

iAddiction :

THE
ADDICTION
TREATMENT PROCESS

A Step-by-Step Guide

A Rehab Guide



It seems that life turns upside down the moment it's discovered that addiction is ruining the life and health of a loved one. In that moment, feelings of confusion, discouragement and concern become so overwhelming that they're difficult to bear. Yet, it's clear that something must be done. Anyone who's witnessed a family member or friend succumb to addiction knows that the immensity of the situation is greater than the help they alone can offer. An individual whose life has been torn apart by drug or alcohol abuse may have even tried to quit on his or her own. But what can you expect during the addiction treatment process? What makes an effective treatment? There are answers, and we want to help you understand them with our drug and alcohol rehab guide.

Sometimes Efforts to Help Fall Short...

It's no one's fault if efforts made out of love and concern fall short and the person addicted to alcohol or drugs continues on a downward spiral. Alcoholism and drug addiction are forms of chronic disease, requiring professional treatment for the person to overcome a battle with substance abuse and achieve sobriety. There are many ways to fight addiction, and trying to choose the addiction treatment process that's right can add to the confusion. In most cases, in-patient addiction treatment provides the user with the complete care needed to break free from the tight grasp of substance abuse and work toward a life of sobriety. Our rehab guide is designed to help you navigate the process and find treatment that truly works.

Don't Try it Alone

The process of obtaining help for one's self or another individual is not one that needs to be taken care of alone. Compassionate, trained counselors and healthcare workers help users take the first step toward overcoming addiction every single day. All hope is not lost for a family member or friend; this rehab guide can help those fighting addiction in their own lives or in the lives of others figure out what to do next to obtain the help needed to win the battle against alcohol or drug addiction.

Step 1: Realizing A Professional Addiction Treatment Process is Necessary

Similar to any other serious illness, addiction is a condition that requires medical attention and professional expertise. Although some users try to quit drugs or alcohol on their own, the consequences of doing so can range from uncomfortable to deadly. Professional treatment for addiction addresses the illness effectively, thoroughly and safely.

- **Substance Abuse Changes Brain Chemistry.** As experimentation with drugs or alcohol becomes a full-blown addiction, the pleasure center of the brain begins to associate good feelings with use of the substance. Eventually, the body and brain need greater amounts of the substance taken more frequently to achieve anything near the same initial high. When a person stops using drugs or alcohol cold turkey, the altered brain chemistry sends messages of physical and emotional pain to the user, making it difficult and dangerous to quit alone.
- **Addiction Affects Physical Health.** Besides the side effects caused by addiction, the individual's health will become compromised with continued substance abuse. Lack of appetite and sleep, insufficient self-care and the stress put upon the user's heart, lungs and other organs puts him or her at great risk of physical conditions, disease and even death. These issues can't be addressed



sufficiently without the support of medical professionals.

- **Mental Health is Impacted by Addiction.** The ability to make sound decisions for one's self depends greatly on the ability to think reasonably and problem solve effectively. Side effects such as hallucinations, paranoia and depression are amongst many mental health side effects that can contribute toward a user's continuing behavior. Depending upon the substance being abused, mental illness can become a long-term health issue from prolonged drug or alcohol abuse.
- **Untreated Illnesses Eventually Become Worse.** If the addiction progresses without appropriate treatment, the user's physical and mental health will continue to deteriorate. Healthcare professionals can provide effective solutions for mental and physical health issues so the individual can work toward regaining the best possible health.
- **Support is Vital to Successful Recovery.** No matter how resolved an individual is to get help for them self or a loved one, it's impossible for most people to overcome addiction without appropriate support. People that are trained to address addiction and have the experience and expertise to do so compassionately are able to provide the support needed for recovery. Love and support from family members and friends are important, but they are seldom accompanied by the knowledge and skills needed to help someone break free from addiction.

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Step 2: Approaching an Individual About Substance Abuse Treatment



If one of the most difficult situations faced is discovering that a family member or friend suffers from addiction, then speaking to the individual about it is probably the second most difficult. Approaching the discussion from a point of love will result in gaining more ground than putting the user on the defensive with an accusatory tone of voice. The tips in this rehab guide can help with the task of talking to someone about seeking help for his or her substance abuse.

one's behalf as soon as possible after the addiction is discovered. Allow time to calm down and collect thoughts so the user can be approached out of love and concern, rather than anger and fear.

- **Knowing When to Intervene.** There's no such thing as perfect timing when it comes to confronting someone about their addiction. But, because addiction becomes progressively worse, it's best to intervene on a loved



- **What to Say to A Loved One.** Words often fail when faced with a situation as disheartening as drug or alcohol addiction. Begin by letting the individual know about feelings of concern, while being honest enough to say that the addiction has been found out. Maintain a calm tone of voice regardless of the reaction, but be firm in the fact that help needs to be found.
- **Dealing with Denial.** Denial is a common defense mechanism used by most people who've succumbed to drug or alcohol addiction. The user doesn't want to readily admit to substance abuse because the resulting feelings of shame and embarrassment are more than he or she can bear in addition to dealing with the effects of

substance abuse and addiction. Gentle but firm insistence that help is needed is a smart approach. It's possible the individual may get angry, upset or refuse to go for help, but family members and friends can and should continue to discuss the issue with the user until help can be obtained.



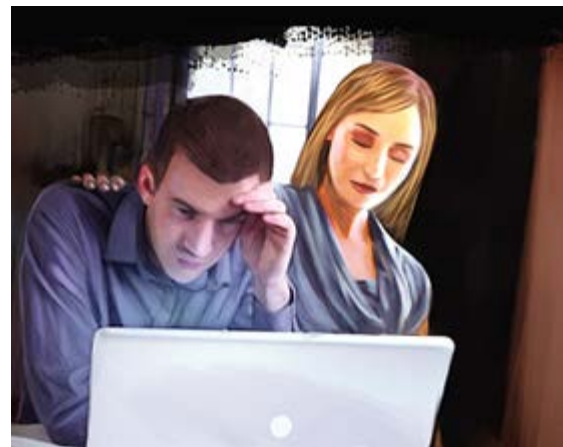
- **Leave the Door to Communication Open.** An individual in the throes of addiction is likely to refuse help time and again, as well as not wanting to talk about the problem. Make it clear that the lines of communication are open, and be available to talk any time. If the first discussion about addiction and seeking help falls on deaf ears, try again. Even though it seems that the words aren't being heard, they are planting seeds of thought that can lead the user to want help.
- **Making a Decision on Someone Else's Behalf.** Parents or loved ones of children or those who suffer from mental illness may find themselves having to make the difficult decision of admitting the user into a treatment facility even if he or she doesn't want to go. As the advocate of a minor or person with health needs, parents have an obligation and a right to seek treatment on the user's behalf.



Step 3: Figuring out Where to Turn When Help is Needed

Coping with addiction is so overwhelming that knowing when and where to turn for help can feel mind-boggling. Since time is of the essence when fighting addiction, it's best to step right into the task of reaching out. Doing so combats vehement denial on the part of the user, as well as the desire to believe that a family member or friend is okay and doesn't need help.

- **Obtaining Support and Guidance for One's Self.** As the family member of a substance abuser, a person must deal with an onslaught of emotion while trying to help an individual in need. To obtain treatment for the user, it's vital that those concerned about him or her seek support for themselves, too. As they start with their own support system, they can quickly make a plan for helping the user.
- **Resources That Can Help.** Family members, friends, a counselor or clergy member make good starting points if a person finds them self needing to seek treatment options on behalf of a loved one. The guidance obtained from another caring individual can steer the user and his or her family toward professional addiction treatment help.
- **Connecting with a Source of Help.** Family guidance or professional counsel should point users and those who care about them toward a professional treatment facility. Ultimately, this is the place where the most thorough and individualized care can be received. There are many substance abuse rehabilitation centers across the country. Once a person knows what to look for in a treatment center, he or she can choose the facility that's most appropriate.
- **What to Do Next.** A phone call or visit is all it takes to begin the process of obtaining help for one's self or another person. Initially, the person needing treatment will meet with an intake counselor to discuss the addiction and how it's affected the individual's health and life.
- **The Journey to Sobriety Begins.** The conversation between user and intake counselor may last only an hour, but it's the first step of the journey that leads to sobriety. A great deal of bravery and courage goes into reaching this point, and that same courage will help the user and those around him or her get through the recovery process. Having the support of caring professionals in one's corner makes all the difference.



Step 4: Looking For a Treatment Facility

There are specific components that are essential to a successful treatment program. But within those components, there's room to make slight changes to ensure the program fits the person involved in it. An effective treatment facility approaches each person as an individual with the intention of devising a program to meet their needs.

- **Advocating by Asking Questions.** Even before an individual meets with the intake counselor, the person seeking help on his or her behalf can start asking questions when they speak with a counselor on the phone or in-person.
- **Programming that Meets Individual Needs.** While learning about the way the program operates and how it can help a loved one, it's also wise to ask how the facility will meet the individual user's needs. An effective, professional rehab center will have no problem talking about what they do to tailor services so they address the particular user's issues.
- **All-Encompassing Treatment Components.** The right treatment facility will help the individual overcoming addiction become free from drugs, while also providing medical care, therapy and classes.
- **Family Support.** Healthcare providers and counselors involved in helping people overcome addiction understand that supporting the family members is equally important. Addiction ravages families and, in their own way, everyone suffers. A facility that offers family meetings and counseling helps set the course to recovery by facilitating a family's ability to work together to overcome addiction.
- **Aftercare Availability.** An effective rehab center offers counseling and classes for those who've completed residential treatment. This essential component helps individuals strengthen the foundation of sobriety they've started in rehab by building on to the life skills and support acquired. Aftercare helps those in recovery learn how to avoid triggers and the temptation that leads to relapse.



Step 5: Getting the Right Treatment

Addiction is a serious illness and it must be treated effectively in a closely monitored environment. The right treatment center enables the recovering user to work toward accountability, while providing a safety net. A complete program includes specific components tailored to meet the individual's needs. Allow this rehab guide to help you understand what needs must be met and what form of rehab helps those needs.

- **24/7 Care.** Residential care provides a recovering person with round-the-clock healthcare when it's needed and enough supervision to ensure that the person in treatment can recover without temptation. Those working at a treatment facility are trained to work with people suffering from addiction, so they have the insight needed to understand this challenging disease.
- **Safe Detoxification.** Before someone suffering from addiction can begin the recovery process, their body must be rid of the drug or alcohol that was being abused. Detoxification happens in a safe, closely monitored environment where the user is kept as comfortable as possible while his or her body becomes free of the substance abused.
- **Individualized Physical and Mental Health Care.** Addiction often goes hand-in-hand with physical or mental illness. Whether other health issues occur in conjunction with substance abuse or because of it, recovery from addiction depends on these issues being treatment. As

the user receives appropriate treatment for health issues, he or she becomes better-equipped to work toward sobriety.

- **Therapeutic Treatment.** Counseling and therapy are vital parts of an effective addictions treatment program. An individual at a rehab facility will attend individual counseling sessions, group counseling with peers who are also overcoming addiction and family counseling. Each type of counseling helps the recovering user address different parts of addiction and learn how to overcome them.
- **Life Skills Learning Opportunities.** Workshops and classes help those in treatment learn how to deal with life's stressors in healthier ways. They can also provide practical teaching to help the individual handle day-to-day tasks in the most effective way. The life skills taught build upon one another, giving the person in recovery a set of tools to use once they finish treatment.

Step 6: Successfully Rehabilitating

Learning more about addiction treatment can reassure people that a treatment facility is the best and safest place for a user to receive treatment. After learning more in this rehab guide, the next step involves taking action.

- **Make a Decision.** All the discussion in the world won't amount to anything if a decision isn't made. It's not easy to decide to go into rehab or bring a family member there. But deciding to get help is the most important thing a person can do for them self or someone else.
- **Take it One Step at a Time.** Looking at the entire process of recovering from alcohol or drug addiction is very overwhelming. In fact, it's likely to feel like something you can't achieve. Rather than worrying about the big picture, it's better to focus on each day as they come and get through hour-by-hour or minute-by-minute.
- **Reach Out Daily.** Each day is a new opportunity to gain support in the fight to live a sober life. Asking for help is difficult, but learning to do so sets the recovering user up for a better chance at sober living.
- **Apply What's Been Learned.** Every day brings opportunities to apply what's been learned in counseling or classes. Although practice may not make perfect, it does make it easier to carry on what's been learned once the individual returns home.
- **Support Doesn't Mean Enabling.** As a family member, it's essential to learn the difference between supporting someone overcoming addiction and enabling the addiction. During family counseling sessions and meetings, loved ones and friends have an opportunity to learn how they can support an individual after treatment is completed without making it easy for them to return to substance abuse.

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Step 7: Look Ahead to the Future

Obtaining proper treatment is the first step toward living a sober life. Being clean and sober requires daily application of all that was learned during the time in rehabilitation.

- **Completing Treatment.** Even if the individual feels they've recovered, it's important to complete the entire treatment program to build the strongest foundation possible for sober living.
- **Relapse Prevention.** Once back home and surrounded by normal life, the recovering user's support system becomes a vital part of relapse prevention.
- **A Treatment Facility's Role in Aftercare.** A drug rehabilitation center with a full treatment program will also offer aftercare services. These may vary depending on the facility and a person's needs, but often include counseling, therapeutic workshops and life skills classes. Some recovering users who complete in-patient care go on to an outpatient program as part of their aftercare plan.
- **Making Aftercare a Way of Life.** Sobriety is a lifestyle, not a one-time fix that works forever. Being mindful of health, avoiding temptation and reducing stress are all a part of working the program to maintain sober living.
- **Start at the Beginning.** Just as family members watch dreams die when a loved one succumbs to addiction, they can also be fearful of having hope for the future once the individual seeks treatment. Sobriety is a new chance for everyone involved. Wipe the slate clean and begin anew, while doing all that needs to be done to remain sober or support a loved one who's recovered from addiction.



The Recovery Process Can Start Now

Healing from the damage and distress caused by addiction can begin now as the first step is taken toward seeking help. Whether treatment is sought for one's self or someone else, finding the right treatment facility provides the first building block toward a foundation that upholds sober living. It's a hard step to make, but one that can have a lasting impact on the user's life.

Start by Seeking Help

Most people don't hesitate to seek medical help for illness, pain or a broken bone. Addiction is an illness that carries pain and brokenness along with it for the user and his or her family. Seeking help is not an admittance of weakness or character flaw. Rather, it's the smartest move one can make to help them self or someone else work toward living the healthiest, happiest life possible.

The Right Treatment Works

Allow the information in this rehab guide to help in making one of the most important steps possible toward overcoming addiction. The time invested in receiving personalized care and learning important life skills at the right treatment center can turn a life around and give hope where there was none. Although seeking treatment at a rehabilitation center feels like the most difficult decision

a person can face, it's a bold, courageous step that denies addiction the right to rule over a person any longer, and making that step is the most loving thing a person can do for them self or a loved one.

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