

Finding Help

Addiction is a terribly hard disease to overcome, and there is not nearly enough support for those afflicted in our province. Our boy was on a list for many months, waiting for a bed in a youth treatment centre. His problem worsened, and by the time he finally reached the top of the list, it was too late. His addiction had become too severe for this two-month program.

Your first response to your child's drug use will likely be to seek out treatment options. Brace yourself. It's not that simple. Although there are some places to go for help, opportunities for longer-term residential treatment are relatively scarce in BC, particularly when it comes to young people.

It is even more difficult to find treatment for those with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and drug dependency.

However, **be persistent**, seek help and support from your doctor, school counsellors, and your local drug and alcohol services.

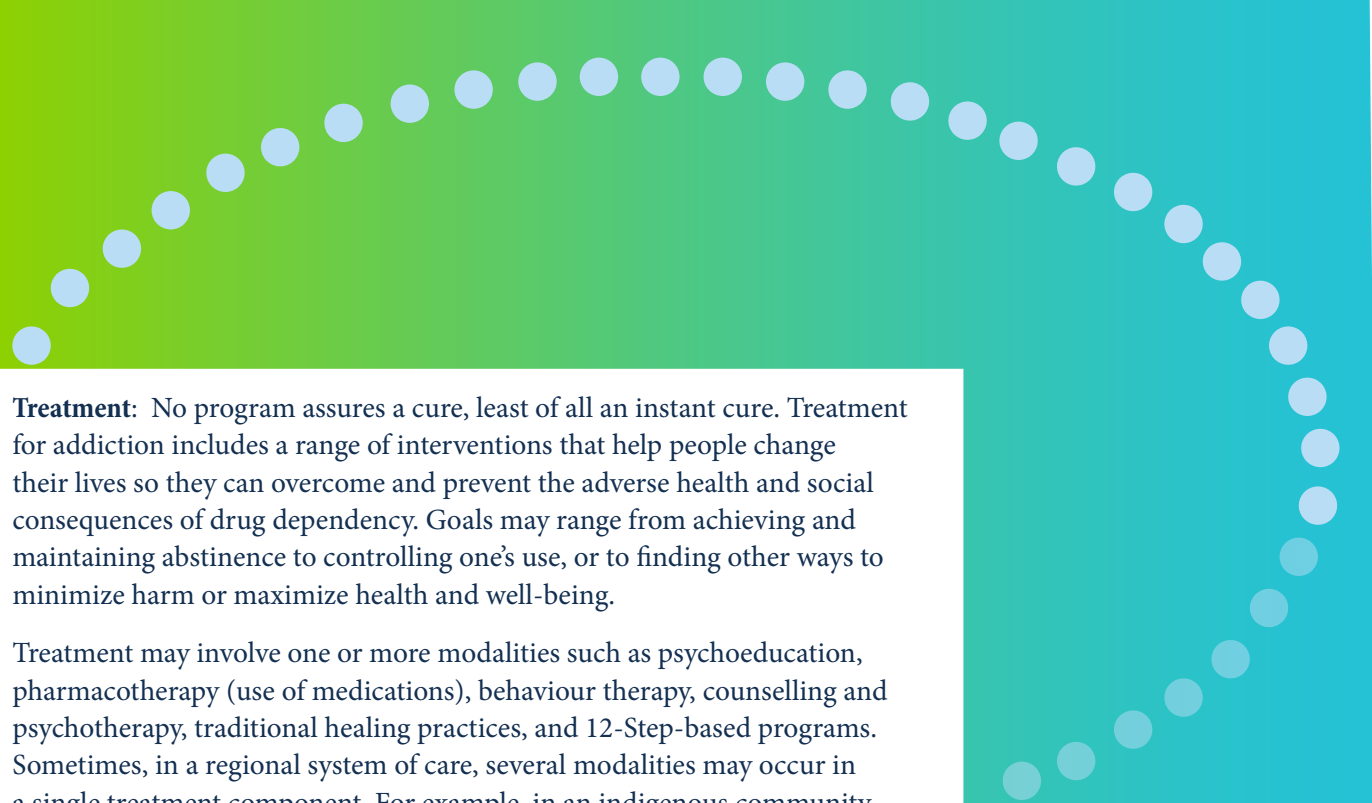
Get to know www.fgta.ca!

The website operated by From Grief to Action provides information about support and addictions services for both youth and adults. Be aware that "Portage at The Crossing" is the only publicly funded long-term residential treatment centre for youth in BC.

Detox facilities and day programs are also listed at www.fgta.ca, along with a wealth of references to other websites and documents. The site is checked regularly for dead links, and the dates of support groups are kept current. You'll have to visit often in order to know the site well, but learning something new is almost inevitable each time you investigate a topic you have not explored before.

DEFINITIONS AND OPTIONS

Detox: To begin with, there's detoxification, or withdrawal management. Detoxification takes care of the physical withdrawal from the drug. The psychological withdrawal takes much longer and is far more complex. For that, the dependent person will need further treatment involving rehabilitation and relapse prevention.



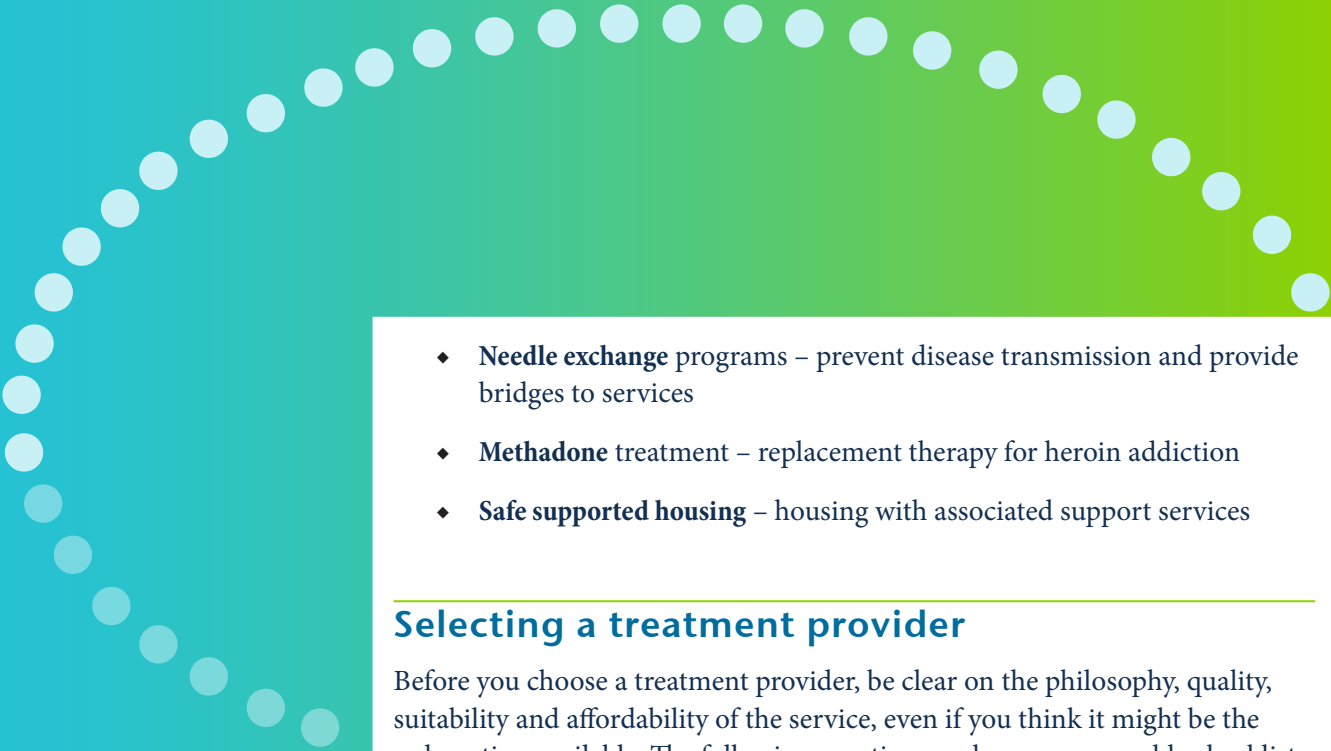
Treatment: No program assures a cure, least of all an instant cure. Treatment for addiction includes a range of interventions that help people change their lives so they can overcome and prevent the adverse health and social consequences of drug dependency. Goals may range from achieving and maintaining abstinence to controlling one's use, or to finding other ways to minimize harm or maximize health and well-being.

Treatment may involve one or more modalities such as psychoeducation, pharmacotherapy (use of medications), behaviour therapy, counselling and psychotherapy, traditional healing practices, and 12-Step-based programs. Sometimes, in a regional system of care, several modalities may occur in a single treatment component. For example, in an indigenous community, pharmacotherapy and traditional healing practices are a possible combination for withdrawal support.

Treatment options in B.C. are available both privately and publicly. Check with your local Health Authority. The FGTA website includes listings of treatment centres for further reference.

Types of treatment options


- ♦ **Outpatient treatment** – available in most communities
- ♦ **Multi-component programs** for youth – various constellations that differ by region.
- ♦ **Withdrawal management** - residential, home, or outpatient support during withdrawal
- ♦ **Intensive non-residential treatment** - day or weekend programs; clients live at home
- ♦ **Residential treatment** – intensive treatment in a structured residential context
- ♦ **Supportive recovery** services – longer-term transitional housing and support services
- ♦ **Pregnancy support** Services – support services to at-risk pregnant women and their families
- ♦ **Street outreach** programs – support services and bridges to the system of care

- 
- ♦ **Needle exchange** programs – prevent disease transmission and provide bridges to services
 - ♦ **Methadone** treatment – replacement therapy for heroin addiction
 - ♦ **Safe supported housing** – housing with associated support services

Selecting a treatment provider

Before you choose a treatment provider, be clear on the philosophy, quality, suitability and affordability of the service, even if you think it might be the only option available. The following questions make up a reasonable checklist to cover (and to confirm) as you read about a program and speak to its administrators.

1. Where is the facility located?
2. Is the facility co-ed?
3. What is the age range of the clients?
4. Problematic drug use for the majority of the clients would be which drug?
5. What is the method of referral?
6. Is there a wait list?
7. Is there a period of “clean time” required prior to admission? If so, how long is it?
8. Does the facility have a detox?
9. Are there medical personnel on staff? If yes explain, psychiatrist? Nurse? Etc.?
10. Will any medications be prescribed or allowed? (especially important with methadone)
11. Is counselling in private sessions or only in group? How long and how often are these sessions?
12. Please describe the philosophy and the approach of the program.
13. What is the success rate?
14. What program details can you provide?

- 
15. What is the policy concerning relapse?
 16. What constitutes a relapse?
 17. What are the rules that may result in discharge? (possible example: smoking cigarettes).
 18. Is there reimbursement for any part of the program fee should the client withdraw or be asked to leave?
 19. What contact will there be for the client – with those outside of the facility? (visitors, weekends, home, letters, phone calls, etc.)
 20. What may the client bring and what is not permitted in the facilities? (money, portable music, etc.)
 21. What recreational /leisure activities are available?
 22. What is the family involvement?
 23. Is there an aftercare program?
 24. How do you monitor that clients are not using drugs while taking part in treatment?
 25. Can the facility provide references?
 26. Is this facility accredited or licensed?
 27. What is this accreditation or license?
 28. How many staff member does the facility have?
 29. What are the qualifications of the staff? Degrees, certificates, diplomas, former addicts?
 30. What is the client-to-staff ratio?
 31. What is the staff turnover?
-



Books

- ♦ *Addiction Is a Choice* / Jeffery A. Schaler, © 2000.
- ♦ *Drugs in Modern Society* / Charles R. Carroll; with contributions by Lynne H. Durrant, © 2000.
- ♦ *Love Her as She Is: Lessons from a daughter stolen by addictions*/Pat Morgan, © 2000.
- ♦ *Overcoming Addiction: a common sense approach* / Michael Hardiman, © 2000.
- ♦ *Recovery Options: the complete guide* / Joseph Volpicelli, Szalavitz, © 2000.
- ♦ *Death by Heroin, Recovery by Hope* / Mary Kenny, © 1999.
- ♦ *Drug Legalization: a pro/con issue* / Jennifer Lawler, © 1999.
- ♦ *Heroin Drug Dangers* / Mary Ann Littell, © 1999.
- ♦ *How to Stop Time: Heroin from A to Z* / Ann Marlowe, © 1999.
- ♦ *How to Talk to Teens About Really Important Things* / Charles Schaefer and Theresa Foy, © 1999.
- ♦ *From Chocolate to Morphine: Everything you need to know about mind-altering drugs* / Andrew Weil, M.D., and Winifred Rosen, updated 1998.
- ♦ *Heroin* / Sandra Lee Smith, © 1997.
- ♦ *The Pursuit of Oblivion: A global history of narcotics, 1500–2000* / Richard Davenport Hines, 2001.
- ♦ *Rational Recovery: A new cure for substance addiction* / Jack Trimpey, © 1996.
- ♦ *Uppers Downers all Arounders – Physical and Mental Effects of Psychoactive Drugs* / Darryl Inaba and William Cohen, © 1993.
- ♦ *How to Deal with your Acting Up Teenager* / Robert and Jean Bayard, © 1983.
- ♦ *One Day at a Time/AA*
- ♦ *Addict In The Family* /Beverly Conyers