

What Does Addiction Treatment Look Like?

Treatment for drug and alcohol addiction can vary from person to person. However, the basics of treatment are usually quite similar. The specifics may be different, but most treatment plans follow a basic itinerary of admission and assessment followed by the treatment itself.

It's a good idea to have an understanding of how treatment works. If you're an addict seeking recovery, this will help to prepare you for what lies ahead. If you're a loved one of someone with an addiction, this will help you understand more about the options available for your loved ones.



What does addiction treatment look like?

Each treatment center will be different from the next, but the fundamental principles are the same. Today, we'll discuss in detail the various aspects of treatment so you can decide for yourself what the best options are.

An overview of addiction treatment

All forms of addiction treatment have the same goal: to help struggling addicts take their first steps on the road to recovery. This generally means teaching them the skills required to cope with their emotional or mental problems without needing to resort to drugs or alcohol.

The process is generally as follows:

- **Admission.** Firstly, you're admitted and accepted into the facility for treatment.
- **Intake.** You'll be given an intake and get to learn more about what the facility is all about.
- **Assessment.** Here is where the facilitators will take note of your individual needs so that they can develop a specific treatment plan for you. These treatment plans can vary significantly depending on your past experience or history with drugs.

- **Detox.** The first thing that you're going to do if you're trying to overcome a serious addiction is go through detox.
- **Treatment.** This is the drawn-out portion of the program during which you'll learn the skill that you need to overcome your addiction. Treatment often consists of a variety of different things, such as therapy, group meetings, and counseling sessions.

Remember, while these basic steps may follow in the same order for most people seeking treatment, the specifics may vary. There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to addiction, so you can expect that there will be some difference between treatment centers and programs.

What Are the Steps for Addiction Treatment?

There are a number of steps involved in addiction treatment. Not everyone will participate in these steps in the same order. However - in the vast majority of cases - recovering addicts will have to go through all of these phases during their treatment program.

These are more detailed descriptions of the various steps involved in addiction treatment.

Admission

The first step in seeking treatment is acknowledging that you (or your loved ones) have a problem. This can be very difficult and often painful.

Oftentimes, however, the only thing that you have to do to start the process is make a phone call or send an email.

Once you have contacted the treatment facility, you'll be able to talk to someone who works at the facility. They'll be able to give you some information about the treatment center and the program, and let you know if there are any spaces available.

Some places may give you a brief assessment over the phone to decide whether or not you're a good fit for their particular facility. For example, someone struggling with a pornography addiction may not be well-suited for a facility that focuses primarily on substance addiction.

Many facilities also prefer to engage with family members of the struggling addict. This helps them to get a more clear picture of the addict's situation and can allow them to make a more solid decision based on this information.

Unfortunately, admission isn't always an easy process - especially when you consider the fact that many addicts don't actually seek treatment themselves. Oftentimes, they are encouraged to attend treatment by their families. In some cases, they are forced to attend treatment by the authorities.

Some treatment centers provide family alternatives for parents, siblings,

or spouses of addicts. These services help the family members learn more about the treatment program and their options. It's never easy giving an intervention to a loved one, but it helps to know as much about the process as you can.

It's also possible that someone can be committed to a rehab facility by the authorities. Usually, this occurs after someone has committed a crime under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Driving offenses, violent offenses, negligent acts, or domestic violence can all lead to someone being sent to rehab.

In these latter cases, the drug user may have the chance to refuse treatment. Unfortunately, this is most likely to result in criminal charges. Being sent to rehab often allows addicted criminals the chance to reduce their sentences by sobering up and making a commitment to stay clean.

Intake

Intake is the next step in the rehab process, which generally occurs as soon as the patient comes into contact with someone from the treatment center. This could mean the receptionist at the front desk, an authority, or even someone who works at the center picking them up from the airport.

The intake process is designed to maintain the safety of the patient, the facility, and all of the people involved. It's basically a series of different administrative processes, such as paperwork, that help to clarify the intent and needs of the person going through treatment.

Intake processes will be a bit different at each facility, and will vary from patient to patient. However, the basic process is often quite similar. These things include:

Filling Out Paperwork

Most paperwork is done during the admission process, but there may be some additional paperwork that needs to be filled out and filed before the patient can begin to attend rehab.

You may need to fill out insurance or payment information. If you're going through rehab as part of a legal formality, there is likely additional paperwork that you're going to need to fill out.

Inspection / Search

Generally, your belongings will be searched before you're fully accepted into the facility. It's very important to everyone at the facility that nothing harmful or destructive be allowed into the facility.

Administrators don't want anything like drugs, weapons, or contraband on the property.

Things like these can put everyone at the facility at risk. There are also usually a number of items that are prohibited at rehab. The list of prohibited items will vary from center to center. Some of the most commonly refused items include:

- Drugs and alcohol, including non-prescribed medication, and drug paraphernalia
- Offensive clothing or belongings, anything with profanity or drug glorification
- Weapons or anything that could obviously cause damage
- Pornography

- Video games, computers, portable DVD players and other electronics may be banned
- Candles, incense, lighters, or anything that is flammable

Questions & Questionnaires

You will likely be able to take this time to ask any questions of your intake worker. They'll be able to help you get a better grasp of what to expect. You can also get an idea of your daily schedule. This is also an opportunity for you to connect with one of the staff members that you may be seeing many times over the next few months.

They might be asking questions, too.

While the most serious and in-depth questioning usually occurs during the next stage (assessment) it's quite normal that intake workers ask you a few questions. This often comes in the form of a questionnaire which you'll be able to answer relatively quickly.

This helps to identify your specific needs and can help prepare your

assessment worker for you. You will likely be asked about your substance abuse history, your goals, your finances, and your expectations during the treatment.

Assessment

Assessment is the phase during which your treatment worker will identify all your specific needs. Assessment is similar, in some ways, to the intake process. However, assessment is generally much more in-depth.

It's important to note that, in some cases, an assessment can be performed prior to actually signing up and doing your intake. Also known as a substance abuse evaluation, this can help you determine whether or not it's even worth your time to go to treatment.

Nonetheless, assessments generally follow similar procedures regardless of when they occur. These procedures include:

Screening

Screening is a process that's used to help determine the nature of your addiction. It also helps to identify any co-occurring disorders, such as depression or anxiety, which may be contributing to the problem.

Screening often involves a simple set of yes or no questions. Your

answers to these questions will determine the results of your screening process and lead into the next stage of the assessment.

Assessment

The actual assessment part aims to identify the specifics of your issue. It will help you understand the severity and depth of your addiction and any other co-occurring disorders. Here, you will help the staff develop your specific treatment plan so that you can be confident moving forward in your treatment.

Some of the questions in the assessment may relate to your past experiences or your future goals. They will likely want a fairly detailed history of your drug use and your family's history with drugs or alcohol. They may also want to hear your goals for the future.

You may also be asked to complete a drug test.

Follow-Up and Referral

These parts of the assessment only occur if you're being assessed prior to actually applying to rehab.

A follow-up generally occurs after the initial assessment if the patient has been determined to be in need of additional treatment, such as counseling or therapy. Follow-ups aren't always required and sometimes treatment can proceed without one.

The referral stage occurs when someone has been assessed and deemed to be in need of treatment. They will be referred to a treatment center that has the necessary staff and facilities required to treat their specific problem.

Detox

Detox is the first phase of actual treatment, though it's not always necessary. Detox is only required for people who are physically addicted to drugs or alcohol.

This is because some drugs and alcohol can cause withdrawal symptoms. These are a series of uncomfortable and unpleasant physical and mental symptoms that can make life difficult for the recovering addict.

It can be mentally and emotionally reassuring to attend detox. It can also be life-saving. There are several reasons that you might want to participate in detox.

Medication

Some detox facilities will prescribe you with temporary doses of medications to help ease the symptoms of your withdrawal. These medications are often addictive themselves, but the healthcare workers at the detox facility are aware of this. They will prescribe just enough

medication to ease your withdrawal symptoms without compounding the problem.

Some detox facilities will prescribe sleeping pills, anxiety-fighting medication, or relaxants to soothe various symptoms of withdrawal.

Medical Care

The most important facet of detox is the medical care that is provided. While most withdrawal symptoms won't kill you - in fact, most of them will rarely lead to any long-term damage - some withdrawal symptoms can be fatal.

This is mostly in the case of GABAergic drugs, like alcohol, benzodiazepines (anxiety-fighting medications) or barbiturates. These drugs affect a certain neurotransmitter system that is responsible for helping to prevent over-excitation in the nervous system.

When you withdraw from a GABAergic drug, your body becomes unable to prevent these excitatory responses. That makes you more prone to having seizures. If you go through serious enough withdrawal, these seizures can be fatal.

Fortunately, medical professionals will be able to provide medical assistance and medication to help prevent serious seizures.

Emotional Support

Not all detox facilities will have mental health workers on site, but some of them do. They will be able to help talk you through some of the more difficult mental and emotional aspects of rehab and withdrawal.

Regardless of whether or not there are trained mental health workers, it can be comforting to know that you are in a facility with all of your basic needs taken care of. Many people struggle to get sober on their own because the withdrawal symptoms are so severe that they decide to relapse instead.

Inpatient care

Inpatient care is not always necessary, but for many, it's the fundamental aspect of treatment.

Inpatient care is different from outpatient care, which we will discuss in detail later. Inpatient care, however, is often required for people who have struggled with serious addictions.

A number of things are included in inpatient care, such as:

Therapy

When you are attending inpatient care, you will regularly get to speak with a therapist. They will help to guide you through your treatment and

ensure that you have the necessary skills to pursue your recovery on your own.

Group Meetings

Group meetings are a great way to connect with other people who are in a similar situation. Group meetings in rehab are generally led by a therapist who directs the conversation. The recovering addicts are then left to pursue any ideas that they may feel are worth discussing.

Room and Board

Since you're staying at the facility, your room and board will be covered by the cost of your treatment. You will be staying on site, and your meals will be provided with you. If you have any special dietary restrictions or considerations, you'll discuss that with your intake worker prior to actually being sent to treatment.

What is the Difference Between Inpatient and Outpatient?

Many people wonder what the difference between inpatient and outpatient rehab is. Both forms of treatment are developed to help recovering addicts learn the skills that they need to thrive without drugs

or alcohol. However, there are many differences between the two programs.

Detox or Not?

Detox is not necessarily a part of rehab. It is generally a precursor program that people go through before they actually attend rehab.

Detox generally lasts for 3, 5, or 7 days depending on the intensity of the patients' addiction. This is always done before they are committed to an actual rehab program.

Detox helps to ensure that people aren't going through withdrawal when they are committed to rehab. If this is the case, it would be very difficult for them to successfully attend their meetings or courses. Even if they were able to attend, they would unlikely be able to participate or absorb information.

People who have been struggling with addictions to drugs like heroin, benzodiazepines, or alcohol should definitely go to rehab before attending treatment. These drugs can lead to serious withdrawal symptoms. Some of them can even cause seizures, which can be fatal if you don't have medical supervision.

Inpatient Rehab

Inpatient rehab is a more serious form of treatment. It's generally recommended for people who have struggled with a very serious addiction, or for people who have already attended outpatient rehab without having any success.

Inpatient rehab is much more intensive in the sense that you cannot leave the facility once you're committed. There are a number of pros and cons to this.

Pros:

- You are under the care of medically trained professionals all the time, who will be able to look after you. They can help ensure that you are properly cared for and, if the need arises, can prescribe you medication in the case of an emergency such as a panic attack or health problem.
- You will constantly be surrounded by people who are also in recovery. This can be encouraging and will help keep your mind on your goals. You will have very few distractions aside from your dedication to get sober.
- You will not have to travel to access your classes or meetings. This means that you won't have to pass any areas that might be triggering, such as a liquor store or an old drug hangout.

Cons:

- It can get lonely during inpatient rehab. Different facilities have different visitation rights, and sometimes you may not see your friends or family for months at a time.
- Inpatient rehab generally costs a lot more than outpatient rehab due to the increased expenses of room, board, food, and constant medical supervision.

Outpatient Rehab

Outpatient rehab is a good choice for people who are struggling with mild-to-moderate addictions. If this is your first time seeking rehab, then outpatient is probably the way to go. It's less intensive, less expensive, and easier to manage.

Like inpatient rehab, however, there are a number of pros and cons associated with outpatient rehab.

Pros:

- Outpatient rehab is less intensive and doesn't require that you dedicate your entire life to the program. This means that people are able to maintain their jobs, their school, and their family lives without becoming unavailable.
- Outpatient rehab is much more affordable than inpatient rehab.
- As long as you attend your meetings and course, you're free to come and go as you like.

Cons:

- Since you're able to come and go from the facility, there's nothing to stop you from relapsing. This is especially true if you have to drive, walk, or take public transit past an area where you used to use drugs.
- Since you're not living at the facility, it can be easy to get caught up in old habits. Many people prefer inpatient rehab because of the intensive focus placed on their recovery.



Call us now for a free 15 minute consultation!
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