



Alcohol and drug treatment services types

Services to treat alcohol and drugs issues include:

- counselling
- residential treatment
- detoxification

A combination of these is often the most effective form of treatment.

Counselling

Counselling can help to guide you through the issues you are facing.

A counsellor can help you to understand your alcohol or drug use. They can also support you to deal with the difficulties you have.

The counsellor will create a safe environment for you to reflect calmly on your concerns. You may have several meetings with your counsellor. This is so that you can build a relationship and create a basis for long-term support.

Look for a counsellor with experience of working with people with alcohol or drug issues.

Alcohol support services (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/alcohol/alcohol-services/>)

When counselling might be useful

Counselling can help if you feel that your use of alcohol or drugs has become part of your daily life.

Counselling can help you if you are ready to take a deeper look at:

- how or why the issue has developed
- what can happen if you make a change

What the counsellor will do

The counsellor will help you to look at how you use alcohol and drugs and how this fits into your life, including your:

- personality
- ways of thinking
- emotional experiences
- sense of wellbeing

Counselling can help you to explore how you feel about your circumstances. This can include looking back on your life to try and understand how the issue developed.

Counselling is a structured way of exploring:

- what has been happening
- how you feel about it
- what you can do about it

Types of counselling

There are many different types of counselling:

For example:

- person-centred
- behaviourist
- humanistic

- psychodynamic
- cognitive behavioural

Community-based treatment

Community-based treatment is support you can get in the community.

As part of community-based treatment you can also benefit from:

- support groups
- education
- individual and group therapy
- detoxification (detox)
- rehabilitation

Residential treatment

With a residential programme you stay in a treatment centre during your treatment. Residential programmes can last from 28 days to 12 months.

Residential programs can help with detox, withdrawal and rehabilitation. They are good if you need more support than a community-based programme.

It can help to take a break from your daily routine to focus on this issue in your life. It is also useful to help break habits associated with problematic alcohol or drug use.

Types of residential treatment programmes

Take time to research different treatment programmes to help with your alcohol or drug use and the harm caused by it.

Look for a programme that suits how you think about your issues and how to resolve them.

Drugs and alcohol services - drugs.ie (Link: <http://www.services.drugs.ie/>)

Detoxification

Detoxification (detox) is medical support to help you stop using alcohol or drugs.

You may need medicine if you have physical withdrawal symptoms (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/alcohol/dependence/withdrawal-symptoms/>) from alcohol or drugs.

For example:

- anxiety and agitation
- nausea
- tremors (shaking)
- seizures (fits)
- hallucinations

If you are worried about your alcohol use, take our alcohol test (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/alcohol/self-assessment-tool/>) to find out what type of drinker you are.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation aims to help you recover from dependence on alcohol or drugs. It often involves a combination of therapy, counselling and education.

Rehabilitation can help you:

- understand what is causing your problem
- gain skills that will help to prevent a slip-up (relapse)
- learn how to cope with stressful emotions, for example, by using relaxation techniques
- learn how to cope with a relapse if it happens in the future

More in Coping with difficult situations ([Link: /living-well/alcohol/coping-difficult-situations/](#))

| Alcohol and drug treatment services types

Support services for families ([Link: /living-well/alcohol/coping-difficult-situations/services-for-families/](#))

Coping with a family member's problem drinking ([Link: /living-well/alcohol/coping-difficult-situations/a-family-members-problem-drinking/](#))

Talking to someone about their problem drinking ([Link: /living-well/alcohol/coping-difficult-situations/how-to-talk-to-someone/](#))

How to help a family member who is dependent on alcohol ([Link: /living-well/alcohol/coping-difficult-situations/help-a-family-member-who-is-dependent-on-alcohol/](#))

Helping the child of a problem drinker ([Link: /living-well/alcohol/coping-difficult-situations/how-to-help-the-child-of-a-problem-drinker/](#))

Page last reviewed: 23 September 2022

Next review due: 23 September 2025