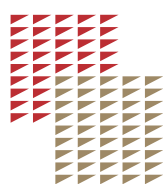
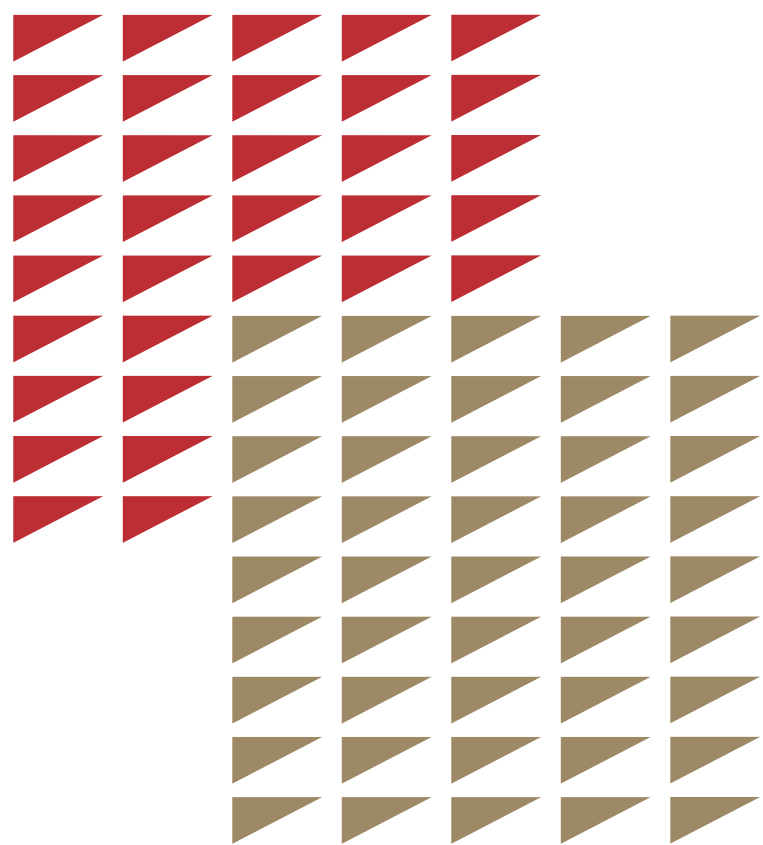


HOW to Choose the Right Treatment Centre for your Addiction



About this book

This E-book has been produced as a guide to some of the fundamental things you need to understand about addiction and its treatment when contemplating entering rehab as well as giving you some of the key questions you need to ask any rehab you are considering seeking treatment with. Although this E-book has been produced and published by The Cabin Chiang Mai, a world-class residential rehab centre based in Northern Thailand, we have written the book as an impartial guide to selecting a rehab that is right for you. We obviously have a vested interest in you choosing us for treatment, and would add that as a first-class treatment centre that meets and exceeds the criteria set out in this E-book for identifying a quality rehab, we should be one of your choices for treatment. However, we encourage you to talk to other treatment centres and to ask them the questions posed in this book, and others, to determine the treatment centre that is right for you. We are more than confident that we will stand out as the best option in almost all cases and if we don't, are happy that you have made the right decision for yourself. Entering treatment is the first step to a life in recovery and is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. We are committed to helping you be sure you make the right one.

The information and content contained in this book was written by and/or sourced from the following people and institutions:

- Mr. Alastair Mordey – Programme Director at The Cabin Chiang Mai, Alcohol and Drug Rehab Centre www.thecabinchiangmai.com
- National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) www.drugabuse.gov
- Addiction – Why Can't They Just Stop HBO Documentary Films www.hbo.com

For further information please visit www.thecabinchiangmai.com or call +66 (0) 80446 8850.

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Introduction

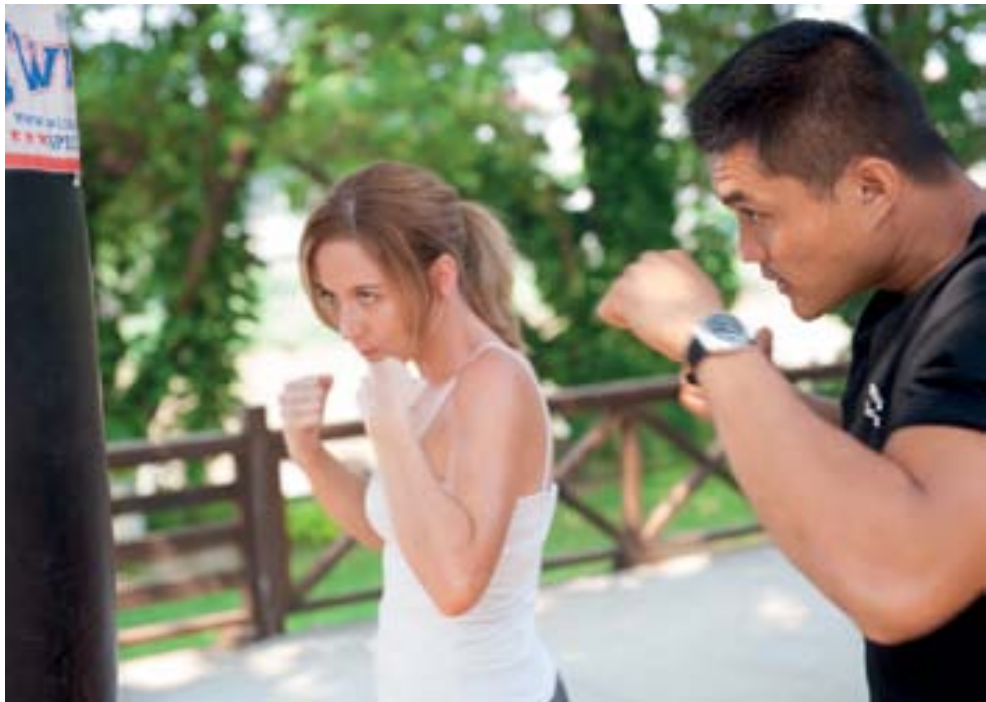
How to Choose the Right Treatment Centre for your Addiction?

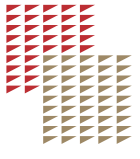
If you’re reading this guide, you’re probably struggling with addiction and experiencing your own personal hell. You may have already acknowledged to yourself – if no one else – that you need help, and are now taking some positive and proactive steps to get the help that you need. Before you read any further, let us congratulate you. You’ve made an important decision that has the ability to change the quality and outlook of your life.

This guide is designed to give you a clear understanding of what addiction really is and what are the most successful methods used to treat it. Additionally, it will help you know what things to look for when selecting a drug rehab, and what questions you need to ask to make sure you’re choosing the right addiction treatment centre for you.

Below, you will find a brief overview of addiction. Some of what you’ll read may surprise you, especially if you have never researched the nature of addiction before. But rest assured, the more information you have about the disease of addiction, the better equipped you will be - with the right tools and mindset - to successfully begin your recovery.

Let’s begin.





Chapter 1

What is Addiction and How is it Treated?

What is Addiction?

Addiction is an illness which affects the reward system in the brain and is characterized by poor neurotransmission, particularly low dopamine production. Dopamine is the brain's reward chemical, so people suffering from addiction experience feelings of low reward when participating in activities which normal people would find sufficiently rewarding. This means sufferers of addiction need to self-medicate themselves with stronger rewards than 'normal' people.

The imbalance in brain chemicals, which causes and maintains addiction, can be caused in three main ways (or a combination of more than one).

1. Addiction is usually inherited as a primary illness. It is genetic in at least 50% of cases, but the real figure is probably much higher. In these cases sufferers are born with poor quality dopamine tone, which result in primary symptoms characterized by a state of ennui – or a feeling of weariness and discontent, lack of interest, boredom, low mood, lethargy, lack of meaning or lack of purpose. Drugs and alcohol (or other behaviours) then become compulsively sought as a way to relieve the symptoms.
2. Environmental factors like trauma, abuse or neglect can trigger addiction because these experiences can cause problems in the brain's chemistry. This can result in poor quality dopamine activity and a need to self-medicate with stronger rewards than normal activities can provide.
3. The traditional view that by abusing drugs or alcohol, people damage their brain function (particularly the dopamine system) which negatively affects dopamine transmission. This is actually probably the least likely way to become addicted.

So, contrary to popular belief, addiction is a primary illness and isn't caused by external factors like poverty or trauma or by actually taking drugs and alcohol. For most people suffering from addiction it is actually the other way around. Our addiction makes us use drugs, drink alcohol or gamble, because we need to 'self-medicate' the symptoms of naturally occurring or environmentally created low dopamine levels.



This means that people who have the disease of addiction need to find stronger rewarding feelings than ordinary people. Once we have discovered a reward that works, i.e. drugs, alcohol, gambling, most addicts find that they are then unable to stop using this substance /reward.

If you can identify yourself within this overview of addiction, you'll find this guide useful to:

- Help you select the right drug and alcohol rehab for you
- Decide what questions you need answers to before you commit to a particular facility
- Identify the risk factors of not seeking support and decide whether now is the right time for you to go into an addiction centre

Why you can't stop using, even though you want to?

The inability to consistently abstain from addictive substances and /or behaviour is caused because the reward (dopamine) system is our brain's survival mechanism, which functions automatically and unconsciously. For people with addiction, getting a rewarding feeling is as important as drinking water would be for an ordinary person who is dying of thirst; so our brains survival system gets involved to make sure we keep doing it.

However, it's important to realise that addiction is a chronic illness which means we have to find a way of treating it, in the same way we would diabetes or other chronic illnesses. Because, unlike a common cold, it won't just 'clear up' of its own accord! Sufferers of addiction also need to understand that if you stop treating your addiction, the symptoms will resume and you will want to use drugs or alcohol again to feel better.

This is why addicts refer to themselves as being "in recovery" rather than "recovered". Recovery is an ongoing and lifetime process for the former drug or alcohol user.

If addiction is a chronic illness, how can it be successfully treated?

The main methods used to treat addiction are 'behavioural', which means that addiction cannot be treated with traditional medicines alone, but rather things we 'do' to get better. It's these new behaviours, tools and coping methods that you will learn and implement when you go into a residential drug and alcohol addiction centre.

Why do I need rehab, can't I just learn this stuff at home?

This simple answer to this question is no, and here's why:

- Addiction is driven by the brain's automatic survival system, so teaching ourselves is not an option because addiction is famous for being the only disease to tell you: you haven't got it! For the large majority of addicts it's essential to allow others who have found a practical, experience-based method of recovery, to help us.
- Experienced drugs counsellors help you develop positive ways of thinking and behaving over a long period of time, giving the brain time to make these recovery techniques part of its automatic response.
- Studies have shown that it takes up to three months to embed significant new ways of thinking, doing and speaking into our subconscious. The addict who experiences a high level of recovery usually completes a minimum of 6 to 12 weeks inpatient treatment and two months outpatient treatment – sometimes longer, but this time frame is dependent on the commitment and the progress of each individual.
- The life of the addict tends to be so 'chaotic' that the removal from their immediate environment and using triggers - something you will learn about in more depth in treatment - becomes essential to their long-term recovery.



What behaviour methods are used to effectively treat addiction when in drug and alcohol rehab?

Well this is a good question, and the methods used vary from facility to facility, but below you will find some of the most common and successful methods used to treat recovering addicts.

CBT – (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)

CBT teaches self-administered techniques and written exercises to immediately lessen stress, depression, anxiety, guilt and fear.

12 Steps

Promotes a sense of belonging, being useful to others (feeling needed) reduces feelings of being less than others (shame), the ability to healthily manage anger, and techniques for healing relationships.

Mindfulness Meditation

Strengthens our ability to concentrate and monitor our negative thought processes, which creates healthy changes in the brain and balances our mood.

Physical Exercise

Boosts brain chemicals, which assist in making us feel rewarded and calm.

The behavioural therapies described above have been found to activate a healthy, long-acting, slow release of dopamine which is a necessity for stable mood and emotional health. They usually form the foundation of any successful drug or alcohol treatment programme.





According to **NIDA**,¹ effective drug and alcohol treatments include behavioural therapy and medication, or optimally, a combination of both. It's important to recognize that behavioural therapies differ in their approach and outcomes. These can include:

- Addressing a patient's motivation to change
- Identifying incentives to stop using drugs or alcohol
- Developing skills to resist drug use
- Incorporating constructive and rewarding activities to replace drug using activities
- Cultivating problem solving skills, and
- Establishing better personal relationships with family and friends

It's also essential to know what treatment model a drug or alcohol rehab uses before you make a decision to become an inpatient, specifically if you think you will need a medical detox as an initial stage in your recovery programme.

¹NIDA (2011) <http://1.usa.gov/VgUoAQ> (retrieved 28/10/2012)

Why is behavioural therapy so effective in treating drug and alcohol addiction?

The reason 'behavioural' therapy is used so successfully to treat addiction is because although addiction is a biological illness, it will have caused us to develop certain ingrained personality traits, which function as coping mechanisms to face life with our addiction. That means we have become disordered in the way we *think*, feel and behave in response to the illness and events around us.

Simply abstaining from drugs or drinking won't leave us without symptoms. The symptoms will resume if we don't do something, but often we don't automatically *know* what to do. Whilst medicines can 'stop' or dampen the symptoms of addiction, learning new ways of thinking and behaving actually teaches the brain what to do, and the brain will get better and better at doing it. This process is called **brain plasticity** - in other words, the ability of the brain to change itself by *doing* different things.





Some addiction treatment centres are able to offer supervised medical detoxes whilst others are not. They may support you if you are experiencing withdrawal symptoms, but many will not have the facilities or staff to facilitate a medical emergency.

Below you will find a list of some of the most common medications currently available to treat opioid, amphetamine and alcohol addictions:

- Methadone, buprenorphine (Subutex, Suboxone), and Naltrexone (including the long-acting formulation Vivitrol) are used to treat people addicted to opiates (e.g., heroin, prescription pain relievers);
- Users of amphetamines such as cocaine, methamphetamine, yaba, etc. are not generally prescribed medications during detox except in cases where psychosis may be present in heavy users. In this case anti-psychotic medications may be prescribed.
- Alcohol detoxification is best managed with the use of Benzodiazepines. The agent most commonly used in a medical detox is Chlordiazepoxide. After detox, drugs such as Acamprosate (Campral), Naltrexone, and Topiramate (Topamax) may be used for treating alcohol cravings and dependence.

Whilst medical detoxification is a necessary first step in the treatment of certain addictions, it's important to recognize detox alone does very little to change the patterns, behaviours and long term implications caused by long-term drug use.



Chapter 2

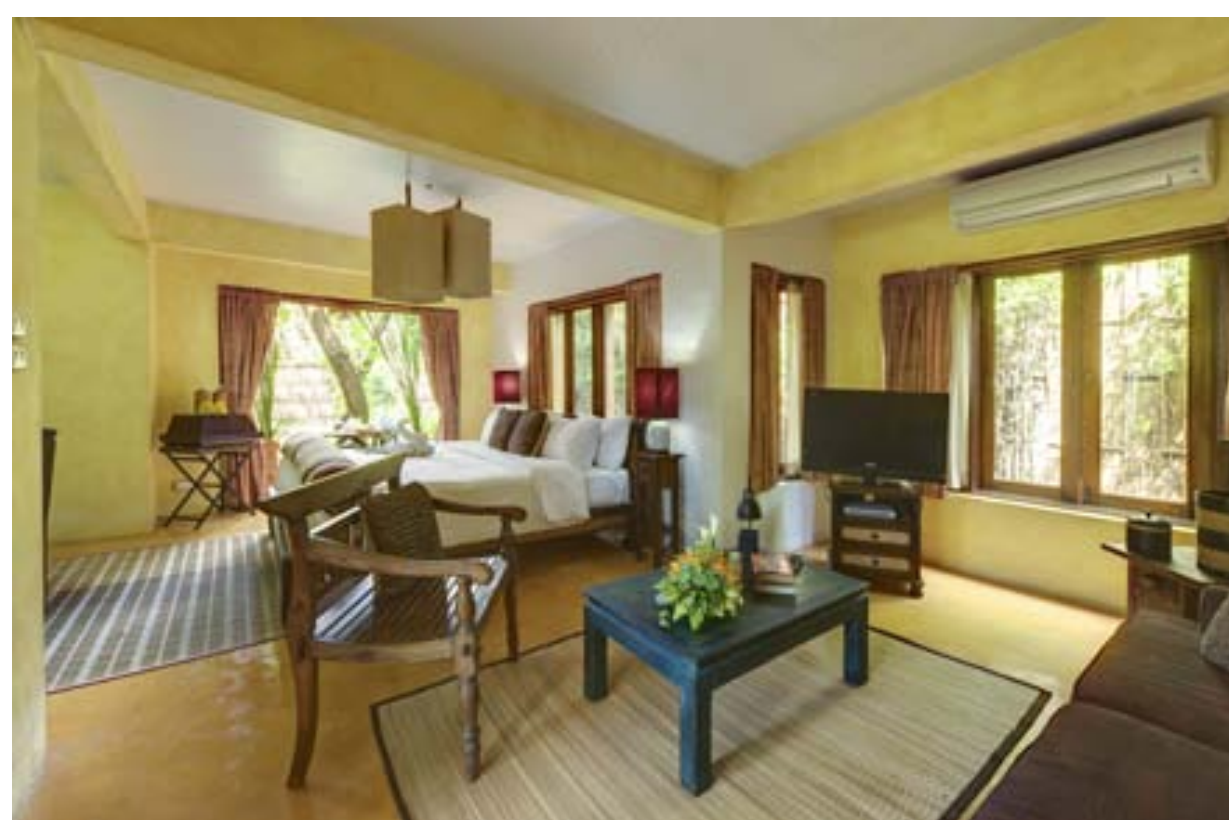
7 Key Questions to Ask Before you Decide on a Treatment Provider

■ Key questions to ask before you decide on a treatment provider

Below you will find some of the most common questions asked by clients needing drug rehab (maybe you will recognise some of your own here?). You will also find an overview of policies, best practices and ways of working typical of most reputable addiction treatment centres. But like with all things that concern your health and wellbeing, you are always advised to do your own research and take appropriate measures to ensure you make an informed choice.

Q1. Does the programme use treatments backed by scientific evidence?

The nature of the disease of addiction has been scientifically established, as have many of the core treatment models that are used for its treatment. For example Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Motivational Interviewing and Group Therapy all have accumulative benefits to addicts who commit to them. Different types of medications have also been identified as useful at different stages of treatment. However, you should always ask your prospective treatment provider what medications they use (if any).



Q2. Are you accredited?

Reputable rehabs will have the right licenses and accreditation to practice ethically. Ask the treatment provider you're considering what accreditation they hold, and discuss any questions you might have directly with them.



Q3. Is the programme tailored to meet the needs of each patient?

Any reputable rehab recognises there is no 'one size fits all' approach to treating drug, alcohol or other dual diagnosis illness. Carefully evaluating and matching treatment settings, programmes and services to the addicts unique set of circumstances and personal challenges is essential to give him or her the best chance of recovery success. Different approaches in treatment modalities consider a person's age, gender, ethnicity, culture, background, and the severity and length of their addiction.

The best and most successful programmes take a holistic approach to recovery from addiction, treating the whole person and not only the disease. They also offer a combination of therapies and other integrated services structured to meet a patient's short and long term needs. These additional services may include: family therapy, parenting support, employment training and help with other social and legal issues.

Do not be daunted by what may appear to be a very intensive assessment process. These protocols are followed within successful treatment facilities for one simple reason: to make sure you get the most appropriate care that meets your individual needs. For that reason, it is very important that you disclose all relevant information to the treatment facility when asked.

Addiction and other psychiatric disorders often occur in conjunction with one another, and in order to ascertain exactly what treatment will be required for successful recovery, a thorough assessment must be taken to understand a client's background.



Q4. Does a programme adapt treatment as the needs of the patient change?

The simple answer to that question should be yes, but it's worth mentioning that not all facilities have the resources to do this, and some are so heavily frequented that this one-to-one personalised care can be very difficult for them to administer. You will find that the inability to personalise care is a key characteristic of drug and alcohol rehabs that tend to have low or below average programme completion rates.

Patients in private clinics may have some differing practical and logistical concerns than those in a state run/funded facility. However, the disease of their addiction is very much the same. And whilst they may face different external challenges, the journey of recovery ahead is still full of personal challenges and potential pitfalls. They also share the same risk of relapse if they don't fully engage with the programme and commit to implementing everything they have learnt about managing their addiction as a daily part of their life. Addiction doesn't play "favourites", and affects people of all races, cultures and socio economic backgrounds.

That's why it's so important to work with your counsellor during the assessment process to create a full map of your individual needs. They will then be able to decide if their facility has the appropriate level of support and treatment to meet your needs, and offer you the best chance of holistic recovery from your drug and alcohol addiction.

Take a look at the graphic below, and it will help to give you a visual idea of the sort of factors that need to be considered when looking at a comprehensive drug and alcohol treatment for any individual.²



Q5. Is their drug testing and drug monitoring ongoing?

During your time in an addiction treatment centre, drug monitoring and testing can form a routine or random part of the programme. Some patients find this intrusive and annoying, whilst others report that knowing there's another level of accountability and supervision whilst they are in treatment helps to keep them focused. It also helps them to know that other residents in the programme are also drug-free.

Many successful recoveries have been thrown very quickly into relapse by being around another patient who has been able to access drugs and continued to use while in treatment. Quality, patient-focused rehabs do everything to discourage and avoid that, including routine and random screening.

Q6. What happens when I leave?

Another core component of successful drug and alcohol addiction treatment is a dedicated and organized aftercare programme. This is usually a combination of a care plan, where the client outlines their needs, goals and potential challenges/risks. These needs are then addressed by looking at what support systems they have or can put in place, and identifying what coping mechanisms and new patterns of behaviour they can call upon when they have to deal with cravings or other challenging situations. Another important part of a successful aftercare programme is identifying a sober individual the addict can call on at any time if/when they feel at risk of relapse and need immediate support.

Many ex-drug and alcohol rehab patients report the implementation of a thorough aftercare plan to have been just as essential to their long term recovery, as their initial time in residential treatment.

² This graphic is based on information supplied by NIDA <http://1.usa.gov/Ty2mnh> (retrieved 28/10/2012)

Q7. What's the length of treatment and what are your retention rates?

The length of treatment ultimately depends of the client, but the most successful recoveries are rarely gained with anything less than 28 days inpatient treatment; it often takes much longer. The length of treatment can be determined by several different factors, which is why in-depth thorough assessment is so important prior to going into a facility. Research indicates that a period of up to three months or longer in treatment delivers much better results.

The most successful programmes will periodically measure progress, and tailor care plans to the give you the most appropriate type, and level, of support. But it's important to recognize that recovery from addiction is a long term process that can - and often does - require multiple episodes of treatment alongside ongoing support from family and friends.

Many addicts think that a relapse means their treatment has failed, and some may think they are "incurable". However, as with other chronic illnesses the treatment for addiction is ongoing, and a temporary relapse does not mean that you have failed, rather that you need to reinstate or readjust your treatment strategy or care plan.

Programme retention rates are easy to measure, whilst success rates are less so. Any rehab centre who gives you surprisingly high figures regarding their success rates should be treated with caution, primarily because of the difficulty involved in collating the data over a prolonged period of time that would allow them to quantify their ex-patients as cured or successfully living in long term recovery.

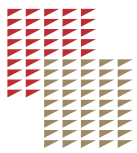
Retention rates, however, are something that should be looked at very carefully, as high retention rates within an addiction facility would indicate a well-structured and managed programme. Additionally, addicts are far more likely to experience long term or permanent recovery as a result of successfully completing a treatment programme until the point of complete discharge



What next?

By now you are hopefully wondering what the next step is. Don't wait any longer, put together a small list of drug rehabs that you know of, research some others, and start making contact with them. From your initial research you may immediately get a feeling that some are not right for you, whilst with others you may feel like you need to contact and speak with them personally to make an informed choice. All reputable rehabs will be happy to speak with you and answer any questions you may have.

Recovery is a gradual process, so start your journey today.



Chapter 3

Some Things to Remember

Some important things to keep in mind

- Addiction is a disease
- Relapse is a part of the disease, not (necessarily) a sign of failure
- Addiction is an illness that is treatable
- The sooner you get into treatment the better
- The longer you stay in treatment, the greater the chances that treatment will be effective
- Addiction is NOT a moral failure
- Remember, drugs and alcohol can “hijack” the brain’s reward system and pleasure pathways
- There are medical treatments available that can help to treat addiction to opioids (prescription painkillers, heroin, etc.) and alcohol
- Behavioural therapies that have demonstrated proof of their effectiveness are the best available treatments for treating addiction to stimulants (cocaine, methamphetamine)
- Treatments for addiction are just as effective as treatments for other chronic, relapsing diseases such as diabetes, hypertension or asthma
- Ultimately you must take personal responsibility for your recovery
- AA and other 12-step programs are support groups and by themselves are not considered treatment. They certainly help many people, but are only part of the process of effective treatment
- If one type of treatment does not work for you, keep looking until you find the treatment that is right for you

