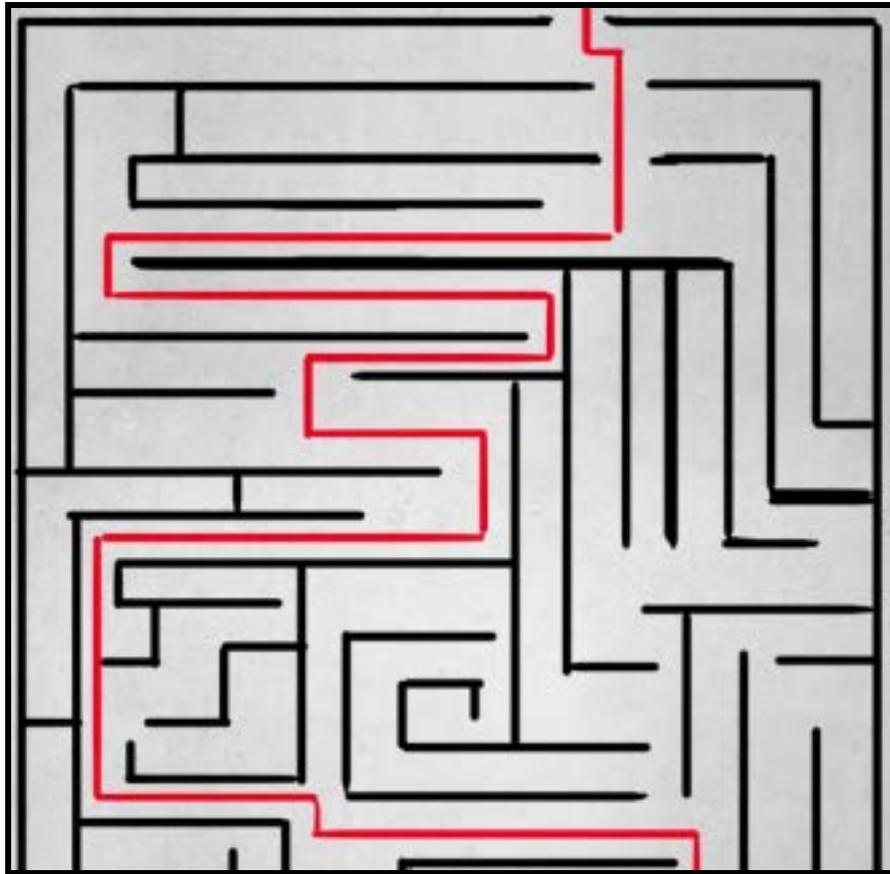


# GETTING THROUGH THE MAZE



**A HOW-TO GUIDE  
FOR NAVIGATING ADDICTION SERVICES  
IN AND AROUND THE TWIN COUNTIES  
(Columbia & Greene, NY)**

# 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 many people living in recovery in our community and around the world.

### ***Recovery sticks the first time.***

False. Sadly, addiction can be an enemy that often lands a lot of punches before it finally gets knocked out. Although recurrence of use is possible, the person that is unsuccessful- even a dozen times- is still capable of recovery. Don't give up!

### ***There is one way to go about getting into 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 to find 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 be unsuccessful. 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 person seeking recovery 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, typically for a stay of a few days to a month or more. During inpatient treatment, residents are able to completely focus on getting well 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 Guide to Mental Health and Addiction Services).

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

- have a severe substance use disorder with long history of use;
- have tried outpatient treatment, but had a recurrent of use soon after;
- need to remove themselves from their current environment to find/maintain recovery;
- have very few, if any, family or other social supports available; and,
- who 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 who are employed, in school or have 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 Outpatient Treatment, are similar to residential programs in intensity of services and effectiveness. Additionally, many outpatient facilities (including Twin County Recovery Services) are able to

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

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; and,
- have a history of being able to maintain abstinence 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 (TC's),* are designed for individuals who are unable to participate in or comply with treatment outside a 24-hour structured treatment setting and who need additional supports to improve their functional skills. Services provided at these treatment centers enhance the social, functional and personal care skills of individuals.

*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. Twin County Recovery Services, Inc. has a women's residence (Riverside) and a men's residence (The Red Door). See the Guide to Mental Health and Addiction Services for additional residential treatment centers.

*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. St. Catherine's operates 8 apartments in Columbia and Greene counties for those in need of a supportive living environment. However, 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. St.

Joseph's Addiction Treatment Center in Saranac Lake is an example of this type of facility.

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

There are four 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.
4. **Greener Pathways.** Any individual struggling with a substance use disorder may contact Greener Pathways and ask for help in getting connected to appropriate treatment and/or recovery supports.

**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 Guide to Mental Health and Addiction Services). 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 and/or even death.

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.

**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. Twin County Recovery Services, Inc. performs evaluations 4 days/week at their Hudson site and 5 days/week at their Catskill site. Evaluations are also offered at other locations throughout the Capital Region and Mid-Hudson Valley (see the Guide to Mental Health and Addiction Services). An

appointment is preferred, but walk-ins will be seen at some locations if they're willing to wait for the next available clinician.

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, that 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. Some 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. Navigators are available at the Healthcare Consortium to assist with insurance-related issues.

## **I need things to support my recovery. 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; and,
- the extensive use of peer supports and volunteers.

The Mental Health Association of Columbia-Greene Counties, Inc. operates two Youth Clubhouses--one in Columbia County (Hudson) and one in Greene (Catskill). The Clubhouses provide safe, supportive, substance-free environments for youth ages 12-21 who are in recovery or are at risk of developing a substance use disorder. Apogee Center in Hudson and Water Street Studio in Catskill are also local recovery centers.

**Support/Mutual Aid Groups.** In addition to recovery centers, there are other resources that help support an individual's recovery. Peer mutual aid groups can be an invaluable source of guidance, assistance, and encouragement. Groups are very helpful, not only to help an individual maintain recovery, 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), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), and Al-Anon are the most well-known self-help groups and they are widely available. Local chapters of Celebrate Recovery and Refuge Recovery also provide support to those in recovery. 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. All 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 Guide to Mental Health and Addiction Services.

**Peer-led recovery organizations.** Participation in a peer-led organization, such as Youth Voices Matter (YVM), 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.

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Please note "Addiction Services Nav Guide" in the Attention or Subject lines.



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