

When Exploring Treatment Centers First ask these simple questions

- Does the treatment center have licensed staff?
- Does the treatment center use evidence-based best practices such as?
 - ✓ Trauma informed treatment
 - ✓ Marriage and family therapy with a LMFT.
 - ✓ How much are families involved in treatment?
 - ✓ Is the treatment in network with your insurance?
 - ✓ Is housing separate from the treatment (called FL model).



Continue considering these more in-depth questions.

1) Does it enjoy a good reputation?

If possible, ask for references and ask around. Better facilities should be able to provide you with contact information for graduates of their program and talking with these people can give a better idea of the quality of care and the suitability of the program for you. You should also consider calling your local better business bureau to inquire about any complaints and ask your doctor or health services provider if they have heard anything good or bad about the program.

It only takes a few minutes, and it may save you from a costly mistake.

2) Is it clean and organized?

Running a successful and comprehensive facility is tough, and not everyone does it well. It can be hard to evaluate how well the staff do their jobs therapeutically, but if the staff do not keep the facilities clean and well maintained, they may be performing poorly in other areas as well.

Ideally, you don't want treatment at a facility where staff are overwhelmed, overworked and underpaid. If you have difficulty getting basic information on the phone, if staff do not return your phone calls in a timely matter, or if you do not feel as though you are being treated with respect, these may be signals of lower quality care.

3) Is the facility accredited?

You may not have the luxury of deciding between facilities, but if you do, try to find an accredited facility employing professional addictions staff. An unaccredited facility is not necessarily poor quality, but without accreditation you will have no way of knowing how well they perform therapeutically, and whether or not they meet basic governmental regulations on therapeutic care. Accredited facilities will need to offer services with proven effectiveness, need to employ qualified and licensed professionals and will receive regular evaluations from governmental agencies to ensure that standards are being met.

Accreditation does not necessarily signify a very high standard of care, but it does protect against a very low standard of care.

4) Does the facility offer a number of distinct forms of therapies?

No one form of treatment works well for everyone in recovery, and better residential care facilities will generally offer a few very distinct forms of programming to better ensure that at least one therapy works for most.

If you go to a facility that offers only 12 step programming, and you find that you cannot relate to the 12 steps, you are not likely to receive much of value from your stay. Look for rehabs that offer a range of therapies including 12 steps based, group recovery, individual therapy, cognitive behavioral therapies, and ideally, peripheral therapies such as equine therapy, yoga, karate, meditation and others. The more that's offered; the better the chances.

5) What does the daily schedule look like?

You have a big job to do and not much time to get it done, and you can't afford to waste your days in a leisurely manner while in treatment. Ask to see the weekly schedule and look for a program of therapies and events that fills each and every day. Beware of programs that offer too much private reflection, free time or personal meditation time. In small amounts these are all beneficial, but in greater amounts they simply indicate a low intensity of more valuable therapies.

6) What's the completion rate?

Relying on so called success rates can be misleading. Facilities measure success differently, and some may not make much of an effort to really find out about relapse so as to keep their success statistics high. Treatment completion rates tell you a lot more. In general, the longer you stay in rehab the better your eventual prognosis, and a facility that boasts a very high completion rate likely offers a high success rate as well.

7) Can family get involved?

Family participation in the therapies prove very beneficial to long term sobriety, and if possible, you want to get your family into the rehab facility, and actively participating in education and therapies that are proven to work.

Some longer-term programs may limit family participation for the first period of care, which is fine; but if possible, you should select a facility that will at some point involve your family in a meaningful way.

8) Do they medicate?

No one therapy works well alone, and for the best chance of success you need to have access to a comprehensive range of tools against relapse. No medications currently available work well on their own, but when combined with therapies and education, these medications can offer additional assistance towards sobriety. If possible, look for a facility that can offer you pharmacological therapies when appropriate.

Medications may also help to alleviate the physical and psychological pains of withdrawal and are especially needed for patients with even minor forms of dual diagnosis.

9) How much aftercare is offered?

Nothing recovery better than a long and intense participation in therapies of aftercare following the graduation from a residential facility. The initial weeks and months of freedom offer great temptations, and the success rates for people who do not maintain aftercare therapies are low.

The longer the aftercare is offered, the better.

10) Does the philosophy of care match your beliefs?

If you're not a Christian, even the most comprehensive and high-quality Christian based program may not offer much of therapeutic value. You need to ensure that you get into treatment that matches your beliefs which resonates with your cultural background, and treats you with respect, regardless of your race, gender or sexuality.

Get the best you can

If you have insurance or money to pay for private care, you should ensure that any facility under consideration satisfies all concerns, and answers all of the preceding questions well. If you can pay, you can go anywhere, and you have no reason to settle for anything less than a perfect fit.

If you cannot pay, and are reliant on subsidized or charitable care, you will not enjoy the same number of options and you may be forced to make some compromises. Try to select a facility that answers as many of the preceding question criteria well as possible and remember that any treatment is far preferable to no treatment.