



Getting Treatment

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

If you are seeking treatment for a mental health or substance abuse problem, you can start by talking with people you know, such as family members, friends, school teachers or counselors, clergy, and your doctor. Your health insurance company can also give you a list of providers. If your employer has an employee assistance program, you can get a referral there.

Where to Begin?

To begin searching on your own, check your local phone book. In the yellow pages, look under:

- Mental health
- Drug abuse and addiction
- Physicians/psychiatry
- Psychologists
- Counselors
- Social workers

In the government blue pages, check the State, county, and city listings for:

- Mental health
- Drug abuse
- Addiction
- Substance abuse

To search the Internet, you can use any of the terms offered above with the name of your State, county, or city and the word "treatment."

Find What Is Right for You

There are many choices for getting good help with substance abuse and mental health problems. When you start looking, consider the choices carefully to make sure you get exactly the right kind of help.

Choose a Counselor

First, you want to ask if the professional is an expert in the area that is of most concern for you or your family. For example, is the problem depression, addiction, your child's behavior, thoughts of suicide, or some other problem? You should feel comfortable with the counselor.

Consider Types of Treatment

There are many types of treatment. Some focus more on changes in thoughts or behavior, while others focus more on interpersonal relationships or self awareness. Professionals often have written or online material available, or can talk with you about their treatment methods. Depending on the problem, treatment can be very brief, or extend for weeks or months.

Decide on a Treatment Setting

Treatment settings vary. For example, outpatient sessions usually take place in a therapist's office. These sessions can be one-on-one, or with a group of people with similar problems. Sometimes family members are included.

Residential and inpatient treatment programs also are available. These programs require living in the facility, and the treatment is much more extensive.

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Learn How Medicine May Help

If medicine is recommended, it will be prescribed by a physician or in some States—by a nurse practitioner or psychologist. In mental health treatment, medication may be used to stabilize moods or to improve concentration. Medication can be useful in substance abuse treatment to reduce drug cravings or to block the effects of drugs.

Make a Choice

What is most important in all of these choices is for you to state your preference. Or let the professional know you are not yet sure what would be the best choice and that you want to talk more about the options.

Ask About Treatment Costs

You will need to find out the cost of treatment and what is reimbursed by your health insurance or public assistance. Before scheduling an appointment, ask the provider to explain the costs and benefits that will apply to you. If the treatment is too expensive, ask them for referrals to a “sliding scale” clinic or provider.

Some insurance plans restrict reimbursement by limiting the type of treatment, length of treatment, or eligible providers. You will probably have to pay at least a portion of the bill, often referred to as “co-pays.”

Consider Self Help Groups

Self help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous or those offered by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) can also be a resource. Their meeting times and locations can often be found listed in a local newspaper or online.

Start the Road to Recovery

The more you understand about what you want to change, the more likely you are to find the right professional. Once you find the best treatment program and provider, along with affordable fees, you are ready to start treatment.

This information is to help you start on the road to recovery.

While in treatment:

- ✓ keep track of the progress being made toward your goals.

If you ever feel that you are not making the progress you are hoping for:

- ✓ talk it over with the provider. You have the right to get answers to your questions, and it is okay to make a change.

Remember, your goals are worth working for. Don't give up if it gets really hard, instead talk to someone you trust. In the end, what matters is getting help that works for you or your family member.

For Web resources, go to www.samhsa.gov

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) can help you find treatment services throughout the United States. Call SAMHSA's Toll-Free Referral Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.ct.gov/dmhas/LIB/dmhas/prevention/cy spi/gettingtreatment.pdf