



Rensselaer County Recovery Helpline



NAVIGATING ADDICTION SERVICES IN AND AROUND RENSSELAER COUNTY (CAPITAL DISTRICT)



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About this guide

Its purpose

The purpose of this guide is to help people suffering from addiction--and the people who love and want to help them--figure out where to go, what to do, and how to go about doing it. There are many services for individuals with addiction, but this guide is meant to be more than just a list of those services. Instead, it's meant to be a real "how to" for navigating your way through them. Countless people have covered this ground before; this guide attempts to capture all the lessons they've learned about what works and what doesn't work so that ultimately, you or your loved one are successful getting what's needed when it's needed on the road to recovery.

How this guide is organized

This guide is organized around questions: questions about what type of treatment options are out there, how to go about figuring out which option is best, how insurance coverage factors into things, what kinds of resources are out there to support sober living, and where the hang-ups, tripwires and landmines are located so they can be avoided. The questions are all written in the first person, as though being asked by the person needing addiction services for him or her -self, but the answers should be equally helpful to the concerned parent, sibling, friend or anyone else trying to help them.

True or false?

A person with an addiction to drugs or alcohol is "lost."

False. Recovery IS possible and in fact, there are more people out there in long-term recovery than currently suffering from addiction.

Recovery sticks the first time.

False. Sadly, addiction is a formidable foe, and it often lands a lot of punches before it finally gets knocked out. Relapse is not only possible; you can practically count on it. However, the person that fails—even a dozen times—is STILL capable of recovery. Don't give up.

There is one way to go about getting and staying in recovery.

False. There are LOTS of ways to go about getting—and staying in recovery. Also, there are lots of points of entry into the system of services and supports.

Enough. I want recovery. What are my treatment options?

Formal treatment takes many forms, and no one type of treatment is best for everyone. There are many roads to recovery. You may think that you need to choose just the right program and if you don't, treatment will fail. But actually, any of a number of programs can lead to success – if a person is willing to accept help from others and invest energy in working on recovery. A physician or other health care professional can also help guide a person to the most appropriate treatment.

Inpatient vs Outpatient Treatment. Drug and alcohol treatment programs generally fall into one of two categories — inpatient rehabilitation (or "rehab") or outpatient treatment. Inpatient rehabilitation programs are intensive, residential treatment programs designed to treat more serious addictions (also sometimes referred to as “substance use disorders”). Outpatient treatment programs are part-time, allowing the recovering user to keep going to work or school during the day. Each type has unique attributes and benefits to offer.

Inpatient rehabilitation. Inpatient rehabilitation programs require a patient to check themselves into a controlled environment to overcome their addiction(s). Patients stay at a clinic with 24-hour medical and emotional support where a typical stay averages 7-28 days. During inpatient treatment, residents are able to completely focus on getting well and sober without the distractions of everyday life. A typical day in an inpatient program is carefully scheduled and accounted for. Psychologists, counselors and psychiatrists meet with patients individually and in group settings to guide inpatient recovery (see list of inpatient treatment centers in the Rensselaer County Mental Health and Addiction Services Directory).

Typically, *inpatient rehabilitation* is suitable for those who:

- have a severe substance use disorder with long history of use;
- have tried outpatient treatment, but relapsed soon after;
- need to remove themselves from their current environment to get or stay sober;
- have very few, if any, family or other social supports available;
- Can commit to a long-term stay in a facility.

Outpatient treatment. Outpatient treatment does not include living at a facility and is therefore more suitable for people with jobs or extensive social supports; it is also less expensive than inpatient rehabilitation. Outpatient treatment can vary in the types and intensity of services offered. Some outpatient models, such as intensive day treatment, are similar to residential programs in intensity of services and effectiveness. Additionally, many outpatient facilities are able to

prescribe addiction medication, such as Vivitrol and/or Suboxone, to assist with recovery (see list of outpatient treatment centers in the Rensselaer County Mental Health and Addiction Services Directory).

Typically, *outpatient treatment* is suitable for those who:

- have a less severe substance use disorder *or* a shorter history of use;
- have family/social support in their current environment;
- wish to maintain their current employment/school status;
- cannot commit to inpatient rehab;
- have a history of being able to stay sober in the past.

Residential Services. Residential treatment is highly structured, with activities designed to help residents examine damaging beliefs, self-concepts, and destructive patterns of behavior and adopt new, more constructive ways to interact with others. Many residential treatment centers offer comprehensive services that focus on life skills, including employment training and other support services, onsite. Residential services include three levels of care: intensive residential rehabilitation, community residential services, and supportive living services.

Intensive Residential Rehabilitation treatment centers, formerly known as therapeutic communities, are designed for individuals who are unable to participate in or comply with treatment outside a 24-hour structured treatment setting and who have substantial deficits in functional skills. Services provided at these treatment centers enhance the social and functional skills of individuals who may engage in inappropriate social behaviors, have poor personal care skills and/or have difficulties with activities of daily living.

Community Residential Services are designed to provide a safe, alcohol and drug-free therapeutic domestic environment for individuals who are homeless or whose home environment does not support treatment and recovery. These services are provided in conjunction with outpatient treatment services and other services as indicated in the treatment plan.

Supportive Living Services provide independent living with limited supervision for individuals who are referred from other treatment facilities, who need an alcohol and drug-free residence with peer support, but who exhibit skills and strengths necessary to maintain sobriety and readapt to independent living in the community. It should be noted that these apartments can be difficult to obtain as the demand is so high.

It should also be noted that, in addition to the three types of residential treatment options identified above, there are also facilities that provide inpatient rehabilitation *and* community residential services on the same campus.

I'm committed to treatment. How do I make it happen?

There are three ways to access inpatient or outpatient treatment:

1. **Referral from a Medical Detoxification Program.** Upon completion of a medical detoxification program, an individual will receive a referral from the detox facility to either inpatient rehabilitation or outpatient treatment.
2. **Referral based on a LOCADTR evaluation.** An individual who does not need a detox program can be evaluated at an outpatient treatment clinic using a tool called the LOCADTR. They will then be referred to inpatient rehabilitation or outpatient treatment based on the results of the LOCADTR evaluation.
3. **Individual choice.** Individuals and/or family members can choose a facility and type of treatment, then contact the facility themselves for admission requirements. Individuals and families may contact a Rensselaer County Peer Engagement Specialist for help and guidance.

Referral from a Medical Detoxification Program. If the individual is in active withdrawal (i.e. not currently using, showing physical withdrawal symptoms), start by contacting a facility that offers a medical detoxification program or “med detox” (see resource directory). This would be advisable for people who have been using heavily for a longer period of time and are more likely to have more severe withdrawal symptoms, or those with other significant health problems. Inpatient detox allows the individual to be closely monitored throughout the process and given appropriate medication to prevent severe withdrawal symptoms.

An appointment with a med detox facility is typically not necessary, as most places are required to treat someone in withdrawal *IF* they meet the facility's admission criteria. A typical medical detoxification can take an average of 3-7 days.

Ambulatory (outpatient) detox is also available for those in either mild or moderate withdrawal or experiencing opiate withdrawal, not requiring hospitalization. (Please refer to the Resource guide for available facilities.

Referral based on a LOCADTR evaluation. If the individual is actively using and, therefore, *not* experiencing withdrawal symptoms, contact an outpatient treatment clinic for an evaluation/assessment.

During an evaluation, a complete review of an individual's substance use is conducted. The clinician will ask questions related to general physical health history, history of drug use, prior treatment, mental health, employment status, and current living environment. In New York State, the Level of Care for Alcohol and Drug Treatment Referral

(LOCADTR) assessment tool is used to ensure placement in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting. While most people believe that more treatment will lead to a better outcome, which is not always the case. Treatment should be matched to an individual's need in order to achieve the best possible outcome.

The LOCADTR results will determine the next step and which is more appropriate-- inpatient rehabilitation or outpatient treatment. If inpatient rehabilitation is the most appropriate and the individual and his/her family agrees, the evaluator will identify and secure an open bed in an inpatient facility, contact the insurance company for guidelines, and advise on next steps. If outpatient care is more appropriate, the evaluator will make an appointment for the individual and provide the individual and his/her family with information regarding local support services.

Individual Choice. People DO have the ability to choose their own treatment option, provided they have the financial resources to pay for them. Most people, however, will have to contend with their insurance companies.

What are the hang-ups, tripwires and landmines to look for when trying to get into rehab?

In addition to being a less restrictive form of treatment, outpatient treatment is typically easier to access. An appointment is usually made available within 2-3 days and there is little, if any, paperwork or testing that needs to be done in preparation for the appointment.

However, a person trying to access inpatient rehabilitation, especially if they are trying to do that based on individual choice rather than relying on a referral from med detox or the LOCADTR, can face some potential pitfalls. Most inpatient facilities require fairly extensive testing prior to admission. Routine blood work, urinalysis, a recent physical, TB test, STD testing, and a psych/social evaluation are routinely required to be completed not just prior to admission, but also within a certain narrow time frame. Completing these tests and attending the follow-up appointments requires someone to have a driver's license (or a reliable form of transportation available to them), flexibility from any work/school requirements, and the ability to organize and prioritize. In addition to being faced with extensive admission requirements, lengthy wait times can potentially derail a person's recovery efforts. It is not uncommon for a facility to be filled to capacity at any given time. While the OASAS dashboard identifies available beds (see: <https://bi1.oasas.ny.gov/analytics/saw.dll?Dashboard>), it is not always up-to-date and the location may not be desirable for the individual and his or her family.

Insurance coverage, and especially the lack of coverage, plays a significant role in an individual's ability to access appropriate treatment as well. Each facility an individual

visits will contact the appropriate insurance company for treatment coverage guidelines prior to admission. Though treatment centers will follow the insurance company's guidelines, most (especially the non-profits) will often offer treatment on a sliding fee scale for those with limited or no coverage.

I need things to support my sobriety. What's out there?

Recovery Centers. Recovery Centers offer many support services to help individuals in recovery improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. They can be a valued resource for the community by providing:

- recovery supports for individuals and their families, who are in, or seeking, recovery from substance use;
- information and education to the community on how to access treatment, including the navigation of insurance and treatment issues;
- wellness information and activities to support recovery;
- the extensive use of peer supports and volunteers.

Support/Self-Help Groups. In addition to recovery centers, there are other resources that help support an individual's recovery. Peer self-help groups can be an invaluable source of guidance, assistance, and encouragement. Groups are very helpful, not only to help an individual maintain sobriety, but also as a safe place to get support and discuss challenges. Connecting with others who know first-hand what you're going through can help reduce feelings of isolation, fear, and hopelessness. Staying motivated and positive is much easier when you have others you can turn to and lean on to help you get through tough times. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is the most well-known self-help group and it's widely available. Nar-Anon groups are peer support groups for families of those struggling with substance use disorder and are as valuable to family members as NA is to the individual. Both of these Twelve Step programs focus on overcoming substance use disorder through spirituality, honesty, and the tradition of service. A list of groups can be found in the Mental Health and Addiction Services Directory.

Peer-led recovery organizations. Participation in a peer-led organization, such as Young People in Recovery (YPR) or Friends of Recovery-New York (FOR-NY), can have a tremendous impact on an individual's recovery as well. Leaders and members are in recovery themselves and are familiar with the challenges unique to substance use disorder. They are often focused on educating the community about substance use disorder and recovery, promoting local resources, and advancing public policy to help reduce the stigma of recovery and increase access to substance use treatment and support services.

Peer Engagement Specialists and Recovery Support Services. Provide support, encouragement and guidance in finding appropriate services to persons misusing substances and/or who are in recovery. The Peer Engagement Specialist develops brief

service plans and provides referrals and linkages to needed services/supports. Peer Engagement Specialists are in Recovery, they have personal experience and expertise in addiction services. They tend to be especially effective with outreach and engagement of people who are struggling with recovery and/or have been reluctant to participate in services. Rensselaer County Mental Health employs a Certified Recovery Peer Advocate (CRPA).

Suggestions for updates and additions can be submitted to the
Rensselaer County Recovery Helpline
at the following email:

Renscohelpline@gmail.com

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