

Hear it from Dr Rod



Advantages of outpatient addiction treatment

By Raul J. Rodriguez MD, DABPN, ASAM, MRO

Advances in medical science have created a number of new outpatient addiction treatment options. Outpatient chemical detoxification, once thought to be impossible, has become the standard of care.



New techniques incorporate both modern medications and innovative procedures to obtain the optimal benefit from these medications. This has increased the accessibility, improved the affordability, raised the effectiveness and lowered the risk of addiction treatment. A good example of this is how Subutex and Suboxone have changed the face of opiate addiction treatment. Treatment that used to cost tens of thousands of dollars and took over 30 days can now be done for a few hundred dollars with barely a day of work missed. These medications prevent the intense physical sickness of opiate withdrawal and allow almost immediate full-scale functioning. This has been especially beneficial for individuals that have many personal and business obligations.

Many newer procedures have been specifically developed to meet the needs of busy working professionals. Few working professionals have the time or money to take a month or even a week off from work to seek treatment. Many people in the past have found this out after it was too late. There is often a loss of job from the extended absence of an inpatient rehab stay. Loss from unearned wages can be enormous and often leads to financial strife. Those who are self-employed risk losing their businesses altogether. This has always been the case, but it is much more pronounced during the era of the Great Recession. Working professionals, business owners and parents have so much more to lose, which usually leads to a higher degree of motivation to get better.

Highly motivated individuals can capitalize the most on the advantages of outpa-

tient treatment. The above average treatment compliance typical of a motivated client allows for a safer and more comfortable detoxification while still being able to work 5 days a week. The physical recovery of a milder intensity outpatient detox is faster than that of a more intense inpatient detox that was hurried due to cost. At the slower pace of an outpatient detox plan, most co-workers would not even suspect that treatment is being received. This helps to preserve privacy and avoid the societal stigma which is often associated with a diagnosis of addiction. Evening relapse prevention programs allow for frequent therapeutic contact without impacting the typical 9 to 5 work schedule. This eliminates the time commitment burden seen in traditional daytime programs that often leads to declining continued involvement over the long term. Prompt use of newly learned recovery tools in everyday life facilitates permanent integration of these tools into an individual's coping system. The net result of all of these benefits is long-term success.

Success is defined as much by sustained happiness as it is by sustained sobriety. It takes a substantial commitment to get to that point. The more livable the treatment plan, the more likely it will be adhered to. Long-term adherence is the single biggest factor associated with long-term success.

Raul J. Rodriguez MD, is the Founder and Medical Director of the Derlay Center for Healing, a cutting edge Psychiatric and addiction treatment facility.

