

# questions to ask a treatment facility

Dear Michelle:

This week I am continuing my series of answers to you about “What is Treatment?” Here I will offer some questions to ask the treatment facilities when you are searching for treatment for someone.

It is important to know if the treatment facility is accredited or licensed. You might not know what it means if they say yes or no, but just know that the “business” of rehab/treatment is very varied and having some kind of standard accreditation and /or licensing is a good start. There are two main accreditations that base performance standards and demonstrated results, quality, and value. These are both nonprofit organizations. One is called The Joint Commission and the other the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (JCAHO and CARF). You can google these and find out what kind of standards they approve.

It is important to ask if the people at the facility who provide drug rehab programming and services meet nationally recognized standards for professional practice. What credentials do their main practitioners hold? Some of the professionals might be a chemical dependency counselor, medical doctor, nurse, psychiatrist, psychologist, nutritionist, and wellness specialist.

- What kind of treatment models do they use?
- Do they take health insurance? How much will it cost for treatment? Include not just the basic cost but be sure to ask for anything that might be extra.
- Do they offer MAT (Medically Assisted Treatment?)
- How specialized is their treatment program to the individual? Or do all clients participate in the same or similar programs?
- How long would a successful treatment program last?
- Do you offer any post treatment support?
- Do you offer a family program, education for the families?
- What is the capacity at the facility?
- Is it a gender specific or a co-ed facility?

These are some general questions to ask to show that you have some knowledge about what basic offerings you are interested in knowing about and get some answers during this emotional and sometime desperate time. From my own experience I have a few more pieces of “advice” regarding a search for a treatment program. While talking to the person at the facility, if you have a bad feeling, go with your gut. Ask how much time the client spends in “program” time and how much is free time.

Here’s a question you might not think of but can be very relevant. Generally speaking people suffering from Substance Use Disorder often have difficulty making good decisions. Part of treatment therapy should help them to learn how to make better choices and to substitute good choices for bad ones. Ask what the rules are, criteria for being expelled from the facility. (I remember when my son was in one of the treatment facilities he was sent to they kicked him out because he wasn’t following the rules. So, one of the reasons I spent all the money to send him to a treatment facility to get help was because

they were the experts and I was not able to get him to follow my rules. Usually if I can't do something like this I refer to the experts.)

One more question I would ask is this. Is your program model based on and predicated on the 12 step model? Remember, 12 step programs are designed to be support, not treatment. If all they will be doing is 12 step meetings, there is no need to pay for this. 12 step meetings are free to all who need and want to participate. If they offer other therapies and programs in addition to the meetings it should be okay.

So, these are just some questions to get you started. Like anything else, going into something with some knowledge helps you to make more educated decisions. It is important also that the treatment people see that you have knowledge and they need to have some better information for you. This is usually such a time of desperation, emotion, and sadness it is easy for people to be taken advantage of if they go into this without some sense of knowledge and purpose. This should be a good start for anyone looking for possible treatment opportunities for themselves or loved ones.

Regards,  
Denise Krochta