Main Differences In Outpatient And Intensive Outpatient Programs For Drug Addiction

by Robert Alexander Center | Nov 28, 2022 | Blog

If you or a loved one requires drug addiction treatment, it's important to know the difference between outpatient therapy and intensive outpatient programs. While both can provide support, the right choice will always depend on the needs of the patient.

Outpatient therapy is a treatment program that is designed to be part-time while fitting with the personal and professional schedule of the individual. Instead of gaining addiction treatment at an addiction treatment center, support is provided while patients continue to live at home. However, they may be required to visit a treatment facility at certain points.

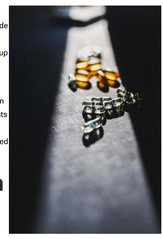
The aim of this type of therapy is to help people recover from drug addiction while also preventing a relapse. However, sometimes outpatient programs do not provide the necessary support to achieve this goal. In cases like this, an intensive outpatient program for drug addiction is recommended instead.

The Differences Between Outpatient and Intensive Outpatient Program For Drug Addiction

As mentioned, outpatient therapy is designed to provide part-time support to patients while will fit the requirements of a busy schedule and a continuous personal or professional life.

In contrast, intensive outpatient programs will provide additional support but they'll also require more time and attention from the patient. As such, a program like this can act as a balance between inpatient and outpatient programs for drug treatment or even alcohol treatment.

What Is Included In An Outpatient Program?



A typical outpatient program will only require a few hours of sessions throughout the week. This can include both individual and group counseling. These are ideal for those who do still want the support of the right group around them but feel confident enough to return or continue with their daily lives.

As mentioned, this is often viewed as a step down from inpatient support and can be the next step after patients complete the full detoxification process at a treatment facility. Full outpatient programs can also be customized to ensure that they meet individual needs.

What Is Included In Intensive Outpatient Programs?

Intensive outpatient programs do not require patients to stay in an addiction treatment center or even remain in a facility for 24 hours. However, they may require as much as ten hours at a facility per week.

Despite this, patients can still continue with their personal lives and professional commitments. The reason for this is that these treatment sessions will often be scheduled early in the morning or late in the evening.

Intensive outpatient treatment is often based on psychotherapy, viewed as key to a successful recovery. Through individual as well as group therapy sessions for drug rehab, patients will learn the right relapse prevention skills.

These sessions are also designed to support individuals with mental health issues that could be a side impact of their addiction.

Intensive outpatient programs will also include alcoholics anonymous and narcotics anonymous for alcohol treatment and drug treatment respectively. These 12-step groups have consistently been viewed as essential for a successful recovery that reduces the risk of relapse.

While more demanding, intensive outpatient programs can still be formulated to match the individual needs and requirements of specific patients to ensure they get the full support they need.

Who Are These Solutions Suited For?

Whether or not a patient requires outpatient or intensive outpatient therapy for drug treatment will depend on the severity of their addiction. Those with severe addiction may not require the 24/7 monitoring that drug rehab inpatient programs provide.

However, they could still need extra support. If that's the case, then an intensive outpatient program will often be the recommended course of action.

In contrast, some people will only be experiencing a mild addiction or will be seen as less likely to relapse. If that's the case, then they could still benefit from outpatient therapy to keep them on the right road to a successful recovery.

Usually, a patient will be recommended outpatient, inpatient, or intensive outpatient treatment based on the results of an intake assessment. A professional will complete a thorough evaluation to determine the ideal option based on individual needs that will lead to lasting sobriety.

We hope this helps you understand the main differences between outpatient and intensive outpatient programs for patients who require drug rehab. The right choice will depend on the specific needs of you or your loved ones.

It is important to select the best possibility for your recovery to prevent the chance of relapse and ensure that you are successful in rebuilding your life through drug treatment after an addiction.

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