

Recovery Starts Here

A Guide for Families Lost in Addiction



AddictionResource
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CHAPTER ONE

How to tell if You or Your Loved One Is Struggling with Addiction

Addiction can sneak up on you or a loved one, slowly derailing the lives of those it affects.

Many people struggle with addiction in isolation, afraid or unable to recognize they need help. Knowing the signs of addiction is key to getting treatment early and stopping the disease before it progresses too far.

This chapter will cover the most common signs of addiction to help you identify whether you or a loved one may be developing or struggling with a substance use disorder (SUD).



What exactly is addiction?

Addiction is a disease with medical, psychological, and spiritual components that can dramatically and negatively impact its victims and their loved ones.

Drug or alcohol addiction is a chronic disorder characterized by the compulsive use of a substance and the harmful consequences that result. Substance addictions are also called substance use disorders (SUDs).

Medical and clinical experts in the United States use the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) to diagnose addiction. The DSM-5 lists 11 characteristics that define addiction:

Using more for longer:

Consuming larger amounts of the substance for more time than originally intended

Unable to quit:

Unsuccessful attempts to cut down or quit using the substance

Spending a lot of time using or recovering:

Spending increasingly more time obtaining, using, or recovering from the effects of the substance

Cravings:

Intense urges to use the substance

Neglecting obligations:

Ignoring responsibilities at work, school, and/or home due to substance use

Social issues:

Continuing the use of the substance despite it causing problems in your social life and interpersonal relationships

Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities:

No longer participating in hobbies, events, or social circles that were once of great interest to you

Risky use:

Using the substance despite it being physically dangerous or against the law

Health problems:

Continuing to use the substance despite the physical and mental health problems it causes

Tolerance:

Needing increased amounts of the substance to get the same effect

Withdrawal symptoms:

Experiencing negative physical and emotional symptoms when not using the substance

If an individual has met more than two of these criteria in the last year, they can be diagnosed with an addiction. The more they meet, the more severe the addiction.

COMMON SIGNS OF ADDICTION

Abnormal or neurotic behavior

Unexplained financial problems

Issues at school or work

Legal issues

Drastic changes in mood

Developing a tolerance for drugs or alcohol

Neglecting typical responsibilities

Loss of interest in hobbies or social activities

Health issues



According to licensed clinical social worker David Levin, a Certified Addiction Professional, some of the early warning signs of addiction include:

- Urgency to engage in a maladaptive (i.e., unstable, neurotic, abnormal) behavior, whether it's using alcohol/substances, overeating, shopping, gambling, sex, video games, or social media, to relieve emotional stress or other difficult feelings/emotions
- Experiencing financial, occupational, educational, relationship, and/or legal consequences as a result of the aforementioned maladaptive behaviors
- Drastic change in one's mood or behavior
- Increased tolerance for the substance (needing larger quantities to feel the same effect)
- Avoiding responsibilities or activities of daily living
- Becoming angry and argumentative when confronted
- Experiencing health consequences

These are general behaviors that may indicate you or your loved one is suffering from addiction.

However, each SUD has unique indicators based on the substance the individual is misusing.

Signs of Alcohol Addiction

Alcohol addiction, also known as alcoholism, is the most common substance use disorder in the world. Behaviors and thought patterns specific to alcohol addiction include:

- Binge drinking, or drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short amount of time
- Frequently drinking to extreme intoxication

- Acting significantly differently when under the influence of alcohol than when sober
- Experiencing tremors, or “the shakes,” when not drinking
- Hiding alcohol around the house, in the car, at work, or at school
- Having large numbers of empty alcohol containers either around the home or in the trash
- Minimizing drinking behaviors or their consequences

Signs of Opioid Addiction

Opioids and opiates are the leading causes of drug overdose and drug overdose deaths.

OPIOIDS COME IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS, INCLUDING:

- Illegal narcotics, like heroin (a Schedule 1 substance) and opium (a Schedule 2 substance)
- Prescription painkillers, like fentanyl, morphine, oxycodone, tramadol, and meperidine
- Cough medicines, like codeine and hydrocodone
- Medications used to treat opioid use disorder, like methadone and buprenorphine

COMMON SIGNS OF OPIOID ADDICTION:

- Physical marks on or around veins, known as “track marks,” that indicate intravenous drug use
- The presence of needles and syringes
- The presence of other drug paraphernalia, such as spoons, cotton, straws, or razor blades
- Frequent disappearances with odd excuses, such as repeatedly “using the bathroom”
- Appearing tired or “nodding out”
- Dark and sunken eyes
- Excessive itching or scratching
- Blue lips (a sign of potentially fatal overdose)
- Commonly experiencing flu-like symptoms

Signs of Stimulant Addiction

After opioids and alcohol, stimulants are the most common cause of fatal, drug-induced overdoses. Stimulants are a large category of drugs that include:

- Adderall
- Bath salts
- Cocaine
- Meth
- Certain weight loss medications
- Ritalin

COMMON SIGNS OF STIMULANT ADDICTION:

- Drug binges that can go on for days
- Being awake for excessively long periods, even for several days
- Increased energy and alertness
- Talkativeness
- Reduced appetite and weight loss
- Nasal issues like sniffing, runny noses, and nosebleeds
- Frequent sinus infections
- White powder or residue on the clothes and face

- The presence of drug paraphernalia, including pipes, “crack pipes,” needles, syringes, straws, small baggies, and razor blades
- Crushing pills into powder and either snorting or injecting them
- Worsening or extreme paranoia
- Neglect of personal appearance (e.g., tooth decay or open sores)
- Picking at skin
- Hyperfixation or hyperfocus

Signs of Marijuana Addiction

Marijuana is the most commonly abused drug in the world after alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco.

Marijuana is consumed in many ways, including vaping, smoking, eating, and skin patches. While there is growing debate as to the medical and recreational benefits of marijuana, it is undeniable that the drug is addictive when misused.

COMMON SIGNS OF MARIJUANA ADDICTION:

- Loss of ambition and motivation
- Memory loss or generally poor memory
- Frequent periods of intense hunger
- Frequent and uncontrollable laughter
- Routinely seeming excessively relaxed
- Frequent red eyes
- Frequently smelling like marijuana
- The presence of drug paraphernalia
Including: bongs, water pipes, rolling papers, vape pens and cartridges, and containers decorated with a five-pronged leaf

Signs of Inhalant Addiction

Inhalants are a broad category of substances that are grouped together by how they are used. Most inhalants are not produced to be consumed by humans, as they are intended for other purposes, such as construction, painting, or office work.

Some of the most commonly misused inhalants include:

- Aerosol sprays
- Chloroform
- Gasoline
- Glue
- Nail polish removers
- Nitrous oxide
- Paint thinners
- Poppers
Includes amyl nitrite and butyl nitrite
- Whippets

COMMON SIGNS OF INHALANT ADDICTION:

- Chemical odors on breath or clothing
- Paint or chemical stains on clothing, the face (especially under the nose), or the body
- The presence of inhalant products in larger quantities than otherwise expected
- Frequent signs of aberrant or intoxicated behavior
- Persistent signs of eye/nose irritation
- Frequent disorientation
- Frequent coughing or other signs of lung issues

Signs of Benzodiazepine Addiction

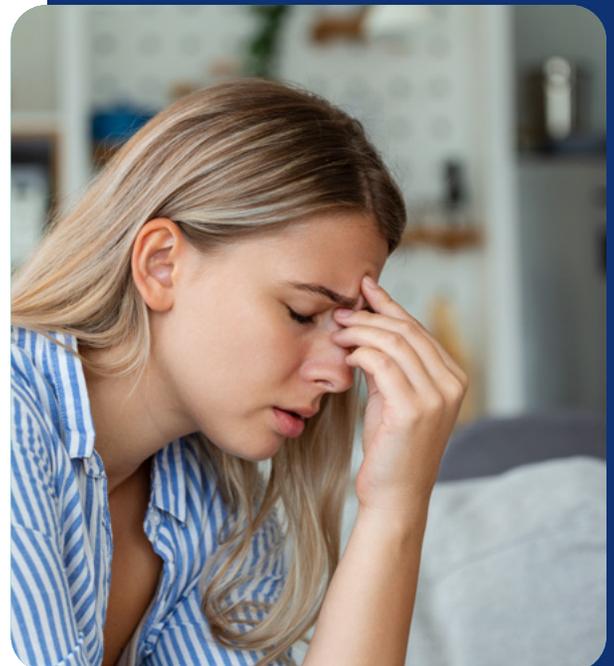
Benzodiazepines, or benzos, are some of the most commonly prescribed drugs in the world. Unfortunately, they are also some of the most addictive and deadly to withdraw from.

Examples of benzos include:

- Xanax
- Ativan
- Klonopin
- Valium
- Halcion

WARNING SIGNS OF BENZODIAZEPINE ADDICTION:

- Frequent extreme sedation or drowsiness
- Frequently appearing extremely drunk, even after drinking very little
- Muscle weakness
- Frequent pill usage
- Extreme calmness or emotional blunting
- Routinely going through prescriptions before they are due for a refill
- Use of benzodiazepines recreationally or without a prescription



Signs of Hallucinogen Addiction

Hallucinogens are a class of drugs characterized by the hallucinogenic effects they create in users. Hallucinogens are considerably less addictive than many other drugs, but they can still cause use disorders. Some of the most commonly misused hallucinogens include:

- LSD (acid)
- PCP (angel dust)
- MDMA (ecstasy)
- Ketamine
- Psilocybin (shrooms)
- Salvia
- DMT
- Mescaline
- Ayahuasca

COMMON SIGNS OF HALLUCINOGEN ADDICTION:

- Altered perceptions of reality
- Talk about seeing, hearing, or feeling things that aren't really there
- Loss of sense of time
- Intense emotional swings
- Distorted thought patterns
- Enhanced creativity
- Synesthesia (the blending or confusion of senses)
- Flashbacks or recurrent hallucinogenic effects without recent drug use
- Persistent psychological distress

What to Do if You Think You or Your Loved One May Be Struggling with Addiction

If you think you may have a substance use disorder, the best thing you can do is seek professional help.

If you think your loved one may be struggling with addiction, talk to them and encourage them to seek professional help.

Remember, the conversation is often difficult and may not go the way you hope.

David Levin, the licensed clinical social worker and Certified Addiction Professional, has some tips for talking to a loved one about their potential addiction. He says to be caring, compassionate, and empathetic—but also assertive.

You might start by addressing the changes in behavior, saying something like, “The family has noticed you’ve been drinking more of late. What’s going on? Is there something you want to talk about?”

Or, Levin says you can be more direct by saying something like, “We love you and are here to support you, but only if you are willing to get help, because it hurts us to watch you continue to engage in these self-destructive behaviors.”

Levin offers a final quote from well-known physician and addiction specialist Dr. Gabor Maté:

“Never ask why the addiction. Ask why the pain.”

Here are some additional tips for having a conversation with your loved one, or yourself, about addiction and seeking treatment:

Educate yourself about their specific addiction before the conversation.

Seek professional guidance or intervention.

Use specific examples.

Highlight the impact of their substance use on relationships.

Never blame or accuse.

Don't be too hard or judgmental.

Always remember that addiction is a disease, not a choice.

Set and maintain appropriate boundaries.

Be patient but persistent.

Offer to investigate treatment options together.

Be supportive but firm.

Address fears and concerns.

Share success stories.

Focus on the positive outcomes.

There is hope!
Call now for help.

1 (888) 433-0236

All calls are confidential and free.

<https://www.addictionresource.com/>



CHAPTER TWO

10 Common Misconceptions About Addiction and Rehab (and Why They're Wrong)

The negative stigma of addiction and rehab comes mostly from people misunderstanding the disease and its treatment. Because of these misconceptions, too many people lose hope and never seek the help they need.

We are determined to debunk common myths about addiction and rehab so you and your loved ones know there is hope and help available, no matter your situation.

In fact, we went straight to the source and surveyed 250 adults who are in recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction to find out the truth about the disease and the journey to sobriety.

1. Addiction Is a Choice

Many people who have not suffered from addiction believe it is a choice. But, in reality, the opposite is true. No one chooses to be addicted to drugs or alcohol. That is no one's goal.

Addiction is considered a disease, just like any other ailment you would go to the doctor or hospital for.

"The American Medical Association called addiction a disease in 1956, and your insurance company pays to treat it," says David Levin, a licensed clinical social worker and Certified Addiction Professional. "Would you choose to have a heart attack or cirrhosis of the liver?"

Addiction results from a series of natural processes in the body and mind that victims have absolutely no control over. Once addiction takes hold, it has such significant impacts on sufferers that they are no longer in control of themselves, their substance use, or the consequences that ensue.

Nearly half (48%) of the adults in recovery from our survey did not feel they had a choice when it came to using drugs and alcohol; they felt like they **NEEDED** to use.

"Would you choose to have a heart attack or cirrhosis of the liver?"

2. You Have to Hit Rock Bottom Before You Can Get Help.

Thinking you must hit "rock bottom" and endure horrible consequences before seeking addiction treatment is a complete myth.

The truth is, it could be too late if you wait to hit true rock bottom.

With addiction, the real rock bottom is death. Luckily, if you're still breathing, it's not too late to get help.

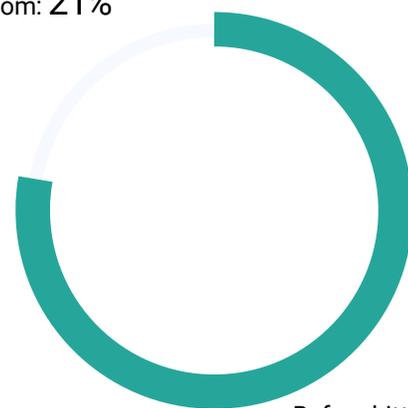
A large majority (79%) of people living in recovery agree that it's better to seek treatment before hitting rock bottom. Six in 10 of those we surveyed said they waited to hit rock bottom before seeking treatment but wish they had asked for help earlier.

The earlier you seek treatment, the better your results and the less damage you will have done to your life. The less severe the addiction is when it's treated, the greater the odds the patient will achieve and maintain lasting sobriety.

When Is It Best to Seek Treatment for Addiction?

According to 250 adults living in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction:

After hitting rock bottom: **21%**

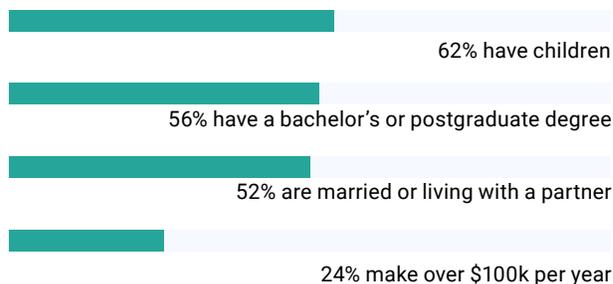


Before hitting rock bottom: **79%**

3. Only Certain Types of People Are Vulnerable to Addiction

Just like other illnesses, addiction is a disease that can strike anyone at any point in their lives. It does not discriminate based on race, gender, age, religion, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, income, profession, or education level. To give you some idea of how truly diverse addiction victims truly are, consider this: Of the 250 recovering drug and alcohol addicts we surveyed:

- Ages ranged from 25 to over 55 years old.
- Over half have a bachelor's or postgraduate degree.
- Over half are married or live with a partner.
- Nearly 1 in 4 make more than \$100,000 a year.
- Only 16% were unemployed or retired.



4. Having an Addiction Makes You a Bad Person

An addiction can cause you to commit bad acts, but it does not make you a bad person. Remember, addiction is a disease. No one would argue that you're a bad person because you have a cold; similarly, no one should argue that you're a bad person because you have an addiction.

It's not your fault that you suffer from an addiction. Addiction can happen to anyone, no matter how good of a person they are.

It is common for people to associate all sorts of moral failings with those who suffer from addiction, anything from lack of willpower and weakness to bad character. However, none of those are the causes of addiction.

Factors that do influence the development of addiction include genetics, living in environments where substance misuse occurs, and the presence of untreated mental health issues—none of which are in the control of the sufferer.

5. You Can Beat Addiction with Pure Willpower

If you could beat addiction with pure willpower, addiction wouldn't exist. Every single person who suffered from addiction could just decide to get better! In reality, addiction requires professional treatment and intervention.

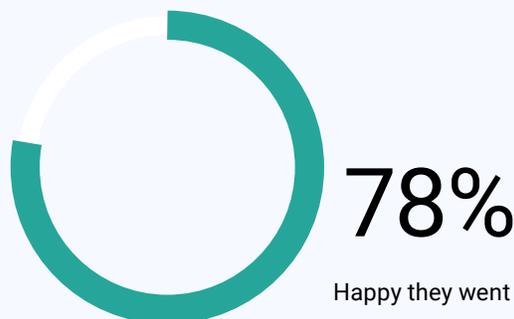
Substance use disorders are incredibly complex, with deep-seated causes and wide-reaching consequences.

To beat addiction, you have to uncover and treat all the underlying causes. Only then can you understand your personal triggers and develop healthy coping mechanisms to avoid relapse. Doing so can take months, maybe even years, of therapy and practice.

In many cases, addiction also requires medical intervention in the form of medically supervised detox and medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

Satisfaction with Rehab

If you're still not convinced professional help is necessary to overcome addiction, consider this: A large majority (78%) of our survey participants were happy they went to rehab, including 58% who chose to go to rehab and 20% who were forced to go to rehab but ended up being grateful it happened.



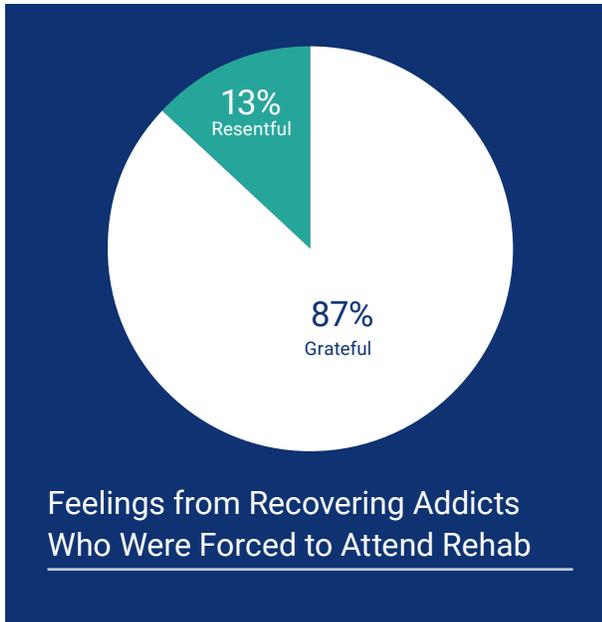
6. You Can't Force Someone into Treatment

Contrary to popular belief, you can force someone into addiction treatment.

In many states, there are statutory provisions that allow certain people (e.g., parent, spouse, or caregiver) to legally force their loved one to attend rehab or other psychiatric treatment. The specific rules and guidelines vary from state to state, but most require imminent danger to the individual or others.

However, far more people go to rehab because of an ultimatum given to them by friends, family, the court, or their job. While technically they may have chosen to attend rehab, the alternative was divorce, losing custody of their children, or getting fired.

While some argue that an individual who was forced or coerced into attending rehab will experience worse treatment outcomes, the data does not support this: 87% of those who said they were forced to go to rehab were grateful that it had happened, and only 13% were resentful. It is important to note, however, that even the 13% who were resentful are currently in recovery.

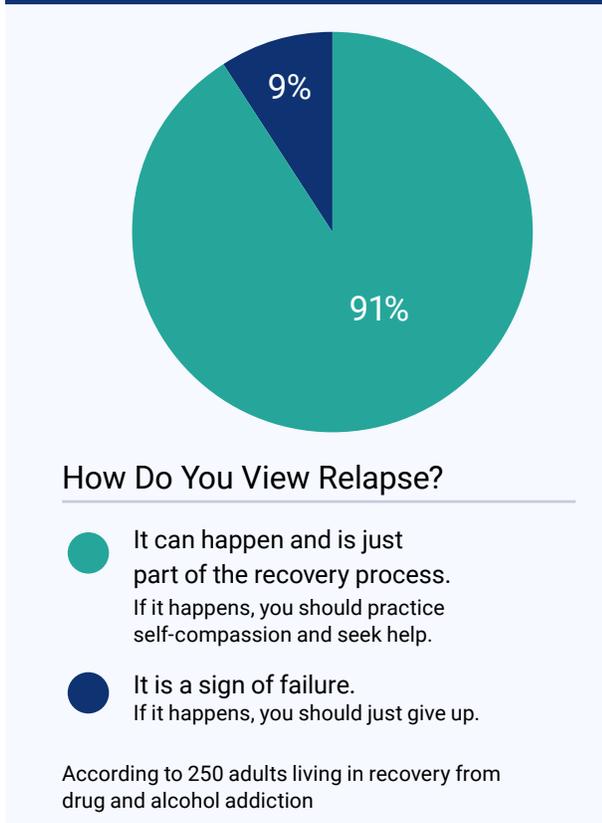


7. Going to Rehab Means Going 'Cold Turkey'

Going to rehab generally means the exact opposite of going "cold turkey." Going cold turkey means you suddenly stop taking drugs or alcohol, usually without professional help.

When you go to rehab, you will absolutely have professional help, and you may not stop taking the substance entirely and suddenly. For many legal drugs, such as alcohol and benzodiazepines, rehabs will use a taper-down method to minimize withdrawal symptoms.

Even if you do entirely stop taking your drug of choice, you may be provided with medications that help alleviate withdrawal symptoms and cravings, like Suboxone for heroin addiction.



8. Relapsing Is a Failure

Relapse is a temporary setback, not a permanent failure. The truth is that relapse is a part of the recovery process.

The majority of those in recovery will experience at least one relapse, and multiple relapses are very common. But it's no reason to feel discouraged or give up.

More than 9 in 10 (91%) of those in recovery have the following view of relapse: "It can happen and is just part of the recovery process. If it happens, you should practice self-compassion and seek help."

Remember, relapse doesn't have to mean that you enter active addiction again. Immediate professional treatment can help keep a relapse an isolated incident rather than the start of a bigger problem.

9. Rehab Is Unaffordable

While some private luxury rehabs can be extremely expensive, far more rehabs cater to those with lower budgets. There are even free, state-funded programs and facilities that specialize in treating the unhoused.

If you want an idea of what people typically spend, about three-fourths of those in recovery paid less than \$10,000, and one-third paid less than \$1,000 for treatment.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS THAT YOU CAN HELP REDUCE THE COST OF REHAB, INCLUDING:

- Finding a low-cost, free, or subsidized program
- Using health insurance
- Getting a scholarship or grant
- Taking advantage of government and veterans' benefits
- Making use of employee assistance programs (EAPs)
- Finding a state or local rehab program
- Finding an outpatient or telehealth program
- Participating in group therapy and support groups

10. Some Addictions Cannot Be Treated

It is true that some substance use disorders can be more difficult to treat than others, and some have higher relapse rates. However, there is no individual addiction that is untreatable, and there is certainly no type of addiction that cannot be treated.

Take it from Legacy Healing Center Chief Executive Director Travis Benfaida, a board-certified recovery support specialist: "I'm clean and sober 23 years. If I can do it, you can do it!"

As long as you are still alive, you can get sober and stay sober. Regardless of whether you are addicted to alcohol or heroin, there are many treatment program options available that will help you start living the sober life you deserve.

The Reality of Addiction

The reality of addiction is quite different than what the many myths and misconceptions about the disease would have you believe. Addiction is not a moral failing but a disease that can strike anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Luckily, help is out there. There are thousands of professionals who dedicate their lives to helping patients just like you or your loved one find the life they want to live.

Perhaps the most dangerous misconceptions are the beliefs that there is no hope, your addiction is untreatable, and your life is ruined. The truth is, there is hope. You can be treated. And your life will get better.

"I'm clean and sober 23 years.

If I can do it, you can do it!"

There is hope!
Call now for help.

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All calls are confidential and free.

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CHAPTER THREE

6 Reasons Why Rehab Is Beneficial...and Necessary

Rehab works, and it offers a pathway to a healthy, sober life. But First, the Risks of Not Going to Rehab. Before we get into the benefits of going to rehab, consider the top 10 risks of NOT going to rehab:

- Death as a result of overdose, injuries, illness, or psychological issues
- Continued substance use at an addiction level and all the associated consequences
- The deterioration of physical health and significantly greater likelihood of major medical issues
- Worsening mental health and a corresponding decrease in overall quality of life
- Damaged or lost relationships
- Legal consequences, including fines, limitations on personal freedom, and incarceration
- Financial struggles
- Increased risk of being involved in dangerous situations, such as overdose or accident
- Isolation and alienation from loved ones and other people in general
- Inability to function in daily life

If you don't seek addiction treatment, many of these risks can become a reality. That's why it is so important to get professional help if you are struggling with a substance use disorder. You don't have to try to beat addiction alone, and you don't have to suffer.

Let's get into some of the biggest benefits of attending rehab and how it can permanently change your life for the better.

Benefits of Going to Rehab

1. More Likely to Break the Cycle of Addiction

One of the most tragic aspects of addiction is that it often becomes a cycle of misuse, withdrawal, cravings, and more misuse. The more of a substance an individual misuses, the worse their withdrawal symptoms and cravings will be when attempting to get sober.

When withdrawal and cravings become bad enough, many individuals will relapse. Often, these relapses motivate the individual to use increasing amounts of the substance, and the cycle of addiction begins again.

The cycle creates a downward spiral that causes significant damage to the individual's life and relationships and is often fatal. The only way to escape the cycle of addiction is to treat its underlying causes, such as co-occurring mental health issues, codependent relationships, or past trauma.

Usually, the only way for sufferers to break the cycle of addiction is with professional help. Although organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) can help, they are often not enough on their own.



2. Detox Safely and Comfortably

When someone who's quitting drugs or alcohol significantly reduces or stops their dose, their body goes into a state of shock known as withdrawal.

Most withdrawal symptoms are highly uncomfortable and unpleasant, and some can even cause permanent injury, disability, or death. In particular, alcohol, benzodiazepine, and barbiturate withdrawal are considered the most dangerous, with the dangers of alcohol withdrawal being especially well-documented.

No matter what symptoms you face, withdrawal is an extremely taxing process that drains the mind, body, and spirit. Most people who go through withdrawal alone are in a poor state of mind when they finish.

The solution is medically supervised detox, which helps reduce or eliminate withdrawal symptoms while keeping patients safe, healthy, and comfortable. By easing withdrawal, rehabs are able to keep patients in a good mental state and improve their chances of completing treatment.

Detox saves lives, both by preventing withdrawal-related fatalities and by dramatically increasing the likelihood that patients achieve sobriety. Medication-assisted treatment (MAT), which makes withdrawal much easier to get through, can also begin during detox.





3. Heal Mental and Emotional Wounds

One of the most important aspects of rehab is uncovering the underlying causes of addiction, like mental health disorders and unhealed trauma. The primary way rehabs achieve this is through individual and group therapy. There are many different types of clinical therapy used in rehab, including:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
- Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT)
- Schema therapy
- Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)

The primary goals of therapy in rehab are to identify triggers and underlying causes of addiction, change negative thought patterns, and develop healthy coping mechanisms.

“Treatment and recovery require being taught coping skills,” says clinical social worker and Certified Addiction Professional David Levin.

Without the help of a therapist, many patients find that their trauma is too painful to face. However, with professional assistance and cutting-edge clinical therapies, patients can begin to heal from the inside out, going straight to the source of their addiction.

4. Form Lifelong Friendships and Support Networks

Addiction is a disease that is both caused by and causes loneliness in its victims. Lack of connection often motivates substance use disorders, which can damage, worsen, or destroy existing relationships.

“Isolation breeds shame, and shame breeds addiction,” says Levin.

One of the most effective methods of combating addiction is to form meaningful connections with healthy and preferably sober individuals. Not only do these connections improve the quality of life for those in recovery, but they also provide significant support and reduce the risk of relapse.

Rehab helps you build these connections in many ways. One of the most important is through group therapy, which encourages patients to work together and help one another heal.

Group therapy allows people to connect on a deep level with others who understand what they are going through. It provides a forum for patients to share their feelings and experiences with others who can give them firsthand advice and a sense of community.

5. Develop Life Skills to Help You Succeed in Recovery

Individuals caught in the web of addiction typically neglect other aspects of their lives to such a degree that they do not learn basic skills that are necessary for everyday life.

Rehab offers many different life skills training programs, such as finance management, interpersonal communication, and household upkeep. Some rehabs even offer resumé help and training for specific types of jobs.

The goal is to make sure patients are well-equipped to handle the challenges of the real world and make their transition to life out of rehab as stress-free as possible.

Many of the life skills taught in rehab have significant recovery benefits and can dramatically reduce the risk of relapse. For example, individuals in better financial situations are generally less stressed and anxious and, therefore, less motivated to misuse drugs and alcohol.

6. Helps Prevent Relapse

Rehab helps prevent relapse by equipping patients with coping skills and a strong support system.

Every patient has a unique set of triggers, which are people, places, or situations that motivate them to misuse substances. Similarly, every patient has unique ways of successfully combating these triggers.

In rehab, therapy helps patients identify their triggers and coping mechanisms so they have the highest chances of avoiding relapse once they're back in the real world.

MOST REHABS CREATE A CUSTOMIZED RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN FOR EACH OF THEIR PATIENTS, WHICH INCLUDES:

- How to avoid triggers
- How to handle triggers when it's not possible to avoid them
- Healthy lifestyle changes to improve their overall quality of life
- What to do if relapse does happen

Rehab also helps you establish a strong support system of people dedicated to your recovery. In rehab, you'll meet other people in recovery, mentors, and medical professionals whom you can contact if you feel like you might relapse.

Give Yourself the Best Chance at a Life You Deserve

Substance misuse can completely derail your life and the lives of those you love. Luckily, it is never too late to get back on track. Attending a trusted rehab program will give you the best chance at success.

Rehab not only helps patients get through withdrawal but also provides the tools and lasting relationships patients need to stay sober in the real world. If you want to give yourself or your loved one the best chance at a better life, finding a rehab program is the best thing you can do.

There is hope!
Call now for help.

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All calls are confidential and free.

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CHAPTER FOUR

10 Tips for Choosing the Right Rehab

Choosing the right rehab is one of the most important decisions you can make on your treatment journey. Luckily, there are thousands of rehab programs out there, meaning there is one that will be the right fit for you.

So, how do you choose the right one?

You may want to start by asking your insurance company to provide you with a list of in-network rehabs. From there, follow these 10 tips to ensure you choose a reputable program that fits your needs and lifestyle.

1. Verify the Rehab Is Reputable

Unfortunately, there are bad actors in the rehab industry. However, it is possible to determine which rehabs are reputable—and which ones are not.

Look for Accreditations from Reputable Organizations

Most reputable rehabs will have accreditations from recognized organizations. Rehabs earn accreditation(s) when their facility meets the quality and safety standards set by accrediting organizations.



Two of the most widely respected accrediting organizations for drug and alcohol rehabs are the Commission on Accreditation of Rehab Facilities (CARF) and the Joint Commission ([Gold Seal of Approval](#)). Rehabs will often highlight accreditations on their websites. If you don't see one, call or email the rehab to see what accreditations they have, if any.



You can also verify a rehab's accreditations by contacting the accrediting organization directly or visiting their website:

- The Joint Commission allows you to search for facilities by name on their [Quality Check](#) site.
- CARF's '[Find a Provider](#)' tool allows you to search by location, facility name, and accreditation type.

Verify the Staff's Credentials

It is also critical that rehab facilities hold all necessary local licenses and that their staff is properly certified. Each rehab will require different local licenses, typically from the state but also possibly from the county or municipality. The licensing agencies may include divisions for behavioral or mental health, or drug/alcohol/substance addiction/abuse.

The best way to tell if a staff is properly certified is to identify what degrees and licenses they hold, as well as any certifications. You'll want to look for titles and designations like:

- Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)
- Addiction medicine physician
- Licensed professional counselor (LPC)
- Licensed clinical social worker (LCSW)
- Master's degree in social work, psychology, and/or addiction counseling
- Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP)
- Board certifications for addiction medicine, psychology, and/or psychiatry

Talk to Alumni

If possible, try to contact alumni from the rehab and have them tell you their view of the program as a former patient.

While no ethical rehab would ever provide you with the contact info of former patients, some rehabs may have alumni who have volunteered as references.

Also, many rehabs have alumni groups that you can reach out to.

2. Look Out for Red Flags

There are many potential red flags that may indicate a rehab is neither trustworthy nor effective. Some of the most important to watch out for include:

- Lack of accreditation or licensing
- Unclear treatment approaches or unwillingness to discuss
- Unqualified or unlicensed staff
- Promises or guarantees for results
- A lack of individual, customized treatment plans
- Poor online reviews and testimonials, or a lack of online reviews and testimonials
- Limited or non-existent aftercare or relapse prevention planning
- Consistently high staff turnover
- Lack of transparency regarding any aspect
- Pressure to enroll immediately
- Poor or unkempt facility conditions
- Lack of family involvement in the rehabilitation process

"People should do their due diligence when choosing a behavioral healthcare provider, no different than you would with any other major decisions," says licensed clinical social worker and Certified Addiction Professional David Levin.

Levin recommends looking at Google reviews to see how many there are and whether the positive reviews seem realistic and relatable to you. He also says the rehab's website should have pictures of the facility. If it doesn't, that could be a red flag of a questionable rehab.

Levin finishes by saying, "When speaking with the treatment provider, you should not feel pressured to make a decision, but feel comfortable with the conversation."



3. Do They Treat Your Addiction?

Most rehabs treat a wide variety of substance use disorders, and some may have programs that specialize in treating specific addictions. When researching your options, confirm the rehabs you're considering treat the substance you're addicted to.

You may also want to look into facilities that treat co-occurring mental health conditions, which are at the root of many addictions.

In fact, co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders are so closely connected that it is often not possible to treat one without treating the other. Otherwise, relapse is extremely likely.

4. Decide Whether Inpatient or Outpatient Is Right for You

There are two broad categories of rehab that most facilities and programs fall into: inpatient rehab and outpatient rehab.

Both inpatient and outpatient rehab programs can be highly effective choices for the right patients.

Inpatient Rehab

Inpatient or residential rehab requires patients to live at the facility where they receive treatment.

Inpatient rehab provides the opportunity for 24/7 monitoring and support. By completely removing patients from their triggers, inpatient rehab minimizes the possibility of relapse and allows patients to fully focus on their treatment and recovery.

Inpatient rehab is widely agreed to provide patients with the best chance of achieving and maintaining lasting sobriety.

"Inpatient rehab provides a social model to prepare for reintegration into the home environment. Whether it's obtaining critical life skills, or learning how to communicate, socialize, or work without substances, inpatient treatment is like basic training or training camp," says Levin.

However, inpatient rehab can be disruptive to a patient's life and is considerably more expensive than outpatient rehab.

If you are suffering from a severe addiction, have an addiction that has proven resistant to treatment in the past, have trouble dealing with triggers, and/or live in a home environment that drives your substance use, inpatient rehab is probably necessary.

"Inpatient treatment is like basic training or training camp."

Outpatient Rehab

Outpatient rehab requires patients to attend treatment at a facility several days a week but does not require patients to live there.

Outpatient rehab allows patients to continue to meet personal, professional, legal, and familial responsibilities while still receiving the treatment they need to recover from addiction. Outpatient rehab is also less expensive than inpatient rehab.

“Outpatient treatment provides critical support as the individual and family navigate the challenges of early recovery,” says Levin. “It’s when the application of the skills learned during inpatient treatment are demonstrated.”

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF OUTPATIENT REHAB, INCLUDING:

- Partial hospitalization programs (PHPs): A structured mental health and addiction treatment program that runs for several hours a day, several days per week. Patients participate in scheduled treatment sessions with therapists during the day and can return home at night. PHPs can be a step down from inpatient treatment.
- Intense outpatient programs (IOPs): Addiction programs that don’t require medical detox or 24-hour supervision. Many clients will “step down” to IOP after completing a partial hospitalization program. IOPs allow clients to focus on school, work, and family while receiving consistent care for their disorders.
- Outpatient programs: The least intensive level of care for treating drug and alcohol use disorders as well as mental health disorders. Unlike IOP and PHP, outpatient rehab is focused on helping patients remain sober rather than reach sobriety.

The outpatient rehab that’s best for you will depend on where you’re at in the recovery process and your day-to-day obligations.

“Outpatient treatment provides critical support as the individual and family navigate the challenges of early recovery.”

5. Pick a Location That’s Best for Your Recovery

One of the longest-lasting debates in the rehab community is whether it’s better to travel for rehab.

GENERALLY, THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING A REHAB THAT’S CLOSE TO HOME INCLUDE:

- You don’t have to deal with travel expenses.
- You’re closer to loved ones and family, who can actively participate in your treatment.
- You’re in more familiar and, therefore, possibly more comfortable surroundings.

SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING A REHAB THAT’S FAR FROM HOME INCLUDE:

- It creates distance between you and your triggers, drug dealers, and other negative influences.
- It’s harder to leave the rehab in the middle of treatment.
- You may be able to attend rehab in a city or state you’ve always wanted to visit.
- Living in a new environment can feel like a fresh start.

Ultimately, you will have to decide if it makes more sense to stay close to home or venture out.

If your loved ones are supportive and live nearby, it may make the most sense to find a rehab close to home so you can take advantage of that support network.

If your home or hometown is full of triggers and you do not feel like you have a support system there, it may be best to find a rehab that’s farther away.



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6. Does Their Treatment Philosophy Align to Your Needs and Values?

Each program will have its own approach, or treatment philosophy, for medications, therapy, and preparing you for life after rehab. Make sure whatever rehab you choose treats addiction with values, therapies, and medical interventions you agree with.

SOME OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE ADDICTION TREATMENT METHODS YOU'LL WANT TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ARE:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT): Helps patients identify and change negative thought and behavior patterns. Beneficial for those who respond to structured and goal-oriented therapy.
- Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT): Emphasizes acceptance strategies, mindfulness, tolerance, emotional regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness. Particularly helpful for those with co-occurring mental health disorders.
- 12-step programs: Emphasize surrender, self-reflection, and peer support. Beneficial for those who find strength in group support, spirituality, and the 12-step principles.
- Medication assisted treatment (MAT): Uses medication to eliminate or minimize withdrawal symptoms and to treat co-occurring disorders. Most commonly used to treat opioid addiction and cases of severe or dangerous withdrawal.
- Holistic approaches: Incorporates complementary therapies such as yoga, meditation, and acupuncture. Particularly helpful for stress reduction and overall well-being.
- Family therapy: Family members participate in counseling sessions to address family dynamics, communication patterns, and support systems. Beneficial for those whose family relationships have been impacted by addiction.
- Trauma-informed therapy: Focuses on creating a safe and supportive environment. Most useful for patients with a history of trauma that has contributed to the development and continuance of their addiction.

7. Look into Specialized Programs

Many patients find that treatment is most effective when conducted in a specialized program. That's because grouping patients with similar characteristics and backgrounds can prevent the development of unhealthy relationships and minimize conflict.

While it's not absolutely necessary, you may consider rehabs that offer specialized programs, such as:

- Gender-specific rehab programs (e.g., men only, women only, nonbinary)
- Age-specific rehab programs (e.g., teens, young adults, seniors)
- Religion or spirituality/faith-based rehab programs
- LGBTQ+-friendly rehab programs (e.g., gay men, lesbian women, transgender)
- Cultural or ethnic-specific rehab programs
- Occupation-specific rehab programs (e.g., medical professionals, first responders)
- Military/veterans rehab programs

8. Do They Offer Family Programs?

Addiction is a family disease. Significant others and family members of those who have suffered from addiction will tell you that they have suffered, too.

Many addiction sufferers experience significant emotional pain over the relationship damage their disease has caused. Many fear that they have permanently lost their relationships. Fortunately, that does not have to be the case.

Many rehabs offer programs designed to actively engage family members with the treatment process and rebuild relationships, even badly damaged ones. Most patients find their families are eager to help them in their recovery and treasure their newly strengthened bonds.

If you or your loved one wants to rebuild family relationships, you should look for facilities with dedicated family programs and/or rehab for couples.



9. Look for Robust Aftercare Programs

Recovery doesn't end when the patient leaves the rehab facility, and neither should treatment. Achieving sobriety is only half the goal of rehab. The other half is to maintain it for the long term.

That's where aftercare comes in.

Aftercare programs continue to provide patients with the support they need to avoid relapse and maintain their sobriety.

While researching rehabs, look to see if they offer any of the following aftercare programs:

- Continued therapeutic support
- Alumni support groups
- 12-step groups
- 24/7 support
- Lifetime recovery coaching
- Alumni events for you and your loved ones

10. Tour the Facility Before Committing

It is critical that you feel comfortable and confident before taking the leap and entering rehab. The best way to do that is to tour the facility and meet the staff before you commit to a program.

Most facilities will have no problem providing a tour and introducing you to staff. If they are hesitant, it is a major red flag.

Due to distance, it may not be possible for you to tour a rehab facility in person. However, it may be possible to take a virtual tour, and you should always be able to at least consult with key treatment staff over the phone.

Remember, choosing the right rehab is not a decision to take lightly. Your health and life could depend on it. Make sure the rehabs you're considering have the right accreditations, licensing, and credentials. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and if something seems off, trust your gut and move on.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Rehab Costs and Payment Options

Addiction is a deadly disease, yet many people are deterred from seeking help because they're worried about the price tag.

Yes, rehab can be expensive, with costs ranging from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars. However, there are payment options and rehab programs that can make treatment affordable.

How Much Does Rehab Cost?

The cost of rehab varies depending on the type of treatments offered, whether the program is inpatient or outpatient, the facility's location and amenities, and the duration of the program.

In general, rehab program costs typically fall within the ranges below:

Medically supervised detox: \$250 to \$800 per day

Average: \$525 per day

Since most detox programs require a minimum of seven days, the total cost is between \$1,750 and \$5,600, with an average of \$3,675.

28-day and 30-day inpatient rehab: \$5,000 to \$20,000

Average: \$12,500

60-day and 90-day inpatient rehab: \$12,000 to \$60,000

Average: \$36,000

Partial hospitalization program (PHP): \$350 to \$450 per day

or \$2,450 to \$3,150 per week

Intensive outpatient program (IOP): \$250 to \$350 per day

or \$1,750 to \$2,450 per week

30-day outpatient rehab: \$1,400 to \$10,000

Average: \$5,700

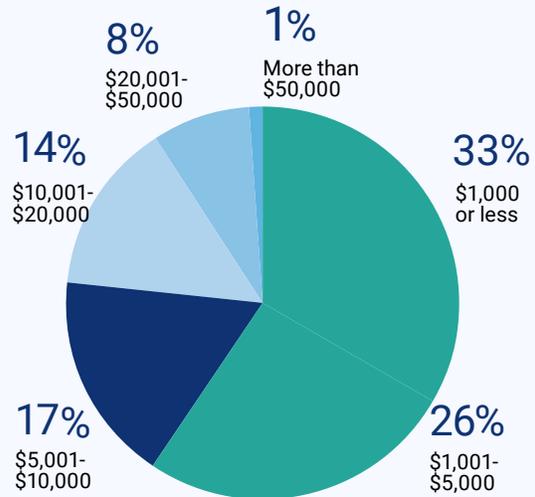
Individual therapy: \$50 to \$150 per session

Group therapy: \$20 to \$50 per session

Sober living homes: \$500 to \$2,500 per week

How much did you pay for rehab?

Additionally, we surveyed 250 adults in recovery and asked how much they paid for rehab. The results were as follows:



A majority of respondents paid under \$5,000 for treatment, with 1 in 3 paying \$1,000 or less.



Insurance Can Help Cover the Cost of Rehab

Does insurance cover rehab? Yes, as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), all health insurance plans are required to provide some level of coverage for mental health and addiction treatment services. Depending on your plan, insurance can dramatically reduce the amount you pay out of pocket.

Of the 250 people we surveyed, 44% said they used insurance to help cover the cost of rehab.

Keep in mind that rehabs are not required to accept insurance, and most only accept a limited number of providers. Most rehabs accept private insurance, and many accept public health insurance plans, including Veterans Affairs (VA) insurance, TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid, and state and local providers.

Before committing to a treatment program, verify that they accept your specific insurance provider and plan.

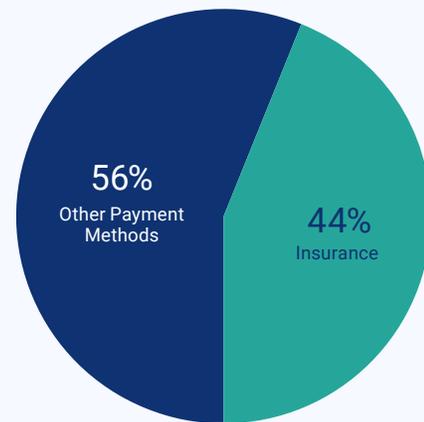
Ways to Pay for Rehab

To get a better idea of how people afford rehab, we asked our survey respondents how they paid for treatment. The results were as follows:

- 44% said they used insurance
- 34% said friends and family helped pay
- 27% said they used personal savings
- 19% chose a free or low-cost government program
- 12% received financial help from a nonprofit organization
- 9% took out loans
- 7% got grants or scholarships

According to 250 adults living in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction

How did you pay for rehab?



While insurance was the most common answer, there are other ways to pay for rehab, either outside of or in combination with your benefits, including:

- **Scholarships and grants:** One of the largest providers of rehab scholarships and grants is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- **Self-pay (savings):** Many patients choose to pay for all or part of their treatment out of their own pocket.
- **Family and friends:** Often, loved ones are willing to help cover the cost of rehab or at least offer a personal loan.
- **Medical expense accounts:** Both health savings accounts (HSAs) and flexible spending accounts (FSAs) allow individuals to set aside pre-tax dollars for medical expenses, including rehab services.
- **Crowdfunding:** Many use online crowdfunding platforms, such as GoFundMe, Kickstarter, and Indiegogo, to raise funds to pay for rehab expenses. These platforms are particularly useful when personal stories and appeals are included.
- **Nonprofit organizations:** Nonprofits that specialize in addiction treatment or the betterment of certain groups, such as religious organizations, military veterans, and LGBTQ+ individuals, may help qualifying individuals pay for rehab.
- **Personal loans:** Some patients may be able to take out a personal loan from a bank or credit union to pay for rehab.
- **Employee assistance programs (EAPs):** "Your employer may offer an EAP that helps employees pay for rehab.. Your company's HR department is the best source of information.
- **Religious and community organizations:** Churches, synagogues, mosques, community centers, and similar organizations may offer financial assistance or other support for rehab.

Tips on Reducing the Cost of Rehab

Although the prospect of paying for rehab may seem daunting, it certainly doesn't have to be. Check out these 10 tips for making rehab more affordable:

1. Research affordable treatment centers, such as government centers, nonprofit facilities, and community-based programs.
2. Consider regions with a lower cost of living.
3. Ask if the rehab has sliding scale fees, which means they charge patients based on their ability to pay and financial needs.
4. Ask about payment plans, whereby rehab programs allow you to spread out the cost of treatment over a series of installments, usually monthly.
5. Negotiate costs, as some facilities may be willing to adjust fees based on individual circumstances
6. Custom-tailor your treatment plan so that it is more cost-effective for you without compromising treatment quality (i.e., reduce or eliminate unnecessary services).
7. Consider outpatient or online/telehealth programs, which generally cost significantly less and allow you to continue working.
8. Maximize your insurance coverage by making sure you understand your plan and are fully taking advantage of what it offers.
9. Explore free or low-cost support services, such as support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and counseling services from community clinics and mental health organizations.
10. Engage in careful budgeting throughout all aspects of your life.

Is There Such Thing as Free Rehab?

Free rehab does exist, but there are comparatively limited options, and most have stringent eligibility requirements. Below are some common examples of programs and benefits provided by the state that can reduce or erase the cost of rehab:

Government or State-Sponsored Treatment Centers

Pros: Often more affordable or free

Cons: Often have very long wait lists and a limited range of services

Contact your local state, county, or municipal health department about publicly funded rehab programs, or use the [SAMHSA treatment locator tool](#) to find nearby centers.

Medicaid

Pros: Provides addiction treatment coverage for eligible individuals

Cons: Eligibility varies by state, and not everyone qualifies

Visit the [Medicaid website](#) or contact your Medicaid office to learn more about coverage for substance use disorders.

Medicare

Pros: Covers many aspects of addiction treatment for eligible individuals over the age of 65 and/or individuals with qualifying disabilities

Cons: Coverage specifics vary and many services are not included

Visit the [Medicare website](#) or contact your Medicare office to learn more about coverage for substance use disorders.

VA Programs

Pros: Provides both inpatient and outpatient rehab, as well as other treatment services, to eligible veterans

Cons: Eligibility based on military service and not all veterans are eligible

Contact [Veterans Affairs](#) to learn more about addiction treatment programs for veterans.

Every free rehab program will have strict eligibility requirements, which may include:

- **Financial need:** Most free rehab programs, especially government or state-sponsored ones, are income-based.
- **Residency:** Many state and local programs require individuals to be legal residents of the state, county, or municipality where the services are provided.
- **Citizenship or legal residency:** Eligibility is often restricted to U.S. citizens or legal residents.
- **Specific demographics:** Some programs require individuals to meet certain demographic criteria to be eligible, especially age, military service, or disability.
- **Severity of the substance use disorder:** Eligibility and/or priority for some programs is partially based on the severity of the individual's addiction.

Is Rehab Worth It?

Yes. Rehab is absolutely worth it for many reasons.

Most importantly, rehab saves lives. Addiction is an extremely deadly disease that is most effectively treated through a reputable rehab program. There is nothing more valuable than your life or the life of your loved one, and no amount of money can bring someone back from death.

Also, addiction is incredibly expensive. It is common for individuals with moderate to severe substance use disorders to spend tens of thousands of dollars every year on their substance of choice.

Many rehab patients save enough from not buying drugs and alcohol to cover the cost of treatment within a few months to a year. The cost savings of rehab are even more dramatic when you consider other costs of addiction, such as legal fees, missed work, missed promotions, increased health care costs, and injury.

Rehab also dramatically improves the quality of life of addiction sufferers.

It can reverse and prevent health complications and legal problems brought on by addiction.

Rehabs can also treat co-occurring mental health conditions, addressing the root cause of many substance use disorders.

Rehab helps patients find new hobbies or rediscover old ones, teaches valuable new life skills, and increases patients' earning potential. Essentially, it provides a clean slate and a strong foundation for those in search of a more meaningful life.

Finally, rehab helps patients rebuild relationships with loved ones while making new connections to create a strong support network that is truly priceless.

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CHAPTER SIX

What Is Rehab Like?

Each rehab program is unique, though there are general similarities you can expect to find at most facilities.

In this chapter, we'll provide an overview of what you can typically expect to find in a high-quality rehab.

Inpatient programs are typically 14 days,

28 days, 30 days, 60 days, or 90 days.

Outpatient programs are generally more flexible but typically last about 30 days.

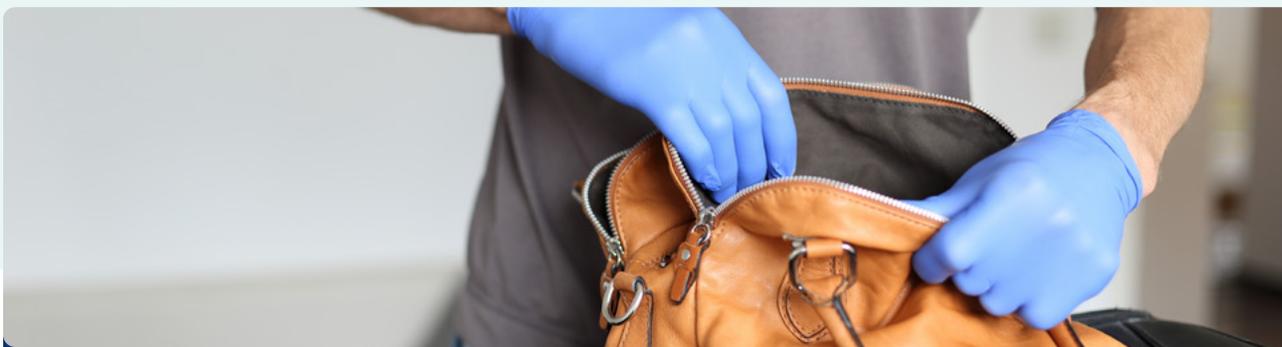
Detox typically lasts between two and seven days.

The Rehab Admission Process

At the beginning of the rehab admission process, you will speak with an intake specialist. The intake specialist will go over your treatment needs and verify your insurance before determining whether you are eligible to attend the facility.

Once your eligibility is confirmed, you will be on your way to rehab. Make sure to pack the following items:

- Personal identification and documentation
- Prescription medications
- Comfortable and weather-appropriate clothing
- Personal hygiene items and toiletries
- Basic makeup and hair care products
- Appropriate reading material
- Notebooks and writing utensils
- Stamps and stationery
- Snacks (if allowed by the program)
- Comfort items (e.g., blankets, teddy bears, photos)
- Eye mask and earplugs
- Health insurance information
- Emergency contact list
- Small amount of cash



Commonly Banned Items in Rehab

- Alcohol
- Drug paraphernalia
- Weapons
- Cell phones
- Laptops
- Tablets
- Video games
- Shoelaces
- Outside food and beverages
- Over-the-counter medications
- Sharp objects (razors/scissors)
- Products that contain alcohol (mouthwash/perfumes)
- Large amounts of cash or certain valuables
- Reading material or clothing that is sexually explicit or otherwise triggering
- Gambling devices (cards/dice)

When you arrive at the facility, you will fill out paperwork, and a staff member will inspect your belongings to ensure you are not bringing in any banned items.

Next, you will meet with a treatment specialist. During this meeting, you will work together to develop a customized treatment plan to guide the rest of your time in rehab.

MOST REHAB TREATMENT PLANS INCLUDE:

- An initial and thorough assessment of medical history, substance use, mental health, and family history
- Clear and achievable short- and long-term goals
- A detoxification plan (if necessary)
- Medical assessment and treatment (if necessary)
- Individual therapy and counseling needs
- Group therapy and counseling needs
- Family support and therapy needs
- Holistic therapies and approaches
- Psychoeducation components
- Aftercare planning
- Dual diagnosis treatment (if necessary)
- Crisis intervention planning

Detox: Getting Through Withdrawal

After you are admitted to rehab, you may need to go through detox. Detox, or detoxification, is a medically supervised process designed to get patients through withdrawal as comfortably and safely as possible.

During detox, treatment staff help you through the withdrawal process by:

- Providing medications to alleviate and/or eliminate withdrawal symptoms
- Keeping you as comfortable as possible (e.g., with blankets and thermostat changes)
- Around the clock physical and mental health monitoring
- Providing emotional support with individual and group counseling
- Addressing nutritional deficiencies

The length of detox can vary based on the substance and the patient's health. In general, patients will spend two to seven days in detox, though possibly up to 14 days in severe cases.

Once you're done with detox, treatment staff will prepare you for the next stages of the rehabilitation process, typically either [inpatient treatment](#) or outpatient rehab.

Counseling to Address Triggers and Build Healthy Habits

Talk therapy is critical to the rehab process.

The primary goals of talk therapy are to pinpoint the underlying causes of addiction, properly diagnose any co-occurring mental health conditions, identify triggers, change negative thought patterns, and develop healthy coping mechanisms.

Diagnosing [co-occurring disorders](#) is an especially important part of addiction treatment. Mental health conditions and addiction form a very close relationship where both cause and worsen each other. The two are so closely linked that it is impossible to successfully treat one without addressing the other.



Individual Therapy

Individual therapy plays a significant role in most rehab programs. Your counselor will likely use at least one of the following evidence-based therapies to help rewire your brain and reshape your behaviors:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) changes negative thought patterns and behaviors by challenging and reframing distorted thinking, developing coping skills, and addressing triggers.
- Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) helps patients process traumatic memories by using bilateral stimulation (e.g., moving eyes left and right).
- Contingency management reinforces positive behaviors and discourages negative ones by using a system of rewards and consequences in treatment.
- Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) helps patients with acceptance and change by incorporating mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills.
- Motivational interviewing (MI) enhances a patient's motivation and commitment to change by resolving ambivalence through open-ended questions, reflective listening, and affirmations.
- Rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) challenges irrational beliefs that contribute to negative emotions and behaviors and then replaces them with rational thoughts that promote healthier emotions and behaviors.



Group Therapy

Like individual therapy, most rehab programs make extensive use of group therapy. In most rehab programs, you will take part in multiple group therapy sessions per day.

“You will be receiving treatment alongside people very similar to you,” says David Levin, a licensed clinical social worker and Certified Addiction Professional. “You may make lifelong friendships.”

SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF GROUP THERAPY IN REHAB INCLUDE:

- Peer groups: Therapist-led peer groups provide a supportive environment where individuals can share their emotions, views, and experiences with others who know what they’re going through.
- 12-step programs: Programs like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) utilize a set of principles and steps that promote spiritual and personal growth and help patients maintain their sobriety even after they leave the rehab program.
- Family therapy: Family members participate in the treatment process to improve communication, rebuild relationships, and resolve codependency issues.
- Psychoeducational and skill-building groups: These groups provide education about relapse prevention, coping strategies, and life skills so patients have the tools they need to maintain long-term sobriety.
- Expressive therapy groups: These groups incorporate creative outlets like art, music, or drama to allow patients to express and process emotions.

Medication Assisted Treatment

Medication assisted treatment (MAT) uses medication to help curb cravings, minimize withdrawal symptoms, and/or treat co-occurring mental health conditions. In some cases, MAT is also used to treat and/or reverse overdose.

MAT has been consistently shown to dramatically reduce the risk of relapse, improve patients’ quality of life, and increase the chances that a patient achieves sobriety.

MAT IS MOSTLY USED TO TREAT:

- Opioid use disorders, with medications like methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone, and Narcan
- Alcohol use disorders, with medications like disulfiram/Antabuse, acamprosate, and naltrexone
- Tobacco use disorders, with medications like nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), bupropion, and varenicline

“Addiction attacks the mind, body, and spirit. Therefore, it is imperative to treat all three.”



Holistic Treatments to Heal Mind, Body, and Spirit

Holistic addiction treatments include therapies designed to fully heal the patient from the inside out. A holistic approach addresses the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs of those in recovery.

“Addiction attacks the mind, body, and spirit. Therefore, it is imperative to treat all three,” says Levin.

Holistic treatment integrates a wide variety of therapeutic modalities, including traditional clinical therapies, cutting-edge medications, and complementary therapies such as yoga, acupuncture, massage, and meditation.

Holistic treatments emphasize activities that promote both mental and physical health, such as exercise, nutrition, and mindfulness. In turn, patients experience less stress, an improved mood, and a stronger mind-body connection.

Finally, holistic addiction treatment provides patients with a supportive community. There’s an emphasis on creating deep, genuine connections with people who have your best interest—and sobriety—in mind.

Aftercare Programs for Success and Sobriety

Rehab aftercare programs help prevent relapse by providing ongoing support to former patients.

Aftercare is important because it helps individuals maintain their progress and navigate the many challenges of the “real world.”

Recovery is a lifelong process, and it all starts with laying a strong foundation in rehab. You can achieve the life you want, and we’re here to help.

EXAMPLES OF AVAILABLE AFTERCARE PROGRAMS:

- Outpatient counseling
- 12-step programs and other support groups
- Sober living homes
- Therapeutic workshops
- Ongoing relapse prevention education and classes
- Family therapy and support
- Rehab alumni groups and activities

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Staying Sober After Rehab

Once you're done with rehab, your main focus will be maintaining sobriety while growing into a new way of life.

The road to recovery can be long and winding, with ups and downs and unexpected twists and turns. However, there are tools you can use to stay on track and plans you can put into place in case of relapse.

Understanding Relapse

Relapse is the return to misusing a substance while in recovery. Relapse is extremely common and not a sign of failure. You might even think of it as a part of the journey to long-lasting sobriety.

What's more, when we talked to 250 adults living in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction, almost all of them (91%) said relapse is a part of the recovery process and if it happens, you should try to practice self-compassion and seek help.

Typically, relapse is spurred by a trigger, which is a person, place, or situation that drives you to use. That's why developing healthy coping mechanisms to deal with your triggers is critical to maintaining long-term sobriety.

SOME COMMON TRIGGERS TO BE AWARE OF:

- Stress
- Negative emotions, like sadness or anger
- Physical discomfort or pain
- Environments or locations associated with past substance misuse
- Celebrations and special occasions
- Boredom
- Isolation and loneliness
- Lack of support
- Lack of structure



Make a Relapse Prevention Plan

Toward the end of rehab, you and a treatment staff member will likely create a relapse prevention plan with strategies to avoid relapse.

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLANS SHOULD BE COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUDE:

- Identification of all triggers, including emotional, environmental, social, and situational ones
- Healthy coping strategies for each trigger, like mindfulness, deep breathing, meditation, or physical activity
- A support system of friends, family, addiction treatment and mental health professionals, and support groups
- The names and phone numbers of emergency contacts
- A plan to do regular check-ins with treatment professionals and support system members
- Healthy lifestyle choices and changes
- A strategic plan to avoid high-risk situations
- A list of early warning signs that a potential relapse may occur
- A relapse response plan if relapse does occur (e.g., contacting a sponsor, attending a support group meeting, or seeking professional help)
- Therapeutic techniques learned in counseling sessions, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
- Aftercare options, including outpatient counseling, support groups, and alumni programs
- Revisions and updates, especially lessons learned from any previous relapses

Take Advantage of Aftercare Programs

Rehab aftercare consists of ongoing support and services for patients who have completed an addiction treatment program. Aftercare is an essential part of the recovery process and is critical in helping patients stay sober for the long term.

Aftercare not only helps patients maintain the progress they made in rehab but actively grows the foundation for a meaningful life of sobriety.

EXAMPLES OF AFTERCARE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INCLUDE:

- Alumni support groups that keep former patients in contact with one another
- Family support groups that provide education, counseling, and a safe space for former patients and their families
- 12-step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and other support groups like SMART Recovery, which foster community, support, and accountability
- Sponsors, recovery coaches, and mentors who can serve as a personal line of support
- Alumni events that gather former patients for fun and/or educational activities
- 24/7 hotlines that give former patients access to immediate support in times of crisis
- Regular check-ins with treatment staff to assess progress and address new challenges
- Outpatient rehab programs to help with the transition from rehab to the real world

Make the Transition Smoother with an Outpatient Program

Many patients who successfully complete an inpatient program still do not feel fully ready to re-enter the “real world.” For such individuals, attending an outpatient rehab program can help make the transition smoother.

Outpatient rehab provides continued structure and support but with greater flexibility and increased freedom. Patients live at home but are required to attend treatment sessions, like individual and group therapy, several times a week at the rehab facility.

Outpatient rehab allows people to test their newfound coping and life skills with the safety and accountability of a treatment program behind them.

Perhaps most importantly, outpatient rehab can decrease the chances of relapse.



Consider Sober Living

Sober living facilities, also known as sober homes/houses, sober living homes, and halfway houses, are residential facilities that provide a supportive and substance-free environment for people in recovery.

Many patients choose to live in a sober living facility after inpatient rehab, perhaps while they are attending outpatient rehab.

Sober living facilities almost always have a list of rules and regulations that all residents must follow to live there.

BENEFITS OF SOBER LIVING FACILITIES:

- A structured, supportive, safe, and substance-free environment
- House rules that promote sobriety, including curfews, mandatory support group attendance, and abstinence
- Peer support and accountability
- A smoother, more structured transition to independence
- The opportunity to learn and apply life skills
- Community integration
- A strong relapse prevention focus

POTENTIAL DOWNSIDES OF SOBER LIVING FACILITIES:

- Financial costs
- Limited privacy
- Varied quality
- Potential for negative influences
- Limited duration

The benefits of residing in a sober living home can far outweigh the negatives as long as you find a reputable facility. Consider asking treatment staff at the inpatient rehab you attended if they have any sober living homes they recommend.

You should also tour the sober living facility, ask about their rules, and see what sorts of recovery programs (e.g., support groups, job preparation) they offer.

Here to help you find and keep your sobriety. Call today: 1 (888) 433-0236

Know How You Will Deal with Triggers

The only way you'll achieve long-term sobriety is by learning how to deal with the triggers that drive you to use. The most effective way to "deal" with triggers is to avoid them altogether.

HERE ARE WAYS TO DO THIS:

1. Establish and enforce healthy boundaries with individuals who may trigger you to use.
2. Surround yourself with people who respect your recovery.
3. Replace old routines associated with substance use with new, healthier habits.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to completely avoid all triggers, and you will certainly have to face them from time to time. For this reason, it is critical to develop coping skills that can reduce the impact of unavoidable triggers.

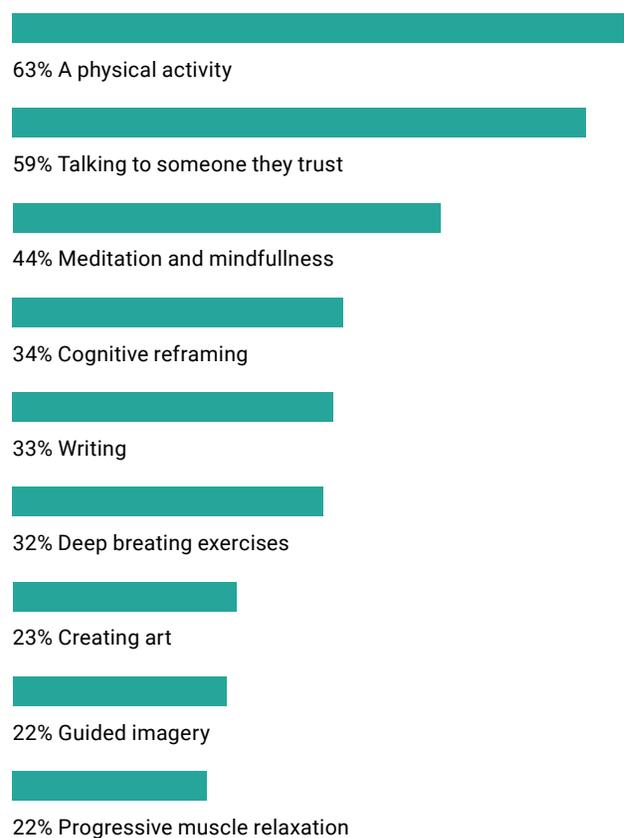
We asked 250 adults in recovery what coping skills have been the most effective for helping them deal with triggers and avoid relapse. These were the results:

- The most common answer was physical activity, like going for a walk or exercising (63%)
- A majority also said talking to someone they can trust, like a sponsor, friend, or family member (59%)
- 44% said meditation or mindfulness
- 34% said cognitive reframing (e.g., challenging negative thoughts, telling yourself you can get through it)
- 33% said writing
- 32% said deep breathing exercises
- 23% said creating art
- 22% said guided imagery (e.g., picturing yourself in your "happy place")
- 20% said progressive muscle relaxation



What are the most effective coping skills for dealing with triggers to use?

According to 250 people living in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction:



Lean on Your Support Network

Strong support networks can improve your quality of life and chances of maintaining sobriety by providing emotional support and accountability. Support networks reduce isolation, offer immediate support in times of crisis, and provide the opportunity to learn from others' experiences.

A sober person's support network should include a variety of individuals, like sponsors, friends in recovery, family members, therapists, and support groups.

Being able to lean on your support network is an important relapse prevention skill. You should reach out whenever you are feeling weak and vulnerable. Ideally, you will have someone you can contact at all hours of the day, like a sponsor or mentor, so you have around-the-clock protection.



Prioritize Self Care

Taking care of your emotional, physical, and spiritual self is one of the most effective ways to prevent relapse.

When you cultivate love and respect for yourself, you strengthen your ability to resist triggers and maintain sobriety.

“Participate in a holistic healing routine of exercise, therapy, and a self-help support group,” says licensed clinical social worker David Levin, a Certified Addiction Professional. “Find a purpose or mission in life where you can help yourself through helping others.”

IMPORTANT LIFESTYLE AND MINDSET CHANGES THAT YOU CAN MAKE INCLUDE:

- Sticking to a structured daily routine
- Getting regular exercise
- Eating a healthy diet
- Establishing healthy sleep habits
- Practicing mindfulness and stress reduction techniques
- Cultivating a positive, supportive, and sober social circle
- Engaging in activities that foster continued learning and growth (e.g., enrolling in art classes or taking an online course)
- Continuing to attend therapy and counseling sessions
- Volunteering and giving back to the community
- Being mindful of how much social media you consume
- Celebrating milestones, even if they are small

What to Do If You Relapse

While experiencing a relapse can be disheartening, it does not mean failure. And it doesn't have to mean you'll start using drugs and alcohol again.

Levin provides the following guidance for those who have relapsed:

- Return to treatment if possible, or a self-help support group if treatment is not an option.
- If you are not already on an anti-craving medication, speak with your healthcare provider about whether you should be on one.
- Perform a root cause analysis of the relapse and/or a timeline of events leading up to the relapse so that you can learn from your mistakes.
- Get back into recovery!

Remember, relapse is a common part of the recovery process. If it happens, give yourself some grace and remember that getting through it will only strengthen your ability to stay sober in the long run.

“Find a purpose or mission in life where you can help yourself through helping others.”

Warning Signs Your Loved One May Have Relapsed

Knowing the warning signs that your loved one may have relapsed can help prevent a major problem from developing. Here are some common signs that someone may have relapsed:

- Behavioral changes, especially isolation, withdrawal from social activities, secretive behavior, and defensiveness
- Physical signs, especially neglecting personal hygiene, extreme weight loss or gain, and bloodshot eyes
- Emotional and psychological changes, especially mood swings, irritability, sadness, and euphoria
- Changes in routine, lack of structure in daily activities, or neglecting responsibilities
- Unexplained financial issues or expenses
- Relationship changes, especially increased interpersonal conflict and a loss of interest in maintaining relationships with friends and loved ones
- Poor performance at school or work
- Changes in sleep patterns, such as both insomnia and excessive sleep
- Unexplained disappearances or absences
- No longer participating in hobbies, interests, or other previously enjoyed activities
- Drug paraphernalia, like empty bottles, needles, lighters, and small baggies

If you suspect that a loved one has relapsed, you must approach the situation with care and compassion. Calmly and openly express your concerns without judgment, and strongly encourage them to seek help.

You might also seek professional intervention, which an individual or rehab can help provide.

If you or your loved one has relapsed, we can help you find your way back to recovery.

There is hope!
Call now for help.

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All calls are confidential and free.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Addiction: A Family Disease

Have you ever heard the phrase, “addiction is a family disease”? It’s very true.

Family members are so profoundly impacted by their loved ones’ drug or alcohol use that most people who seek information about addiction treatment are parents, spouses, or children of addicts.

If this sounds familiar, know you’re not alone. In this chapter, we’ll dive into how addiction can impact relationships and the roles that different family members can play in helping—and hurting—someone who is struggling with a substance use disorder.



Good Intentions, Bad Outcomes: Codependency and Enabling

CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS CONSIST OF:

A “giver”

Feels responsible for the taker’s wellbeing and will go to excessive lengths to accommodate the taker’s needs while neglecting their own.

A “taker”

Prioritizes their own needs without reciprocating support. They make demanding requests and become manipulative when their needs aren’t met.

This imbalance enables the taker (addiction sufferer) while draining the giver (enabler). And the unhealthy dynamics that define codependent relationships often perpetuate and worsen the cycle of addiction.

MOST CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS SHARE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Mutual dependency: Both parties rely on each other to fulfill emotional needs. The giver (enabler) derives a sense of purpose from caretaking and the taker (addiction sufferer) relies on the enabler to shield them from negative feelings and consequences.
- Fear of confrontation: Both parties fear upsetting the balance of the relationship. They fear how the other person might respond if they try to establish boundaries or confront the addiction.
- Low self-esteem: Both parties typically suffer from low self-esteem, with both seeking validation through the relationship.
- Reinforcement of dysfunctional patterns: The taker (addiction sufferer) continues their destructive behavior because they do not have to face the consequences and the giver (enabler) continues enabling because they receive validation from the taker.

If you think you may be enabling your loved one, licensed clinical social worker and Certified Addiction Professional David Levin says, “Don’t buffer the negative consequences or emotional pain that could motivate them to seek help.”

In other words, do not shield your loved one from the negative repercussions of their behavior. Otherwise, they will have no reason to change.

“Don’t buffer the negative consequences or emotional pain that could motivate them to seek help.”

Types of Codependent Relationships in Addiction

Codependent relationships can be between friends, family members, or spouses, with some of the most common being:

Spouse to spouse:

Typically involves one spouse covering up for the addicted spouse, taking on their responsibilities, and neglecting their own needs.

Parent to child:

Typically manifests as the parent providing financial support without accountability, minimizing the severity of the problem, and shielding the child from consequences.

Child to parent:

Typically manifests as the child taking on caregiver responsibilities, attempting to control the parent's behavior, and internalizing feelings of guilt and responsibility.

Sibling to sibling:

Typically involves one sibling taking on caregiver responsibilities and covering up their sibling's actions.

If you think you may be in a codependent relationship, Levin recommends "Setting firm boundaries, promoting recovery, and seeking your own therapy and self-help support group."



Help your loved one break the cycle of addiction. Call today: 1 (888) 433-0236

Common Codependent Behaviors in Addiction

In the context of familial relationships and addiction, codependency can manifest in many different forms of enabling behavior, including:

- Providing financial support without ensuring it is used responsibly or without addressing the addiction
- Lying, making up excuses, or creating false narratives to cover up the addiction sufferer's behavior
- Covering up, denying, ignoring, or downplaying the existence or severity of the addiction
- Neglecting one's own personal well-being to accommodate the addiction sufferer's needs, desires, and demands
- Taking on the personal, familial, professional, or financial responsibilities of the addiction sufferer
- Ignoring personal boundaries and letting the addiction sufferer violate them
- Rescuing the addiction sufferer from the negative consequences of their actions
- Attempting to take control of the addiction sufferer's behavior, often through emotional or financial means

The first step in breaking out of codependency is recognizing the behaviors that define it. From there, a rehab or mental health professional can help you and your loved one develop a healthier relationship.

Family Roles in Addiction

THE ADDICT

THE SCAPEGOAT

THE CARETAKER

THE MASCOT

THE HERO

THE LOST CHILD



The Addict

The Addict is the individual who is suffering from a substance use disorder.

The Addict typically engages in secretive behaviors, neglects responsibilities, and is preoccupied with obtaining and using substances. Other family members often adapt their behavior to the Addict, who becomes the center of the family's conflict.

EXAMPLES OF HOW THE ADDICT BEHAVES:

- Allows others to enable their addiction
- Allows others to cover up for them
- Relies on other people for financial support
- Allows others to minimize their addiction
- Engages in secretive and deceptive behavior
- Minimizes the severity of their issues

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU ARE THE ADDICT INCLUDE:

- Seeking professional help from addiction counselors, therapists, support groups, and rehab programs
- Addressing the addiction and its underlying causes
- Encouraging open and honest communication within the family
- Setting and enforce healthy boundaries to prevent enabling

In families that suffer from codependency and addiction issues, each person typically assumes one of six common roles. Let's take a closer look at what defines each of these roles and more importantly, what healthier alternatives look like.



The Caretaker

The Caretaker assumes a nurturing and protective role over other family members, typically at the expense of their own well-being. They prioritize others' needs to the extent that their own emotional, mental, and physical health suffers.

However, they also use their caretaking and sacrifice to emotionally manipulate others. The Caretaker is often in deep denial of the family's issues, especially those of the Addict.

EXAMPLES OF HOW THE CARETAKER BEHAVES:

- Enables the Addict's behavior
- Shields others from the consequences of the Addict's actions
- Neglects their own personal needs
- Often uses victimhood and martyrdom to manipulate emotions
- Often experiences burnout
- Struggles with their own mental health

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU ARE THE CARETAKER INCLUDE:

- Establishing and enforcing healthy boundaries
- Prioritizing your own needs and well-being
- Accepting that others must experience the consequences of their actions
- Engaging in self-care practices
- Seeking out support from others
- Talking to a mental health professional
- Encouraging independence and responsibility among family members



The Hero

The Hero is a perfectionist and overachiever who is typically very concerned with image and appearances.

The Hero attempts to compensate for the dysfunction in the family by striving for success and doing whatever it takes to maintain a positive image for the family.

The Hero often over-assumes responsibility for the family's issues, and frequently attempts to "fix" the Addict and the family's dysfunction. They often suffer from high levels of stress.

EXAMPLES OF HOW THE HERO BEHAVES:

- Overachieves academically, athletically, or professionally
- Attempts to create a sense of stability and success within the family
- Tries to make themselves and their family appear as perfect as possible
- Avoids addressing problems or ignores them altogether
- Focuses on external achievements rather than underlying issues within the family

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU ARE THE HERO INCLUDE:

- Seeking emotional support from friends, family, or professionals
- Acknowledging the issues within the family and their true severity
- Addressing underlying family issues directly
- Recognizing that external success alone cannot heal family issues
- Fostering and encouraging open communication within the family



The Scapegoat

The Scapegoat tries to draw attention from the family's underlying issues by acting out and/or engaging in disruptive behavior.

Sometimes known as the "problem child," they often become the target for the family's blame and criticism, deflecting it from the actual cause.

Scapegoats may be partially motivated by the attention that the Addict receives and are often hostile and/or angry.

EXAMPLES OF HOW THE SCAPEGOAT BEHAVES:

- Engaging in rebellious and disruptive behavior
- Diverts the attention of family members from the Addict
- Becomes the target of blame and criticism from other family members
- Becomes the source of the family's problems
- Lashes out at other family members

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU ARE THE SCAPEGOAT INCLUDE:

- Finding healthier ways to express yourself
- Expressing your emotions constructively and honestly
- Not engaging in rebellious or disruptive behavior
- Seeking individual counseling
- Developing healthier coping mechanisms
- Advocating for family therapy
- Promoting open communication



The Lost Child

The Lost Child withdraws from family dynamics, typically becoming emotionally distant and detached in the process. They seek refuge in isolation and often try to remain unnoticed.

Typically, the Lost Child is deeply uncomfortable with conflict and will go to great lengths to avoid confrontation.

EXAMPLES OF HOW THE LOST CHILD INTERACTS WITH OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS:

- Isolates themselves from family members and family interactions
- Avoids confrontation whenever possible
- Steers clear of involvement in family problems, especially arguments
- Neglects own desires and needs
- Does everything possible to remain unnoticed in the family

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU ARE THE LOST CHILD INCLUDE:

- Openly expressing your feelings and concerns with your family members
- Working towards opening up communication with family members
- Seeking out individual counseling
- Exploring ways to constructively engage in family interactions and dynamics
- Set and enforce healthy interpersonal boundaries
- Making sure that your family is aware of your needs



The Mascot

The Mascot uses humor and a generally upbeat demeanor to cope with the family's issues and improve the mood of other family members.

They often use humor as a defense mechanism and a means to divert attention from the family's underlying issues.

The Mascot is deeply uncomfortable with the negative emotions of others and are unable or unwilling to recognize their own pain.

EXAMPLES OF HOW THE MASCOT INTERACTS WITH OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS:

- Excessively uses humor to diffuse tension and mask underlying issues
- Attempts to present a good mood to others and to improve their mood
- Avoids serious discussions about the addiction
- Attempts to change the subject in other ways if humor does not work
- Minimizes issues and attempts to reframe them in a positive way

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU ARE THE MASCOT INCLUDE:

- Properly balancing humor with seriousness
- Addressing the addiction and other underlying issues
- Accepting that sometimes negative emotions are necessary to resolve issues
- Investigating individual counseling
- Honestly expressing your emotions
- Developing healthier coping strategies

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CHAPTER NINE

Repairing Relationships Damaged by Addiction

Repairing addiction-damaged relationships can be challenging, but it's possible.

It will likely take time and it won't be perfect. However, the connections you forge throughout the journey could become stronger than ever before.

When we asked adults in recovery how their relationships had bounced back since seeking out treatment, we found that:

- 53% can talk more openly and honestly with their loved ones now.
- 52% say their loved ones trust them more now.
- 46% feel closer to their loved ones.
- 39% have set healthy boundaries.

How Relationships Affected by Addiction Recovered after Treatment

With the right tools, resources, and boundaries, you and your loved ones can begin to heal together. Let's explore different strategies for addiction sufferers and their loved ones who are looking to rebuild healthy relationships in the wake of addiction.

53%

Can talk more openly and honestly with loved ones

39%

Set healthy boundaries with their loved ones

46%

Feel closer to their loved ones

52%

Loved ones trust them more now

Relationship Repair Tips for Loved Ones of Addicts

If your friend or family member suffers from addiction, you've likely suffered as well.

The emotional toll of watching someone you love struggle with a substance use disorder is heavy. Yet, your feelings and needs may have been overlooked as most of the focus was placed on the addiction sufferer.

To move forward and offer the most helpful support, you must take care of yourself. Repairing a relationship with an addiction sufferer starts with you setting boundaries and practicing self-care.



Set Healthy Boundaries

Setting and enforcing healthy boundaries protects the addiction sufferer from slipping back into unhealthy habits. Boundaries also protect the personal well-being of all parties, promote accountability, and help maintain a stable environment.

EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BOUNDARIES THAT FRIENDS OR FAMILIES MIGHT SET WITH A LOVED ONE SUFFERING FROM ADDICTION INCLUDE:

- Zero tolerance for lying or breaking promises
- Mandatory family meetings
- Zero tolerance for substance use
- Not allowing their substance-using friends in your house
- Respect for privacy and personal space
- No longer providing them with financial support
- Curfews
- Required participation in treatment programs and support groups
- Self-care expectations
- Must have at least a part-time job, be in school, or actively applying for jobs/school

Boundaries in Action!

Scenario:

Your adult child, struggling with alcohol addiction, asks you for money. They claim they need it for groceries, but you suspect they'll use it for alcohol.

"I understand you need help, but I can't give you the money directly. I can buy groceries for you or take you to the store myself, though. If you're truly struggling, I want you to call your support group or let me help you find professional help. I love you and I'm here to support your recovery, but I can't enable your addiction."

This boundary addresses the specific behavior (requesting money) without judgment and offers an alternative solution that meets their needs without enabling the addiction. It clearly communicates your support for their recovery and sets a firm limit on your involvement in the addiction. It also encourages them to seek professional help, which is essential for long-term recovery.

Finally, one of the most important parts of setting boundaries is respecting them. All boundaries must have clearly established consequences if they are violated, and these consequences must be imposed when necessary.

Practice Self-Care

Self-care improves your mental, physical, and spiritual health. It also keeps you in a positive state of mind and improves your ability to communicate with a person suffering from addiction in a healthy manner.

Taking care of yourself is crucial to helping your addicted loved one. You must first take care of yourself before you can properly take care of others.

"You have to be willing to put in the work (Al-Anon, family counseling, self-acceptance, self-love, and self-forgiveness). Then you can accept, forgive, and love your addicted loved one," says David Levin, a licensed clinical social worker and Certified Addiction Professional (CAP).

There are different ways to practice self-care, both individually and with other family members – sometimes including someone suffering from addiction.

All healthy self-care practices should "fill your cup." In other words, they should help you and your family feel accomplished, satisfied, and at peace without any sense of guilt or regret.

Try a few out and see which ones feel the best, then commit those to your individual and family routines.

INDIVIDUAL SELF-CARE PRACTICES:

- Talking to a therapist
- Practicing meditation and mindfulness
- Journaling
- Physical exercise
- Reading
- Getting adequate sleep
- Drawing, painting, sculpting, or collaging
- Listening to music
- Dancing
- Practicing deep breathing techniques
- Mindful walking
- Eating a healthy diet
- Taking a digital detox

GROUP OR FAMILY SELF-CARE PRACTICES:

- Family therapy
- Family exercise sessions
- Planning and cooking meals together
- Family game nights
- Family movie nights
- Nature walks or hikes
- Family vacations
- Group meditation or yoga
- Group DIY projects
- Technology-free periods
- Family meetings

Relationship Repair Tips for Addiction Sufferers

A big part of the addiction recovery process is making amends and rebuilding relationships with those you love most. It is not an easy thing to do.

It can be painful to bring up past events and acknowledge the hurt that has come from your addiction. However, addressing the damage and giving your loved ones time and space to process are some of the most meaningful steps you can take to heal your relationships.

Acknowledge the Damage

It's critical that addiction sufferers acknowledge the damage their disease has afflicted upon their relationships. Not many relationships make it out of addiction without a few battle scars.

Acknowledging your loved ones have endured pain is a critical first step on the path to rebuilding relationships. Validate their feelings and apologize when appropriate.

Remember, forgiveness isn't immediately necessary or likely to happen. What's most important is that you're opening the lines of communication in a safe and productive way.

To find more about how addiction can damage relationships, we asked 250 recovering drug and alcohol addicts how their substance use negatively affected their loved ones:

Don't Rush It

Addiction can shatter trust in an instant – and rebuilding it can take a significant amount of time, commitment, and consistency.

It's crucial to remember that you cannot rush the process of repairing relationships. Just because you feel like you are now trustworthy does not prove you are trustworthy.

You must take the process of rebuilding trust day by day. Know there will be setbacks, but that you can deal with them when they happen.



How Addiction Negatively Affected an Addict's Loved Ones



“Building trust takes T.I.M.E.” (Things I Must Earn)

You will earn trust over time as you stay sober, respect boundaries, and show your friends and family you are a different person now that you're no longer in the throes of addiction.

Relationship Repair Tips for Addiction Sufferers and Their Loved Ones

Repairing relationships damaged by addiction takes effort from both the addiction sufferer and their loved ones. Luckily, there are steps you can take together to make the process easier and more effective.

We'll close out this chapter with tips that addiction sufferers as well as their friends and family can both use when rebuilding their relationships.



We can help your family heal the damage caused by addiction. Call today: 1 (888) 433-0236

Ask a Professional to Mediate

Addiction can create distrust, anger, and resentment amongst the addiction sufferer and their loved ones. Relationships are oftentimes so badly damaged that it's difficult for the two parties to even be in the same room, much less achieve meaningful breakthroughs. This means it might be necessary to bring in a professional therapist to mediate.

SOME OF THE BIGGEST BENEFITS OF USING A THERAPIST TO MEDIATE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS INCLUDE:

- **Neutral mediation:** A therapist can help balance and guide the conversation with a neutral and unbiased perspective.
- **Creation of a safe space:** Therapists' neutrality enables them to create a safe space where all parties can express their feelings openly and without judgment.
- **Healthy communication:** A therapist can set ground rules and prevent disagreements from escalating, ensuring communication remains constructive.
- **The ability to tackle underlying issues:** A therapist can help address the root causes of relationship issues, enabling patients to work towards more meaningful and long-term resolutions.
- **Education, resources, and tools:** Therapists help patients understand addiction, the challenges of recovery, and the tools they need to maintain healthier relationships moving forward.

Practice Healthy Communication Skills

Healthy communication skills dramatically improve the quality of relationships, heal family bonds, and help provide a supportive environment that promotes recovery for the addiction sufferer.

SOME HIGHLY EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS THAT ALL PARTIES CAN PRACTICE INCLUDE:

Active listening:

Fully concentrate on what the other person is saying, ask questions, and take a genuine interest in their needs.

Empathy:

Acknowledge and validate the speaker's emotions so they feel understood and heard.

"I" statements:

Express your emotions and needs without blaming others by avoiding "you" statements, and instead constructing statements that follow this format:

*"I feel [emotion] when [event] because [how event affects you].
Moving forward, [what you would like to happen in the future]."*

Appropriate and controlled body language:

Use non-verbal cues to convey helpful emotions and good intentions, like uncrossing your arms, leaning in, and maintaining eye contact.

Appropriately timing discussions:

If you need to talk to your loved one, avoid emotionally charged or triggering times.

Be assertive, not abrasive:

Be honest and straightforward while maintaining composure and respect for the other person.

Avoiding enabling language:

Don't minimize the existence or seriousness of their addiction or any of the consequences of it.

Foster an Environment of Love and Support

FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Fostering a healthy environment not only supports sobriety efforts, but it can help mend damaged relationships. If you're a friend or family member of someone suffering from addiction, try to make changes to their environment to help them get clean and reestablish relationships.

Support, don't enable: Express care and concern without making excuses or shielding them from natural consequences. Establish boundaries if needed. Listening without judgment also helps.

Limit access to addictive behaviors: Restrict money and resources that would enable harmful behaviors. Do not store substances at your home or use them around the addiction sufferer. Control accessibility in your space and encourage sober activities.

Foster healthy social connections: Introduce new positive social circles from support groups. Isolation can enable addiction, so encourage wholesome social activities.

Set up distraction-free spaces: Design comfortable, relaxing areas in your home with minimal triggers. Limit access to smart devices, TVs, or anything in your space that could cause negative feelings.

Communicate from a place of love: Have tough conversations with caring intentions, not frustration. Stay calm when addressing unhealthy patterns to create a safe space.

Make counseling a priority: Urge your loved one to attend recovery meetings, support groups, or therapy. Offer to drive them to remove barriers and share educational materials around their condition.

FOR ADDICTION SUFFERERS

As someone suffering from addiction, fostering a healthy living environment is critical to your recovery and fixing relationships with loved ones. Here are some things you should focus on:

Seek out supportive people: Surrounding yourself with understanding people who care about your well-being creates a positive atmosphere. Make connections at support groups and avoid relationships that enable addictive behaviors.

Establish a daily routine: Structure your day by planning things like regular activities, meals, and exercise. Consistency provides stability during recovery.

Manage triggers: Identify people, places, and things that trigger you and make changes to minimize exposure to them. Triggers often include certain social circles or locations associated with your addiction.

Make your space addiction-proof: Whether it's alcohol or addictive foods, remove tempting substances from your living space to support your goals.

Pick up healthy habits: Incorporate new positive outlets like meditation, journaling, and recreational activities. Idle time and stress can trigger a relapse, so explore hobbies that fulfill you.

Seek counseling: Work through underlying issues with a counselor specializing in addiction treatment for coping techniques tailored to your situation. Having professional support boosts outcomes.

Celebrate Milestones and Small Victories Together.

There are no small victories when it comes to addiction recovery. Every milestone is worth celebrating. In the beginning, addiction sufferers might start by celebrating each sober day and then slowly move to weeks, months, and years. Acknowledging the "small" victories helps build momentum for long-term recovery.

Celebrating together provides the addiction sufferer with positive reinforcement and lets them know that their loved ones are truly invested in their recovery. It also provides the family with peace of mind that things are improving. Perhaps most importantly, it provides an opportunity for bonding and relationship strengthening.



Do Relationships Recover from Addiction?

Relationships can and do recover from addiction. You can reconnect with your loved ones. You can repair the damage together.

With the right help, tools, and a lot of patience, you can rebuild addiction-damaged relationships. It won't be easy, but restoring those connections makes the process worth the work.

Start Living a Meaningful Life of Sobriety

One of the most tragic parts of addiction is that it slowly kills hope. It can seem like nothing will ever get better. It can feel like there is no escape. Luckily, nothing could be further from the truth.

Better Addiction Care is dedicated to helping you or your loved one overcome addiction. We believe in everyone's ability to achieve sobriety and live a meaningful life.

Our treatment approach combines evidence-based therapies, medication, and peer support to address all aspects of addiction, so you are healed in mind, body, and spirit.

We are committed to making sure you get the treatment you need. We accept most leading insurance providers and can help you figure out other payment options if necessary.

Don't wait another minute. Get help today.

Start your healing journey by verifying your insurance or by calling 1 (888) 433-0236.

There is hope! Call now for help.

1 (888) 433-0236

All calls are confidential and free.

<https://www.addictionresource.com/>

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