

MST Therapist Adherence Measure - Revised (TAM-R): Guidelines for TAM-R Administration and Management

Options for Collecting TAM-R Data

Agencies have several options for collecting TAM-R data from families. These include third-party interviewers, telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, and providing paper questionnaires for families to complete. Each method comes with its own costs and likelihood of error. It is up to the organization to decide which method to use; however, *under no circumstances should the family complete the survey in the therapist's presence*. If the family's therapist is present while the caregiver completes the questionnaire, it raises the possibility that the caregiver will "feel pressured" to respond more favorably than they might feel (e.g., the caregiver may believe that responding negatively to the clinical staff member collecting the TAM-R data will somehow get a therapist, or the family, into trouble). In addition, unhealthy dynamics can occur within the team if therapists are asked to collect TAM-R data on other members of their own team. Therefore, the MST Supervisor or non-clinical staff should be assigned the responsibility of collecting TAM-R data. The possible sources of error are described below for each method.

- a. *Third-party interviewers*. Using objective third-party interviewers is considered best practice and there are several MSTI approved call centers that can assist teams in collecting this data via telephone interviews. For more information on using an MSTI approved call center, contact msti@mstinstitute.org.
- b. *Telephone interview*. Telephone interviews have been used in all the MST research studies, and they have the lowest likelihood of error if conducted by experienced interviewers. Tips on phone interviewing strategies are in the TAM-R Phone Interview Manual for Teams. The more these strategies are followed, the more likely it is that your data will be predictive of outcomes. The costs of this method are often offset by a higher return rate.
- c. *Face-to-face interviews*. Face-to-face interviews are also likely to have low error and a high return rate, but they have the highest cost. They can be useful as a supplement to telephone interviews to collect the TAM-R from hard-to-reach families.
- d. *Providing blank surveys to be mailed back to supervisor*. This strategy usually has the lowest cost but also the lowest response rate. The recommended strategy for increasing the response rate is to have the therapist deliver the blank TAM-R and a stamped envelope addressed to the supervisor or the therapist can ask the caregiver to insert the completed TAM-R into an envelope addressed to the supervisor, seal the envelope and sign across the seal. Alternative strategies for increasing the response rate will introduce more error and therefore are strongly discouraged.
- e. [Online Administration](#). Please see this document for instructions.

MST Supervisor's Role in TAM-R Collection

The primary responsibility for ensuring that the TAM-R is collected on schedule and administered correctly resides with the MST supervisor regardless of the entity and method used for conducting the TAM-R interviews.

Informing Families About TAM-R's: Whether using a call center or collecting TAM-R's internally, families need to be informed about the collection process. The supervisor must prepare therapists with the skills to explain the purpose of the TAM-R in an engaging way to families.

During the case opening process, families should be educated on the purpose of the TAM-R and how the information will be collected. If possible, consider including something to this effect in writing as part of the initial paperwork that is signed by the family. The appendix includes examples of ways in which to explain the TAM-R's to families.

If families initially decide not to participate, therapists should continue to discuss this with families on subsequent visits and discuss this decision in light of other known concerns (e.g., engagement problems in other areas) in supervision. If the family continues to decline participation, therapists should bring this to the attention of the supervisor and MST Expert for discussion and resolution.

Managing the TAM-R Administration Schedule: To coordinate the administration of the TAM-R, therapists should inform the supervisor when the first session with a family has taken place. That first session date should be entered immediately as the First Visit Date on the MSTI website. This will trigger the MSTI website to include this case in the TAM-R Schedule Report. It will set up the first administration of the questionnaire to occur during the second week of therapy and approximately every four weeks thereafter.

After a questionnaire has been completed, the data is entered and scored on the MSTI Website. It will then be listed in the TAM-R Monitor Report as completed. It is recommended that the TAM-R Schedule Report be run by the MST Supervisor at least every other week to ensure identification of cases at the beginning of their call window.

If you have questions about administration of the TAM-R, please discuss them with your MST Expert. If you have technical difficulty with this process, such as accessing the website, or have any other questions about the data entry of the TAM-R, please contact the MST Institute (msti@mstinstitute.org) for assistance.

To be best prepared to address potential TAM-R interview barriers, supervisors should remind therapists to add notes regarding the family's preferences to be entered on the Case Enrollment Form, regarding whether they can be contacted, how to be contacted, and best times to be contacted. This information then will be available on the TAM-R Schedule Report.

Using TAM-R scores: At boosters or during supervisor development calls, the MST expert and MST supervisor should review TAM-R reports. (See "[Guidelines for TAM-R Interpretation](#)" for more detailed instructions). Results will be shared and discussed with clinicians at the booster or at another time. This process includes discussion of the therapist's strengths and struggles and the development of fit assessments and goals, as needed, within the therapist's development plan.

MST Institute (MSTI) Resources to Support Data Collection

MSTI offers a secure data collection and reporting system that provides tools to enter, store, and manage the data collection process. Please access the information on the MSTI website, www.msti.org, to guide you in the process of administering and interpreting the adherence measures. Logins are required to access the secure site and are restricted to individuals who are part of a licensed MST team. Training guides and online training sessions are available on how to use these tools. Information about the online training sessions can be found at <https://www.msti.org/mstinstitute/services/training.html>.

Agency Resources Required if Collecting TAM-R Internally

Interviewer: If the agency has decided to collect the TAM-R's from families themselves, the interviewer should not be an MST therapist. The interviewer should be friendly, courteous but assertive, have a pleasant manner, and be fluent in languages or dialects of the families served by the MST program. It is estimated that the time commitment required will be one hour per week for each MST therapist employed by the agency (e.g., for a team of 3 full-time therapists, 3 hours per week will be required) to administer and enter the TAM-R's into the MSTI website. However, those hours typically need to be outside normal office hours when families are available to answer the questions.

MST Supervisor: As stated above, the Supervisor is responsible for TAM-R collection. If the agency will be completing TAM-R's internally, the Supervisor will have additional responsibilities to oversee the TAM-R Data Collector, and time should be properly allocated in the Supervisor's workload for this support and oversight.

MST Supervisor Responsibilities for Monitoring the TAM-R Data Collector

- a. Have the person administering the TAM-R's set a specific goal for him or herself regarding how many calls to make a day.
- b. The person entering the responses into the MSTI website should review the answers on the website for accuracy. Once the items are confirmed, the record should be locked.
 - i. Training guides and online training sessions are available through MSTI for data entry tips. Information about the training guides and online training sessions can be found at <https://www.msti.org/mstinstitute/services/training.html>.
- c. The MST supervisor should QA and monitor the data collection process by doing the following:
 - i. review the TAM-R Monitoring Report on the MSTI website regularly
 - ii. review data entry for accuracy by randomly comparing online data to completed questionnaires
 - iii. listen to calls randomly at least once a month
 - iv. confer with your expert as needed to assist you in assessing the quality of the TAM-R administration and entry process
- d. Supervisors should ensure the TAM-R collector is running a TAM-R Schedule Report from the website that will create a list of families that have a TAM-R due during a specified period.

APPENDIX - EXAMPLES OF TAM-R EXPLANATIONS FOR FAMILIES

TAM-R explanation for families - teams using a call center

Our MST program is committed to providing you and your family the best possible services. Therefore, someone will call you periodically to ask you questions about the services you are getting. Your opinions are extremely important to our efforts to improve services to families like yours.

We are working with telephone interviewers at *{name of organization}* to collect this information. Therefore, we will share your name and telephone number with them, so they can call to ask you some questions about the services you are receiving. Your name and phone number are the only personal information that will be shared. Your answers to the questions will not be shared with anyone who is not directly involved in the MST program in a way in which you can be identified. The staff are trained in the importance of maintaining confidentiality and your privacy. Your personal information will be protected with safeguards that comply with the highest standards.

You do not need to consent to the use of your personal information in this way to receive MST services. However, participating in the telephone interviews does ensure that you will receive the best possible service.

If you have any questions about this notice or if we can help you in any way, please call:

MST supervisor: _____

MST Provider Organization: _____

Phone number: _____

TAM-R explanation for families - teams using internal data collection

Our MST program is committed to providing you and your family the best possible services. Therefore, someone will call you periodically to ask you questions about the services you are getting. Your opinions are extremely important to our efforts to improve services to families like yours.

We have an internal staff person, who is not an MST therapist, assigned to gather information regarding the treatment you are receiving from your therapist. Therefore, we will share your name and telephone number with them, so they can call to ask you some questions about the services you are receiving. Your name and phone number are the only personal information that will be shared. Your answers to the questions will not be shared with anyone who is not directly involved in the MST program in a way in which you can be identified. The staff are trained in the importance of maintaining confidentiality and your privacy. Your personal information will be protected with safeguards that comply with the highest standards.

You do not need to consent to the use of your personal information in this way to receive MST services. However, participating in the telephone interviews does ensure that you will receive the best possible service.

If you have any questions about this notice or if we can help you in any way, please call:

MST supervisor: _____

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Phone number: _____