

# Finding Treatment Starter Pack

Prepare your first call, compare the answers from providers, and organize the next step toward care.

Keep completed notes private. Use short notes in each box; continue on another copy or separate paper when needed. Save the completed PDF on your device and reopen it to check your notes before closing.

## Start With What You Need Help With

You do not have to know the name of a treatment program or diagnose yourself before asking for help. Bring the concern you want help with, and ask how an assessment works.

- Name the concern in your own words. For example: “My use is affecting my sleep and work, and I want help understanding my options.” You can write it down or ask someone you trust to help with the call.
- Ask how the program gets to know you. Find out who does the assessment and how it shapes the plan. Ask how your physical health, mental health and practical circumstances will be considered.
- Check what is actually available. Ask what license or accreditation the program holds, who issued it and where to check it. Ask separately about the clinician’s qualifications, available services, medication care and costs. [3] [2] [1]

Fictional examples of call notes. Neither program represents a real provider or a recommendation.

## Worked Example: Compare Answers, Not Advertising

| Question        | Program A                               | Program B                            |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Assessment      | Clinician appointment available Tuesday | Assessment process not yet explained |
| Schedule        | Evening visits described                | Visit times unconfirmed              |
| Medication care | Can arrange an outside consultation     | Need to ask                          |
| Cost            | Estimate requested                      | Estimate requested                   |

A useful next step is to ask Program B who conducts the assessment and when visits are offered. Ask Program A how the outside consultation is arranged and billed. The notes help you ask clearer questions; they do not choose a level of care for you.

**Begin with one conversation**

An unanswered question is a reason to follow up, not a failure on your part. Use only the pages that help with your next step.

## Before You Call a Treatment Provider

Have somewhere to write the answers. If a trusted person is helping, decide what you want them to ask or share.

**Words You Can Use**

"I am looking for help with [your concern]. Are you accepting new patients? What happens first, who does the assessment, and what is the wait?"

**Your main concern and question**

What would you like help with? What answer do you most need today?

**Program and call details**

Name, number, date, person you spoke with and a way to follow up.

**Assessment and first appointment**

Who conducts it? How do you arrange it? What should you bring?

**Services and practical fit**

Ask about treatment options, visit schedule, costs and accessibility needs.

**The next action**

What happens next, who will do it and when? What is still unconfirmed?

**If the first person cannot answer**

Ask who can explain the clinical services, the schedule or the costs. Different people may handle different parts of the process. [2]

## Compare What Programs Can Offer

Record the actual answer, not just “yes.” Ask how the program will address the needs identified in your assessment. An unanswered box stays unconfirmed. Keep brief notes here; use the Additional Treatment Notes sheet for longer answers.

### Program / contact / date

**Program A**

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

**Program B**

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

## Assessment and your role in the plan

**Program A**

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

**Program B**

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

## Staff qualifications / how to verify

### Program A

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

### Program B

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

## Services and treatment approach

### Program A

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

### Program B

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

## Medication care, if relevant

### Program A

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

### Program B

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

## Visit schedule / start date / travel

### Program A

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

### Program B

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

## Cost estimate / separate charges

### Program A

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

### Program B

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

## Other care and follow-up support

### Program A

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

### Program B

Record the answer and who confirmed it. Leave missing answers unconfirmed.

### Bring the comparison to an assessment

These questions help you understand services. They are not a scoring system or a clinical recommendation about which program you need. [3] [2]

## Prepare for the First Appointment

You can bring short notes rather than finding the perfect way to explain everything. Keep sensitive information on your own device or paper, and share it with the people you choose.

### What has been happening

The concern that brought you here and examples you want to discuss.

### What you want to change or understand

Your priorities, questions and hopes for the conversation.

**Health information to discuss**

Medicines, symptoms, changes in substance use or stopping, and other care you receive. Ask the clinician what details they need.

**What could make care easier or harder**

Work, caregiving, travel, communication, costs or accessibility needs.

**Before you leave**

What is the plan? Who do you contact with questions? When is the next appointment?

**Your notes belong to you**

You do not need to send completed worksheets to AddictionHelp. Save them somewhere private.

**Additional Treatment Notes**

Keep longer answers here and label each with the program, question and date. If you need more room, print another copy of this sheet or keep a separate private note.

**Longer answer or explanation**

Program / question / date, followed by the details you need to keep.

**Another answer or comparison**

Label the provider and question so you can match this to your comparison sheet.

**Still unconfirmed and next contact**

What needs checking, who can answer and how you will follow up.

**Save a copy before closing**

Save your completed PDF on your own device, then reopen it to check that your notes are still there. Keep completed files private. For longer answers, use another copy of this sheet.

## If a Treatment Option Does Not Fit

A full program, an unaffordable estimate or a schedule that does not fit can leave you unsure what to do. Use the answer you received to prepare a more specific next question.

**Words You Can Use**

"This option does not work for me because [the barrier]. Is there another service, provider or contact you suggest I speak with?"

**What did not fit**

For example: no appointments available, cost, location or service needs.

**What the program suggested**

Contact or service name, what they offer and anything not yet confirmed.

**One next step and support for it**

Who will contact whom? Is there someone you would like to help with the call?

## Keep Exploring Treatment Options

**Find treatment help**

<https://www.addictionhelp.com/find-treatment-help/>

**Compare treatment programs**

<https://www.addictionhelp.com/treatment-centers/>

## Sources

**[1] SAMHSA: Asking for help**

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-support/how-to-cope/how-to-ask-for-help>

**[2] NIAAA: Questions for treatment programs**

<https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/how-to-find-alcohol-treatment/10-questions-for-alcohol-treatment-programs>

**[3] SAMHSA: Choosing quality treatment**

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-support/learn-about-treatment/finding-quality-treatment>