



## The MDT Method

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### What is the MDT?

The MDT is a system where the child's whole development is considered during assessment and therapy. The MDT strives for optimal integration of all developmental areas, disciplines, methods, goals, learning frames, activities etc. So the child is seen as a whole and all developmental areas are considered in unison (not separately).

The MDT system brings new ideas and perception to the field of early intervention. It enables the therapist to have:

- Multi-level integration across all developmental areas
- A "Road Map" for developmental stages
- A structured method to ensure therapy is effective and efficient
- A variety of treatment systems and services
- Flexibility in using variety of techniques from different methods and disciplines.
- Tailoring for the optimal system for the child and their family.

### Traditional Therapy Models

The traditional therapy model defines disciplines such as Physiotherapy, Psychology, Occupational therapy and Speech therapy. Children generally have separate assessments and treatments through each discipline. Although this approach is not often the most helpful when working with a person with multiple areas of difficulty, as two major problems occur:

- First, there is often an overlapping between the different disciplines and developmental areas.
- Second, the integration of knowledge and goals is very hard to obtain due to many reasons.



The outcome of these two major problems is an uncoordinated treatment system with "holes" in the treatment map. In many cases the key factors for the whole treatment procedure are missed and therapy can be disorganized and it can be difficult to achieve results.

## The answer...

Few integrative methods have been raised over the last 20 years in order to answer those questions (ABA, DIR, RDI, Son rise, Miller method, ESDM etc.). The MDT is another system that aims to target to the integrative aspect in treatment but strives for optimal integration of all aspects – developmental areas, disciplines, methods, goals, learning frames, activities etc. So the child is seen as a whole and all developmental areas are considered in unison (not separately).

In order to understand the child's condition in the most accurate way is to use the term "Primary Dimensions". As in primary numbers in Math, the primary dimensions are pure entities that interact between themselves but unique enough to reduce overlapping as much as possible. The primary dimensions in developmental treatment are: fine & gross motor, sensory preferences/condition, communication skill, Receptive & Expressive language, speech, cognition, social skill, emotional condition, ADL and behavior. Each dimension generally represents a specific neurological circuit, hence, can be identified solely.

Evaluating the developmental condition of a child through these primary dimensions ensures reduced overlapping and that there no "holes" in the evaluation. Where we aim to see all the aspects of development regardless of specific therapist influence.

## MDT evolution

The MDT idea was started in 1996 as a result of an ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) treatment system for a 4 years old autistic child. Dr Elad Vashdi, who was one of the therapists in that system and later on lead the therapists group, tried to organize the treatment system in a better order. The ABA had its own advantages such as goals, organized programs, accurate and intensive work. On the other hand, the levels of programs didn't make sense and the professional knowledge was missing. The ABA program treated every event as a behavior to which the same behavioral rule was applied.

Dr Vashdi formed a brainstorming group of young therapists across all disciplines (including: physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and psychology) which met regularly and collaborated to form new more streamlined method. After many years of



meetings the direction was clear – creating a system that would try to integrate all the developmental areas and methods in an applicable way, would be the best approach.

The main focus was on developing the practical tools for using the MDT. Over the years we have worked on creating evaluations for all developmental areas that will enable the integration between fields, we built specific treatment programs based on experience and professional knowledge. Another aspect was creating the integrative analysis tool that will enable multi-dimensional analysis. The MDT tools are still in the long process of being developed to ensure the highest standard of assessment and therapy is conducted.

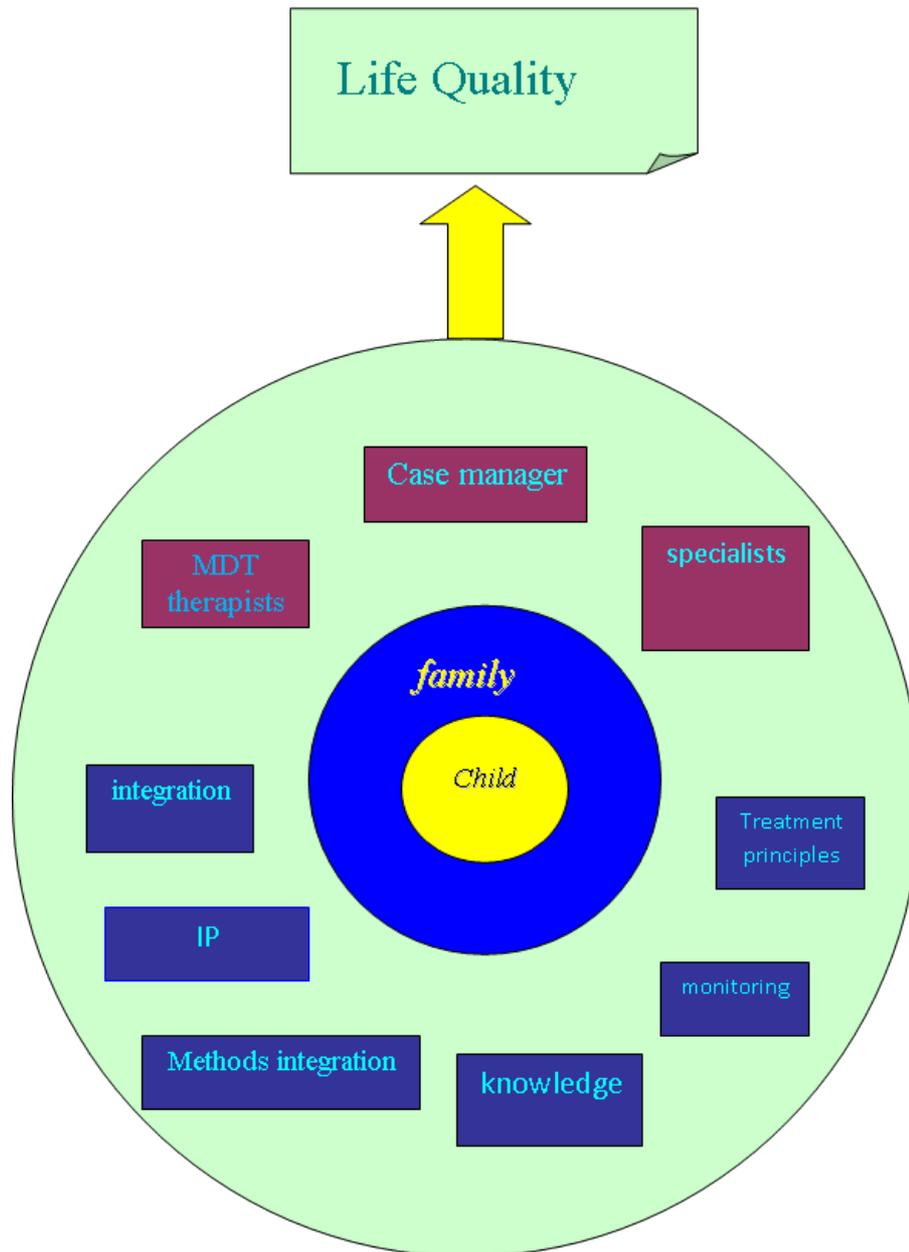
### *Milestones of Development:*

- Opening a clinic (2005)
- First MDT therapists training in Israel (2006)
- First MDT supervisors training in Israel (2007)
- Opening an MDT based day-care in the center of Israel, Herzelia (2009)
- Opening an MDT based day-care in the North of Israel, Kibutz Alonim (2012)
- MDT training for therapists in Melbourne (Aug 2013)
- MDT based clinic in Melbourne (Aug 2013)
- Online MDT supervisors training (Nov 2013)

### **MDT Tools**

- Evaluations forms for all fields – Speech, Language, Communication, Motor skill, Cognition, Emotional status, Sensory preferences and ADL.
- Analysis form
- Treatment structure
- Multi-level goals model
- Treatment programs for all treatment subjects.
- Principles and techniques in treatment.
- Creating Motivation techniques.
- Building relationship with the child principles.

## Levels of integration



**Table 1: The MDT Quality of life Model**

As seen in Table 1, integrative thinking and therapy are the basis of the MDT. Integration can be found in the MDT in various levels:



- **Exercise/activity** – the activity the child engages in integrates several goals and could be a continuum/chain of ideas that creates a theme in the treatment, to keep the child engaged and having fun whilst learning.
- **Therapist** – a single therapist can deliver all the treatment in the different areas. The MDT defines the multidimensional therapist. The MDT therapist is not an expert in all fields but can perform through all of them. MDT therapists can perform in different levels of expertise depending on their experience, education, abilities etc.
- **Case manager** – they are the most important link in the chain. The case manager is the key factor of the whole system since they are the one who integrate the basic data, creates the program, guide the therapists and manages the program.
- **Team** – the integration between the team members is important for the success of the program. The MDT defines the relationship between the team members and enables the communication between them.
- **Learning frames** – the learning frame (actual therapy sessions) is the place where the child spends most of their time. The fluent communication between the learning frame and the rest of the therapists is very important for the intensity of the therapy.
- **Evaluation fields** – Assessing all areas of development at the right time enables interactions between all the points. This brings a high a level of understanding about the child's strengths and weaknesses.
- **Analysis** – the ability to have an integrative analysis of all the data and then create to an integrative treatment plan.
- **Integration between methods and disciplines** – MDT doesn't rule out any method or discipline as long it scientifically based and can be used within the analysis frame. Usually, most of the methods and knowledge from all the disciplines can fit in certain conditions into the whole program.
- **Treatment structure** - is an integration of many factors such as goals, financial capacity, number of therapists, quality of therapists, environment, resources etc. It is not “one size fits all” but tailor made for each child. The program changes as the child changes. So the program is made to fit the child, the visa versa. It is set in a way that would be the most beneficial for the child under the circumstances.



## Intervention procedure

- Interview and first observation – understanding the key factors for treatment.
- Specific thorough evaluation according to key factors and other specialists' evaluations.
- Creating the treatment structure – amount of hours, therapists, place...
- Setting goals in the Multi-level goals model.
- Creating the integrative exercises and activities.
- Guiding the team and collaborating with all the intervention factors.
- Reporting and re-evaluating regularly.

## MDT services

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### In Israel :

Day care in the center of Israel (Herzlia)

Day care in the North of Israel (Alonim)

Consultations

### In Melbourne, Australia:

The MDT is available through the "The Voice Within Speech Pathology" clinic run by Elise Swallow and "Best Start Clinic" run by Caroline De Fina. Elise and Caroline work in collaboration with each other.

Please call 0497 847 044 or email [admin@voicewithin.com.au](mailto:admin@voicewithin.com.au) for enquiries.

### Internationally:

Private consultation 1-7 days – on demand.

Video conference consultation.



# MDT Training

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## MDT training for therapists

MDT training for therapists is built according to the needs of the specific clinic or therapists. The length and topics will vary according to needs.

## MDT training for case managers

1. An online course, constructed of 8 basic modules and 9 advanced modules. Each module is built from 5-8 lessons. Each module takes 2-3 months.
2. A student can take 2 modules at once.
3. At the end of each module a video-conference meeting between the student and Dr Vashdi takes place in order to summarize the module.
4. Training can start in any time.
5. Pre-requisite skills and experience are necessary for entering the program.

Written by

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