

OPTIONS FOR TREATING ADDICTION

Addiction is a medical issue

First and foremost, it's important to remember that addiction is a medical issue. It should not be stigmatised and the person suffering addiction should not be blamed or punished for something that is very much beyond their control.

Over time, addiction can seriously interfere with your daily life. It can affect your relationships, diminish your performance at work, and cause long term financial and physiological pain for you and your loved-ones.

It's also important to remember that addiction of one form or another is something many people struggle with - as many as 1-in-3 people have an addiction of some kind. It's not unusual but it's not untreatable.

The first step in treating addiction is to acknowledge there is a dependency problem that needs to be dealt with.

Next, speak to your GP about your options for treatment:

Addiction Treatment Programs

Addiction treatment programs generally focus on getting sober and staying sober. These may take the form of individual treatment, group sessions or family therapy. Depending on the level addiction, co-morbidities, the type of substance the patient is addicted to, or the needs of the individual, these programs may be delivered either as Out-Patient treatment or in a residential-setting (where you stay overnight for a few weeks or months).

Counselling and Mental Health Services

Specialist mental health and support services delivered by a professional counsellor who is experienced in dealing with addiction can take the form of 1-on-1 sessions or you may find it helpful to work with the counsellor alongside your spouse or another family member. A counsellor will work with you to develop strategies to cope with cravings, avoid the substance or the social settings which trigger cravings, and deal with relapses that may arise as you work to reduce your dependency.

Self-Help and Support Groups

It can be helpful to draw inspiration or motivation from and establish accountability amongst other people who are experiencing the same or similar addictions by joining a Self-Help or Support Group. They can also be a useful source of information and resources. Examples include Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.