

# Newton PATH Guide to Finding Substance Use Treatment

Choosing substance use treatment can be overwhelming. No single treatment approach is appropriate for all individuals. Finding the right treatment program involves careful consideration of such things as the setting, length of care, philosophical approach, and your or your loved one's needs. This guide provides some information on what to look for when choosing treatment for you and/or your loved one.

## Detoxification (Detox)

Detox, or stopping the use of substances and managing withdrawal, is the first step that prepares a person for treatment. Detox can be inpatient (Acute Treatment Services) or outpatient. It can be accessed from an emergency room or by calling a program directly. The typical length of stay for inpatient detox is one week. Some inpatient programs offer both treatment and detox.

There are multiple types of treatment programs following detox. Your options include clinical support services/transitional support services, residential programs, partial hospitalization or day treatment, and outpatient and intensive outpatient programs. Treatment programs may or may not include medication-assisted treatment.

## Clinical Support Services (CSS)/Transitional Support Services (TSS)

CSS and TSS are short-term residential programs for individuals who need a safe and structured environment to support their recovery process after detox. CSS is typically 2 weeks and is paid for by the client's insurance. TSS is typically 2-6 weeks, and clients can stay until they find a residential treatment bed. TSS is paid for by the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS). Referrals to CSS/TSS are usually made by case manager at the detox facility, but you can also self-refer.

## Residential Programs

Residential programs (sober living, recovery home, therapeutic community, etc.) provide a long-term living environment with treatment services for individuals who have been stabilized medically. Treatment often occurs in phases, with different expectations and activities during each phase. Residential programs are best for people who need a safe and structured environment to support their recovery process. Residential treatment may help people with very serious substance use disorders who have been unable to stay substance free in other environments.

## Partial Hospitalization or Day Treatment

In these programs, the individual attends treatment for 4-8 hours per day, but lives at home. These programs usually last for at least 1-2 weeks and work best for people who have a stable, supportive home environment.

## Outpatient and Intensive Outpatient Programs

Outpatient programs provide treatment at a program site, but the person lives elsewhere (usually at home). Outpatient treatment programs have different requirements for attendance – some require daily attendance while others only meet 1-3 times per week. Intensive outpatient treatment programs require individuals to attend 9-20 hours of treatment activities per week. Outpatient programs usually last from about 2 months to 1 year. People who do best in an outpatient program are able to attend counseling sessions regularly, have community supports, have a place to live, and have some form of transportation to get to treatment sessions. Outpatient treatment may consist of individual/group therapy, family counseling, self-help/mutual support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and/or medication-assisted treatment.

## Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

MAT is the use of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies to treat opioid and alcohol use disorders. Not all providers are authorized to prescribe these medications, so it is important to ask when you are selecting a treatment provider.

**Acamprosate (Campral):** Acamprosate is used to treat alcohol use disorder. It helps the brains of people with chronic, heavy use of alcohol to work normally again. It helps prevent people from drinking alcohol but does not prevent withdrawal symptoms after people drink alcohol. It is typically taken by mouth 3 times daily.

**Buprenorphine (Buprenex, Butrans, Probuphine):** Buprenorphine is used to treat opioid use disorder by suppressing and reducing cravings and preventing withdrawal symptoms. It comes in tablet and film form and is dissolved under the tongue or in the cheek. You may also be prescribed a combination of buprenorphine and naloxone (Suboxone, Zubsolv, Bunavail). Naloxone blocks the effects of opioids and is added to decrease the likelihood of misuse.

**Disulfiram (Antabuse):** Disulfiram is used to treat alcohol use disorder by causing unpleasant effects when even small amounts of alcohol are consumed. It is taken by mouth once daily.

**Methadone (Methadose, Diskets, Dolophine):** Methadone is used to treat opioid use disorder. It tricks the brain into thinking it's still getting the abused drug, so withdrawal doesn't occur.

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding can safely take methadone. Methadone is taken once daily by mouth. Early in treatment, patients must go to a clinic daily to receive the medication. Later in treatment patients may be allowed to take methadone at home.

**Naltrexone (Vivitrol, Revia):** Naltrexone is used to treat both opioid and alcohol use disorder. It blocks the euphoric and sedative effects of opioids and alcohol. It can be started once a patient is opioid-free for at least 7-14 days. It is typically administered monthly as an injection by a doctor or nurse in a clinic.

### Questions to consider when selecting a treatment program

#### General questions for all treatment programs:

1. Has the program been licensed or certified by the state? (In Massachusetts, substance use treatment programs are licensed by the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services in the Department of Public Health) Is the program currently in good standing in the state? Are the staff qualified?
2. Does the program accept your insurance? If not, will they work with you on a payment plan or find other means of support for you? (Some programs have beds that are free for those who do not have insurance)
3. What does the program cost? What is included in the cost?
4. How soon can you be admitted into the program? Is there a waiting list?
5. What is the length of the program?
6. For how long do you need to be substance-free prior to admission? (This question does not apply to detox)
7. Does the program encompass the full range of needs of the individual including medical, psychological, social, vocational, and legal?
8. Does the treatment program also address sexual orientation and physical disabilities as well as provide age, gender, and culturally appropriate treatment services?
9. Does the program offer counseling (individual or group) and other behavioral therapies to enhance the individual's ability to function in the family/community?
10. Is there ongoing assessment of an individual's treatment plan to ensure it meets changing needs?

11. Does the program offer medication as part of the treatment regimen, if appropriate?
12. Does the facility have case management/aftercare planning to help make referrals to the next stage in your recovery?
13. Are services or referrals offered to family members to ensure they understand addiction and the recovery process to help them support the recovering individual?
14. Is drug testing mandatory? Is drug testing random or only performed when there is suspicion of drug use?
15. What is the policy in case the individual in recovery relapses?

Questions specific to residential programs:

1. Is the sober home certified by Massachusetts Alliance for Sober Housing (MASH)? You can visit their website ([www.mashsoberhousing.org/certified-residences](http://www.mashsoberhousing.org/certified-residences)) for a list of certified homes.
2. Are there support groups, case management, and/or individual/group therapy available? Is support available 24/7?
3. What are the house rules (cars, smoking, overnight guests, overnight absences, curfew, drug testing, etc.)?

**Do you have questions or want to speak to someone?**

MA Substance Abuse Helpline  
800.327.5050  
<http://helpline-online.com/>

City of Newton  
Health and Human Services Department  
617.796.1420  
<http://www.newtonma.gov/NewtonPath>

*Information in this guide adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*