



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY TITLE: MLC COUNSELING SERVICES PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

POLICY: Miriam’s counseling services provide support, care, and treatment for students and families to strengthen skill development and social/emotional functioning.

1. Miriam Learning Center offers individual, group, and family counseling to help children improve mental health concerns using empirically based interventions. The focus of treatment is to decrease mental health symptoms as indicated by pre and post rating on the Pediatric Symptoms Checklist from admission to discharge. By treating mental health issues, we increase the likelihood that children, adolescents, and young adults will excel in school and other areas of their life.
2. Missouri Master’s level, licensed or provisionally licensed therapists employed through MLC, work with parents and professionals to make sure goals and treatment are appropriate to each child’s needs. Licensed professionals may also hold certifications in play and art therapy.
3. Master’s level licensed clinicians provide Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma focused CBT, play therapy, art therapy, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, social skills curriculum, solution-focused therapy and other empirically-based interventions to address the therapeutic needs of each child.
4. Types of interventions:
 - a) **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** is a short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a hands-on, practical approach to problem solving. Its goal is to change patterns of thinking or behavior that are behind people’s difficulties, and so change the way they feel. Master’s level provisional or fully licensed professional counselors or social workers, who have received training in CBT, provide this service. This intervention is appropriate for all ages and mental health issues that relate to emotional dysregulation, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, OCD, and similar conditions.
 - b) **TF-CBT** is an evidence-based treatment for children and adolescents impacted by trauma and their parents or caregivers. It is a components-based treatment model that incorporates trauma-sensitive interventions with cognitive behavioral, family, and humanistic principles and techniques. TF-CBT has proved successful with children and adolescents (ages 3 to 18) who have significant emotional problems (e.g., symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, fear, anxiety, or depression) related to traumatic life events. This intervention is used with children and adolescents who have experienced a single trauma or multiple traumas in their lives. Master’s level provisional or fully

licensed professional counselors or social workers who trained in TF-CBT provide this intervention.

- c) **Play Therapy** is defined as "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained **play** therapists use the **therapeutic** powers of **play** to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development." It is most appropriate for children age 3-11 with trauma, neglect, or abuse, and those who are not as verbal. Although some Master's level licensed clinicians use play within the context of treatment, Play Therapists are certified by their state, in addition to their state license.
 - d) **Art Therapy** is a form of psychotherapy involving the encouragement of free self-expression through painting, drawing, or modeling, used as a remedial activity or an aid to diagnosis. Although many therapists may use art within the context of their treatment session, the Art Therapist is certified in addition to his/her Master's level state license. Art Therapy is appropriate for ages 3, up, and can be an appropriate intervention for any type of mental health issue.
 - e) **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)** is emerging as an effective strategy to help young children and their families increase social and emotional **health** while decreasing challenging behavior. This intervention is appropriate for infants, toddlers, and up to school age. This intervention identifies and treats behavior issues in early childhood. Master' level licensed clinicians experienced working with young children and trained in the ECMHC model provide interventions.
 - f) **Solution-Focused Therapy** can stand alone as a therapeutic intervention, or it can be used along with other therapy styles and treatments. It is used to treat people of all ages and a variety of issues, including child behavioral problems, family dysfunction, domestic or child abuse, addiction, and relationship problems. Master's level licensed clinicians trained in SFT provide interventions.
 - g) **Social Skills Instruction (SSI)** focuses on explicitly teaching behaviors to students who show social skill deficits. Social Skills Instruction assists students in acquiring new behavioral skills, building fluency with existing skills, or generalizing existing skills to new situations. SSI is used when clients have related deficits due to Autism, Social Pragmatic Communication Disorder, ADHD, and other conditions that interfere with making and keeping friends. Empirically based SSI or social/emotional programs are used. When SSI stands alone, services are provided by Master's level Missouri licensed or provisionally licensed clinicians, special education teachers, and other professionals trained in implementing SSI.
 - h) **TeleSPED** offers any of the above counseling interventions through telehealth services, when deemed appropriate for a student. Services are administered through Theranest telehealth services, a virtual platform that is HIPAA compliant. The assigned therapist will ensure that the client and his/her family are set up and trained on the platform prior to services starting. The family must have a device that can connect to the internet and access to internet or a hotspot.
5. Therapy may be provided for any child age 2 to 18 as long as the child's needs fall within the expertise of our assessment and treatment team. Children who may have needs beyond our expertise will be referred to community resource with the ability to help the child. Parents, and

when appropriate, the referral source, will be notified regarding the reasons their child required alternative services. A list of these service providers will be provided upon request or when appropriate during the course of treatment.

6. Therapy may be provided within the child's educational or daycare setting, at Miriam School K12, within the home, or other community-based locations.
7. Services are provided Monday through Thursday 8:00am-8:00pm and Fridays 8:00am-3:30pm. MLC is closed for most standard holidays. Therapy is provided during the summer Monday-Thursday 8:00-4:30 and Fridays 8:00-4:00.
8. A formal evaluation is not required in order to receive counseling services. Our therapists will conduct an informal assessment during the first few treatment sessions in order to determine a treatment plan. The treatment plan will dictate the frequency and duration of the intervention. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy frequently lasts 12-24, 50-minute visits.
9. For private clients, the therapist will meet with the child for 50 minutes or less, if the parent also requests time with the therapist.
10. Counseling services may be funded through St. Louis County Children's Service Fund, St. Louis City Mental Health Board, the child's school, or parent pay. State, grant, and local government funding is dependent upon meeting funding requirements and availability of funds. Scholarships may be available on a first come first served basis for mental health evaluations and are income based.
11. Students may be referred for counseling by self, parent, teacher, mental health professional, or by any other individual involved with a student.
12. All programs accept students living in any geographical area, with the exception of St. Louis County Children's Service Funded (CSF) programs and St. Louis City Mental Health Board (MHB) funded programs. CSF funded programs fund St. Louis County residents who attend any preschool or day care (age 3-5) and any private or parochial school or charter school that is located in St. Louis County (age 3-18). The MHB funds any St. Louis City resident who attends a preschool or daycare located within St. Louis City limits (age 3-5). Consumers applying for programs must also meet program entrance criteria for each program.
13. Therapy is discontinued when goals have been achieved, when progress is no longer apparent, or when the parent/consumer chooses to stop therapy. Refer to the counseling entrance and exit criteria for specific exit criteria.
14. At the time of referral, any identified conflicts of interest will be disclosed to a participant prior to the applicant making a final decision regarding entering programming. Examples may include but are not fully inclusive; dual roles of treatment staff, recommendation services on evaluations that include MLC services, and funding requirements or restrictions.
15. Fees for Service 8/1/24-7/30/25. The cost of individual or family counseling is \$110 per 50-minute session, unless indicated otherwise by a contracted rate.
16. The counseling program description is available to the consumer, family, legally appointed representatives, and stakeholders on line at miriamstl.org and can be provided in paper copy upon request.