

# + Substance Use Treatment

If you or a loved one are struggling with an alcohol or drug problem, it's important to know that it is treatable. But it's not always easy to understand how to get help. The brief overview below gives you a snapshot of how the process works.

## The place to start is with an assessment by a qualified substance abuse professional.

Trained health care professionals use a range of assessment tools to identify a substance use disorder. They can then refer the person to an appropriate treatment option.

## Treatment programs

**Inpatient treatment for detoxification.** If there is a potential for withdrawal symptoms, it may be necessary to start with inpatient detox. Detox provides medical supervision and intervention to prevent a medical emergency during withdrawal from the substance. This is most often needed for depressants, such as alcohol and narcotics. This inpatient treatment includes daily programs to address the substance disorder.

After detox is completed safely, the person can track to either an inpatient or outpatient program.

**Inpatient and residential treatment programs** are often called "rehab." These highly structured environments offer safe housing, medical care, assorted therapies, and daily programs for a set period of time, often thirty days.

**Intensive outpatient programs** may be a good option for those with milder or less long-term issues. These group programs meet several times a week, or daily, for several hours. They provide the level of intensity that many people need.

## Treatment may involve...

**Behavioral evaluation and counseling**, which address mental health issues and help a person build skills for sober living. These may be individual sessions, as well as family sessions.

**Medications** may also be used to help restore brain balance. In addition, they may reduce risk of relapse once a person has stopped using. They may be most effective when combined with behavioral counseling.

**Peer support, such as sponsors and groups (e.g. AA, NA)**, play a role in treatment and in ongoing recovery. They're free and available in most communities.

## Be aware

**Dual diagnosis is common.** Very often, someone with a substance use disorder will also be dealing with a mental health concern. This may be a factor in determining the appropriate care setting.

**Relapse is also common and doesn't mean failure.** Recovery is a process that can last a lifetime. It may take many attempts to find the right mix of strategies that will allow a person to successfully maintain sobriety.