



Why should I send my child to Residential Treatment?

Residential treatment may be considered when other methods of treatment have not been successful or when residential treatment is recommended by a mental health professional.

What is Residential Treatment?

Residential treatment is an intensive program considered when a youth or adolescent needs a safe and secure treatment setting with 24-hour care provided by trained, qualified staff. The average length of stay will vary by program but usually is between 30-90 days or longer.

Residential treatment should have a clinical foundation involving psychiatrists, nurses, doctors and others who participate in the treatment. Some programs may offer an education component along with the clinical setting so that your child continues his or her education while in treatment.

Parent Checklist: What do I look for in a residential treatment facility?

All residential treatment facilities are not alike. Deciding which one to trust with the care and treatment of your child can be difficult. However, here are some things to ask the programs you're evaluating:

Will Residential Services Work?

- Does the facility provide therapy that has been clinically tested and provides positive outcomes?

Safety of Children

- Is the facility locked? Can children leave without a planned discharge?
- Can I remove my child if I change my mind?

Staff Training

- What are staff credentials and who exactly will be treating your child?
- Who will do the medication management?
- Does the facility work with a board certified psychiatrist?
- How will the facility handle your child if he or she becomes verbally or physically aggressive?

Family-focused treatment and support

- How much family therapy will be provided?
- What other family support and education groups are offered?

Accreditations: Organizations that hold the facility accountable

- Is the facility licensed? By whom?
- Is the facility accredited by The Joint Commission (www.jointcommission.org)? Many insurance providers require this level of accreditation.

Individualized Treatment Program that addresses your child's specific needs

- How will the facility customize treatment to meet your child's individual needs as well as your family's needs?
- Does the facility develop an individual treatment plan specifically for your child?
- How many individual, group and family sessions will be provided?

Treatment Updates

- How will you be informed of the treatment plan and goals set for your child?
- How will you be notified of your child's progress throughout treatment?

Aftercare planning

- How will they assist you with finding the right aftercare providers?

Facility assistance

- Will the facility help you explore and access available financial resources to cover the costs of residential treatment?

What can I expect when I decide to call a residential program and who should I talk to?

While all program are different, there are some common things you can expect during the intake process.

- **Making the first call:** Generally when you call a residential facility, you should ask for the Intake or Admissions Department, which will help you evaluate whether or not the residential facility can meet your child's unique treatment needs. Admissions staff should be willing to spend as much time with you as necessary to learn about your child and answer questions about the program. Sometimes the initial phone call can take up to an hour.

During this exchange of information, it is a good idea for you to have as much information as possible about your child's history, including: what your child has been diagnosed with, treatment he/she has received so far and who provided it (including any hospitalizations, outpatient treatment, and residential treatment), and what medications your child is taking. Also be prepared to share information regarding your child's past and present behaviors and struggles, and why residential treatment is being considered.

Once it has been determined that a particular residential program can meet your family's needs, you may want to work with the Intake staff to schedule a tour and/or staff interviews. Good programs will encourage you to tour the facility at some point during the process. Parental support is necessary for great outcomes, and programs should welcome your involvement.

- **Admissions Process:** The admissions process varies from facility to facility, and you will work with the Intake staff to determine how to get your child to their facility. Some facilities provide transportation for your child upon admission, and some will require you to provide transportation. You may transport your child yourself, or, if you are concerned that your child will not go willingly, it may be best to hire a private transportation company to transport your child for you.

If your child is in the hospital when it's time to admit them, look for an agency that is willing to do a Direct Admission from the hospital to their facility.

What resources are available to help me in the decision-making process?

Mental Health Professionals

- Talk to your doctor, mental health therapist or psychiatrist about your child's problems and ask their opinion about the available treatment options.

Other Parents

- Ask if the facility will provide outcomes data or surveys from other families. Family testimonials may help to alleviate your fears and give you a level of comfort about the facility's staff and overall treatment effectiveness.

Social Service Organizations

- Seek out your local NAMI (National Alliance of the Mentally Ill) organization. They are a consumer group dedicated to providing support groups to adults and parents of children with mental illness. Many parents who have participated in NAMI programs have had to make these same decisions. Their website is www.nami.org.

Professional Organizations

- NATSAP** - National Association for therapeutic Schools and Programs www.natsap.org
- AACRC American Association Children's Residential Centers** - Founded in 1956, the oldest national association focused on the needs of children with serious mental and behavioral problems who are in residential or other milieu-based placements. Their website is www.aacrc-dc.org.
- NACBH** - National Association for Children's Behavioral Health www.nacbh.org
- SAMSHA** - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration www.SAMSHA.org.
- Mental Health America** - www.nmha.org
- Family Driven Care** - Promoting the primary decision making role of families in the care of their own children www.ffcmh.org
- Indiana Families** - Their mission is to create and grow networks of support, education, intervention, leadership and advocacy and empower families to facilitate growth and development for their children who have emotional behavioral or mental challenges www.indianafamilies.org.

What funding options are available for residential treatment?

- **Medicaid:** Programs vary by state. Indiana residents who qualify for Medicaid may be able to participate in the PRTF program.
- **Insurance:** Your policy may cover residential treatment. It is important to work with the residential provider to verify insurance benefits.

- **TriCare:** For military families
- **Private Pay:** For families that want to pay privately.
- **Department of Education:** Depending on the situation, your child may be eligible for services through his or her school. You will need to discuss this with the Special Education Services Department at your child's school.
- **Loans:** Some banks and institutions will make loans similar to student loans.

Summary

Residential treatment can be beneficial for young people struggling with complex and severe mental illness. It is important that you as a parent are actively involved in your child's treatment, and are comfortable with the facility you choose.

