



LIFESTYLE

INTERVENTIONS

A FREE FAMILY GUIDE

# 7 Questions Every Family Should Ask Before Choosing a Treatment Center

*A clear, supportive guide to help you make a confident, informed decision for someone you love.*








Free guide

A 10-minute read

# A calmer way to choose

When someone you love is struggling, choosing a treatment center can feel impossible. Every program sounds reassuring, and you're often deciding under stress. These seven questions help you compare providers on quality, safety, and fit. Ask each center the same questions, write down their answers, and the right choice becomes clearer.

## What you'll learn to ask

- 01  Licensing & level of care
- 02  Staff qualifications
- 03  Co-occurring conditions
- 04  True cost
- 05  Family involvement
- 06  Aftercare
- 07  Fit & safety

**If this is an emergency, please don't wait.** If someone is in immediate danger or having a medical or psychiatric emergency, call 911. For free, confidential, 24/7 crisis support, call or text 988 (the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline), or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

## Question 01

# Is the center licensed, accredited, and what level of care does it provide?



A quality provider holds a state license and often national accreditation. It should also match the person to the right level of care along the treatment continuum, from medically supervised detox to residential, partial hospitalization, intensive outpatient, or standard outpatient care.

### A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

"We're licensed by the state, accredited by The Joint Commission or CARF, and based on the assessment we'd recommend this level of care. Here's why."

### WATCH OUT FOR

A center that can't name its license, has no accreditation, or pushes one program regardless of the person's actual needs.

### ASK IT LIKE THIS

*"Are you licensed in this state and accredited? And which level of care are you recommending for us, and why that one?"*



### KEEP IN MIND

You're allowed to ask for proof. A reputable center is proud of its license and accreditation.




Question 02

# What are the qualifications of the clinical and medical staff?



The people delivering care matter more than the building. You want to know who will actually be treating your loved one, and what they're trained to do.

 **A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE**

Care is led by licensed clinicians (for example a psychologist, LMFT, LCSW, or psychiatrist), with medical staff available when detox or medication is involved, and they're glad to share credentials.

 **WATCH OUT FOR**

A center that won't share staff credentials, presents unlicensed "coaches" as clinical treatment, or has no medical oversight where it's needed.

**ASK IT LIKE THIS**

*"Who exactly will be treating my loved one, and what licenses or credentials do they hold?"*



**KEEP IN MIND**

Ask who leads care day to day, not just who is named on the website.



Question 03

# Does the program treat mental health and substance use together?



Many people have co-occurring conditions, sometimes called dual diagnosis, where a mental health condition and a substance use condition happen at the same time. Treating only one side often isn't enough for lasting progress.

 **A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE**

The program screens for co-occurring conditions and offers integrated treatment that addresses mental health and substance use together.

 **WATCH OUT FOR**

A center that treats addiction or mental health in isolation, or offers no psychiatric support when it's clearly needed.

**ASK IT LIKE THIS**

*"If both mental health and substance use are involved, do you treat them together, and how?"*



**KEEP IN MIND**

When both are present, treating them together usually works better than one at a time.

## Question 04

# What does the cost include, and how do insurance and payment work?



Clear, written costs prevent painful surprises during an already stressful time. You deserve to understand exactly what you're paying for before you commit.

### ✓ A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

The center itemizes what's included, verifies your insurance benefits in writing, and is transparent about out-of-pocket costs before you commit.

### ! WATCH OUT FOR

Vague pricing, pressure to pay large sums upfront, or an unwillingness to put costs in writing.

### ASK IT LIKE THIS

*"Can you put in writing exactly what's included, what insurance covers, and what we'd pay out of pocket?"*



### KEEP IN MIND

A clear, written estimate is a sign of a trustworthy provider.



Question 05

# How is the family involved in the treatment process?



Recovery rarely happens in isolation. A program that includes the family helps build the support system your loved one will lean on afterward.

 **A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE**

The program offers family sessions, regular communication within privacy rules, and education to help you support recovery at home.

 **WATCH OUT FOR**

A center that excludes the family entirely or has no plan for keeping you informed and involved.

**ASK IT LIKE THIS**

*"How will our family be involved, and how will you keep us informed along the way?"*



**KEEP IN MIND**

Being included isn't intruding. Good programs welcome the family.



Question 06

# What does aftercare and continuing support look like?



The period right after a program ends is often the most vulnerable. The transition back to daily life is where many people need the most support.

 **A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE**

The center provides a written aftercare or discharge plan, step-down options to less intensive care, and ongoing or alumni support.

 **WATCH OUT FOR**

A center with no aftercare plan, where treatment simply ends with no clear next step.

**ASK IT LIKE THIS**

*"What happens after the program ends? Is there a written aftercare plan and ongoing support?"*



**KEEP IN MIND**

Ask about the day after discharge, not just the program itself.



Question 07

# What happens in a crisis, or if the program isn't the right fit?



Recovery isn't a straight line. A good provider plans for setbacks and is honest about what happens if its program turns out not to be the right match.

 **A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE**

The center has a clear crisis protocol, can step up care or coordinate a transfer, and explains its transition and refund policy upfront.

 **WATCH OUT FOR**

A center with no crisis plan, one that locks you in, or that won't discuss what happens if the program isn't working.

**ASK IT LIKE THIS**

*"What's your plan if there's a crisis, or if this turns out not to be the right fit for us?"*



**KEEP IN MIND**

A provider that plans for setbacks is one that takes recovery seriously.



# Understanding levels of care

Treatment isn't one-size-fits-all. Clinicians describe a continuum of care and match the level to the person's needs, and people can move up or down as their situation changes.



LOWER INTENSITY

HIGHER INTENSITY



**Outpatient** LIVES AT HOME

Scheduled sessions that fit around everyday life. Often a step-down or lower-intensity option.



**Intensive Outpatient (IOP)** LIVES AT HOME

Several hours of treatment a few days a week, while keeping up daily responsibilities.



**Partial Hospitalization (PHP)** LIVES AT HOME

Structured treatment for most of the day, several days a week; returns home in the evening.



**Residential / Inpatient** LIVES AT FACILITY

Lives at the facility with 24-hour support. Used when needs are higher or structure matters.



**Detox / Withdrawal management** MEDICALLY SUPERVISED

Short-term, medically supervised care to manage withdrawal safely. Often a first step, not treatment on its own.

*There's no single right level. The right one matches the person in front of you. A good provider explains its reasoning, not just its program.*

# Your treatment-center checklist

Ask each center the same questions and note their answers. Comparing them side by side makes the decision clearer.

- Licensed and accredited? What level of care, and why? .....
- Staff's clinical and medical qualifications? .....
- Treats mental health and substance use together? .....
- What does cost include? Insurance and payment? .....
- How is the family involved? .....
- What does aftercare and continuing support look like? .....
- What happens in a crisis, or if it isn't the right fit? .....

 **GREEN FLAGS**

Clear answers, named credentials, transparency, a written aftercare plan, and a family that's included.

 **RED FLAGS**

Vague answers, pressure, an unwillingness to put things in writing, no aftercare, family excluded.

# Where to turn for help

These free, national resources can help you find treatment and get support, any time.



## **Emergency: call 911**

For immediate danger or a medical or psychiatric emergency.



## **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988**

Free, confidential support 24/7 for mental health, suicide, or substance use crises. Chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).



## **SAMHSA National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357**

Free, confidential, 24/7 information and referrals to treatment and support services.



## **Find treatment: [FindTreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov)**

A national treatment locator. Search by location, type of care, and payment accepted.



## **Check accreditation: The Joint Commission & CARF**

Look up a center's accreditation at [jointcommission.org](https://www.jointcommission.org) (Quality Check) or [carf.org](https://www.carf.org).

# How Lifestyle Interventions can help

Lifestyle Interventions is a team based in Los Angeles that supports families navigating mental health and substance use crises. We help you understand your options and decide on a next step together.

Our services include Crisis Interventions, Family Support Services, and Mentoring & Recovery Support.

## Ready to talk it through?

Reach out to talk with our team about your situation and your options.

**1**

We listen to what you're going through.

**2**

We help you understand your options.

**3**

You decide the next step, at your pace.

Call (866) 826-0985 · [lifestyleinterventions.com](https://lifestyleinterventions.com) · Schedule online: [lifestyleinterventions.com/about](https://lifestyleinterventions.com/about)

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