



## Alcohol rehabilitation: A review

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### Abstract

Alcoholism affects all segments of American life. The National Institute of Drug Abuse reports that in 2009, an estimated 6.8 percent of Americans had consumed five or more drinks on at least five occasions within the month preceding their survey. In addition, the National Center for Biotechnology Information reports that an estimated one in six Americans has a problem. If you have developed a drinking problem, understanding your options for treatment is important. Alcohol rehab centers can offer you the medical attention and support you need get your drinking problem under control so you can reclaim your life.

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### Introduction

Alcohol rehabilitation centers offer both inpatient and outpatient treatment. Outpatient treatment is good for people who have developed a drinking problem but are not yet addicted to alcohol. These people may be social drinkers who drink more than they should and have difficulty stopping. They have more of an emotional attachment to alcohol. Alcoholics should seek treatment from an inpatient treatment facility. They have developed a physical addiction to alcohol. If they go a short time without drinking, their body reacts negatively to the lack of alcohol, making it hard for them to properly function. Alcohol rehabilitation can be helpful for the management of drinking problems. But what happens during the alcohol rehab process? What can you expect and how are therapies implemented? We review the basics of alcohol rehabilitation here. Then, we invite your questions about alcohol rehabilitation at the end. In fact, we try to respond to all questions with a personal and prompt reply.

### Alcohol Rehabilitation Definition

Alcohol rehabilitation is the process of combining medical and psychotherapeutic treatments to address dependency on alcohol. The goal of both, drug and alcohol rehabilitation (inpatient or outpatient) is for the patient to remain permanently abstinent and gain the psychological tools for long-term sobriety. Who should attend rehab treatment? Anyone whose life, health, work or relationships are affected by chronic alcohol or drugs use. The intent of rehabilitation is to enable a patient to be successful in life and avoid the drastic consequences that alcohol abuse can cause.

### Alcohol Rehabilitation Goals

#### Goal 1: End alcohol abuse

The most important goal of alcohol rehabilitation is to stop drinking. This goal serves as a starting point for all the other goals in during alcohol treatment.

#### Goal 2: Establish a positive support system

This is an important rehabilitation goal because it allows for success after the program is complete.

#### Goal 3: Improve general health

Improved general health allows for a healthier lifestyle and is also important for long-term sobriety. This goal is often achievable during inpatient alcohol rehabilitation and can be met in the first weeks of alcohol sobriety. Some cases of extreme alcohol abuse may require longer period of time to see improved health.

#### Goal 4: Improve personal circumstances

This alcohol rehabilitation goal aims to give the patient a successful future outside of the program.

#### Goal 5: Meet employment and educational needs

This goal also aims to set the patient up for future success outside of an inpatient or outpatient alcohol rehabilitation program.

#### Goal 6: Reduce criminal behavior and resolve legal problems

Rehab centers aim to remove any negative aspects of the patient's life in order to facilitate future success.

#### Goal 7: Treat psychiatric disorders and psychological problems

Alcohol rehabilitation aims to provide treatment or refer treatment facilities for specific psychological problems.

### What Happens During Alcohol Rehabilitation?

#### 1. First, assessment

Upon entering alcohol rehabilitation, medical staff will screen you to assess your personal situation and create a program that is unique to you. This will likely include a physical exam, a urinalysis drug test, a psychological screening and an assessment of personal circumstances.

The aim here is to understand the extent of alcohol abuse and to create a program that will allow you to succeed.

**2. Then, alcohol detox if necessary**

Alcohol withdrawal generally begins 3-5 hours after the last drink, but may not require anything more than medical supervision. During the detox period of alcohol rehabilitation, you will be monitored by medical staff 24-7 to make sure that the withdrawal is not complicated or dangerous. In extreme cases of alcohol withdrawal, medication may be necessary to prevent or treat seizures or DTs (delirium tremens). But in most cases, medical staff will only need to monitor you to ensure safety.

**3. The meat of the program (psychotherapy and behavioral treatments)**

This is one of the most important phases of rehabilitation, as it begins to give you a base for future sobriety. During this phase, you work with an alcohol counselor to address your current mental and emotional condition and understand where it's coming from. Then, you can start to make behavioral and attitudinal changes to remain sober, prevent relapse, and start living a happy life. If you are dedicated – the chances for your alcohol rehab program to work are increases and you have made significant steps towards becoming sober long-term.

**4. Prescription medications**

Currently, pharmacotherapy for alcohol dependence is an emerging and valuable tool for treatment. Some examples of medications which may be prescribed to you during an episode of treatment in alcohol rehabilitation include:

- Acamprosate
- Anti-anxiety medications
- Antidepressants
- Disulfiram
- Naltrexone

However, these treatments will be assessed on an individual basis and will be implemented along with psychosocial treatment. In fact, medications work best when combined with psychological and behavioral treatments.

**5. Continuing alcoholism education**

Education about alcohol abuse is important during alcohol rehabilitation, as it aims to engage your rational mind. Alcoholism education helps you break down the compulsion to drink, understand the origin of cravings, and to avoid triggers in the future.

**6. Finally, supportive social services**

During this final step of alcohol rehabilitation, rehab staff help empower a patient by connecting her/him with services outside the treatment facility in order to maintain abstinence from alcohol and begin to create a network of supportive people to influence in the patient's life. These services can include housing, health care, social service, child care, or financial and vocational counseling.

**What happens after alcohol rehabilitation?**

After alcohol rehabilitation, you're pretty much on your own. While aftercare is getting significantly better, it will be up to you to continue a program of rigorous attention to your inner life. A good alcohol rehabilitation program may recommend you to:

- A community addiction recovery center
- Life skills training programs
- Outpatient addiction treatment
- Social services
- Transitional living

The most important thing to consider after alcohol rehabilitation is having an aftercare program that allows you continued treatment and a safe environment to maintain sobriety. It is also important that you follow suggestions to help you continue to maintain constant sobriety. Suggestions can include attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous, SMART recovery or another community or church groups, addiction counseling, or living in a halfway house. Finding a safe environment to live in while entering back in to the normal realm of everyday life is imperative.

**Conclusion**

Rehab is a place where a patient undergoes proper medication and treatment for dependency on psychoactive substances like alcohol, prescription drugs and drugs including cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines. The main intention of a rehab is to enable the patient to cease substance abuse to avoid the physical consequences caused by extreme abuse. Treatment includes medication for disorder or depression where counseling by experts are given and sharing of experience with other addicts are usually carried. Meditation and spiritual wisdom is included sometimes in the medication process. Psychological dependency is used where the experts give advice to patients to interact in a drug-free environment.

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