



General Information on What to Look For in an Intensive Addiction Treatment Program

TREATMENT LEVELS



SEARCH



TAILORED TREATMENT PLANS



LIFE SKILLS



Partnering for Better Chronic Pain Management and Safer Opioid Use: A Knowledge Hub for People With Disability and Their Providers

Introduction | Although most people are treated for opioid use disorder in a provider's office, some people do better if they go to treatment programs that are just for addiction. These are called *intensive addiction treatment programs*. Intensive addiction treatment programs can help people who are coping with more severe addiction, mental health conditions, and living situations that don't support recovery.

Types of Intensive Addiction Treatment Programs

Intensive treatment programs have a team of addiction specialists. These specialists offer a variety of programs and services.

- For example, intensive treatment programs may have a psychiatrist, mental health and addiction counselors, nurses and a medical doctor, a wellness counselor, a nutritionist, and peer counselors.
- Services may include individual and group therapy, family and couples therapy, addiction education, skills-building sessions, treatments like music therapy, medication management, and peer support groups.

There are different types and levels of intensive treatment programs. These programs look at each person's situation to decide what level of care meets their needs. Outpatient treatment is the most common.

- **Outpatient setting.** The person attends individual sessions and group meetings. The number of sessions a person attends each week and the types of services they get depend on their needs.
- **Residential setting.** People being treated for addiction live together and support each other as they go through treatment. Not everyone qualifies for this level of care. This setting is for people who struggle to stay drug free or who have an unstable living situation.

Evaluating Intensive Treatment Programs

Not all addiction treatment programs are the same. Be informed about the treatment programs that will best meet your needs. Spend time looking for a program with a good reputation. Program staff will recommend a level of treatment after evaluating a person's physical and mental health needs and their living situation.

What to Look For in a Licensed Addiction Treatment Program

Topic	What to Know	Questions to Ask
Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accredited program meets certain performance standards. <i>Accreditation</i> means that a program shows results, quality, and value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the program accredited by the Joint Commission or the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)?
Staff-to-Person Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff ratios should be low enough to ensure each person can see a counselor when they need to. A lower ratio means that counselors have time to give every person the attention they need.¹ Ratios may be as high as one staff person to 75 people and as low as one staff person to 30 people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the ratio of staff to persons treated?
Licensed and Credentialed Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff who are credentialed and licensed meet national standards of professional practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many licensed and credentialed staff are there? How many staff are not licensed and credentialed?
Multidisciplinary Treatment Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mix of licensed professionals can help with addiction at the levels of mind, body, and spirit. 	<p>Does the program have staff with different skills? Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addiction counselor Mental health counselor Medical doctor Nurse Psychiatrist Spiritual care counselor Peer counselor Wellness specialist Nutritionist Disability advisor
Medication to Treat Opioid Use Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many treatment programs do not prescribe medications for opioid use disorder. People who take medication for opioid use disorder are more likely to stay in treatment.² 	<p>Does the program prescribe medication to treat opioid use disorder?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, what type? If no, can you see a separate provider who prescribes buprenorphine (byoo-puh-NOR-feen) while you are enrolled in the program?
Mental Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with chronic pain and disability often have anxiety and depression. They may use opioids or alcohol to cope with how they feel. 	<p>Does the program employ staff who can diagnose and treat mental health conditions?</p>
Tailored Treatment Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quality program does an in-depth assessment and then tailors the treatment for each person's needs. 	<p>How does the program tailor treatment to fit the individual?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do they offer supports for people with disabilities, like accessible bathrooms, sign language interpreters, and easy access into the building? <p>See the <i>Knowledge Hub</i> resource Accommodations to Look For in Substance Use Treatment Programs for more information about what to look for in an accessible treatment program.</p>

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Life Skills, Aftercare Planning, and Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After finishing treatment, it is important to have a support system that encourages new behaviors to prevent relapse. 	<p>Does the program offer services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain management skills to help you cope with chronic pain? Family programs to help family members learn how to support you? Services after discharge to support lasting recovery? Life skills, like cooking and managing money, to help you live independently?



Resources

- To find a licensed treatment facility, go to the [Addiction Treatment Services Locator](#).
- To see ratings of drug and alcohol treatment programs in a limited number of cities, go to [Help.org](#).
- [Step-by-Step Guides to Finding Treatment for Drug Use Disorders](#). Learn how to recognize a substance use disorder and how to find help. This web page gives information on treatment programs, support groups, and affordable help.
- [Answers to Common Questions About Accessing Opioid Use Disorder Treatment](#). This *Knowledge Hub* resource gives information about paying for a treatment program and finding a program that accommodates people with disabilities.



For more information visit: Partnering for Better Chronic Pain Management and Safer Opioid Use: A Knowledge Hub for People With Disability and Their Providers | [KnowledgeHub.air.org](https://www.knowledgehub.air.org)

Endnotes

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2015). *Federal guidelines for opioid treatment programs*. Publication No. (SMA) PEP15-FEDGUIDEOTP. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/pep15-fedguideotp.pdf>
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *Medications for opioid use disorder save lives*. The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK541393/>

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