebasedinterventions.org.uk
- www.mstuk.org

The LinkedIn logo, featuring the word "LinkedIn" in a sans-serif font with a blue square containing a white lowercase "in" to the right.

- [National Implementation Service](http://NationalImplementationService.org)

The Twitter logo, consisting of the word "twitter" in a lowercase, rounded sans-serif font followed by a blue bird icon.

- NIS @NISProgrammes