



Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation

Substance Misuse – Social Emotional Wellbeing Healing Centre



What to Expect When You Go to Rehab

Support Booklet

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What is Residential Rehab?

Residential Rehabs are places where you stay that have structured treatment programs. They can help you if you feel trapped or hurt by your drug use, and want to work towards a healthy happy drug free life.

How long will I be there?

Most programs run for 90 days (3 months) some only go for 1 month, some go for 6 to 9 months. Depends where you go. Sometimes court or FaCS will tell you how long they want you to go to residential rehab for.

What's the difference between detox and rehab?

Detox is a very short stay (4-7 days) just to get you over the worst of the withdrawals and to make sure that the rehab you will be going to knows what may be in your system when you show up.

Rehab is longer and is about changing the way you think and introducing some healthy routines and behaviours. Rehab will help you understand what makes you turn to drugs and alcohol and give you better ways to cope with life.

Criminal and Mental health matters

Sometimes courts can bail you to a rehab. If that is the case, it is important to remember that if you leave early, you will be in breach of your bail and could be picked up by the police.

Can I have my medications / methadone / tobacco in rehab?

Some rehabs are specifically for people who are on harm reduction treatment programs with methadone or bupe. People attending those will need to be stable on their dose, and detoxed from any other substances.

Many detox and rehab facilities are tobacco free now, and will have nicotine replacement therapy available to assist. It's a good idea to ring and find out whether your rehab has such a policy.

Rehabs also have their own individual policies on prescription drugs like anti-depressants and psychotics. Some will not allow them at all.



What scares you about Rehab?

I won't know anyone there so I'll be all alone.	I don't know what will happen there.	I'll start to feel the guilt for all the bad stuff I did.
I'll start to have feelings again. I like feeling numb.	I don't have any willpower. I can't stop using drugs.	I won't be me without drugs.
I spend all my time on drugs. What will I do without drugs?	Withdrawal is going to be painful and uncomfortable.	They'll make me work.
I have a mental health issue too. Will this be treated as well?	I'll be bored without drugs. Life won't be any fun.	I'll have to give up my friends and my partner (if they use).



What will I need to take?

Bathroom requirements like shampoo, toothbrush (some rehabs may supply them), clothes for several days, some rehabs will need your medicare card, your Centrelink reference number.

What should I not take to rehab?

Do not take phones, or movies. There is restrictions on television times in rehab. You generally can take music, but there will be rules about when you can have it on, to prevent you from isolating away from the program. Rehabs have their own brochures with their rules on them. Marrin Weejali can help you get a copy, and help you understand why they have their rules.

Why do I need to go to detox first

Some rehabs have their own detox section. The ones that don't will expect you to go to a detox before you come to rehab. A short time in detox getting over the worst withdrawals will let the rehabs know what is in your system, and make sure that you won't have medical issues when you stop using drugs. Some people can have fits and bad pain, and detox can make sure you are comfortable if this might happen to you.

Will it cure me?

No matter how long it goes, recovery doesn't finish when you leave rehab. Addictions are not easy to cure, and recovery is a lifelong commitment. The only cure to addiction is to keep saying 'NO' when you are tempted. This requires practice and effort throughout your life.

Rehab simply gives you a drug free safe environment to start the recovery journey, to start to repair and reunite with your shattered spirit. You start learning what triggers you to use and learn new ways to cope with life's challenges rather than turning back to substances.

How much will it cost?

Most rehabs will take money out of your Centrelink payment to cover your board and food while you are in the rehab. They will take most of your Centrelink to cover their costs. It will be important that you do not have too much being deducted for other bills. The rehab staff will help you set this up, and many rehabs have Centrelink staff visiting them regularly.

If you are not on Centrelink, you will need to have enough money to pay the costs privately.

Some rehabs will ask you to have some money when you show up. This could be for a drug test before you go in the door of your first week tariff (board). We will make sure you know about this and you can manage it before you show up.



What sort of people will be in rehab with me?

All the other people in rehab with you will be at different stages of their recovery. They will all have their own terrible story and be feeling emotions that they have been covering up for a long time.

This may mean that the people around you can be very sensitive and easily irritated. You may need to keep to yourself a bit so you are able to focus on your own recovery. It is still important that you participate in rehab community, as you will be re-learning how to get along with people.

Will I have a room on my own?

It's a good idea to ask about this before you go, some rehabs will have you share a room at the beginning, then move into more private spaces when you have become settled into the rehab routine.

Rehab rules

Many rehabs will not allow clients to have contact with people outside the rehab (including their own family) for the first 2-4 weeks, depending on the time of year. This is because that is the most common time to walk out of treatment, and if family rings crying that they miss you, you walk.

Many rehabs will not allow you to have your mobile phone in their facility. This is to stop calls that might trigger your cravings or calls that might distress or distract you from your recovery journey. Your family can still call the

rehab, and after the first non-contact period, you can usually use the rehab phone to call out at set times.

Many rehabs (all the ones I can think of) expect you to participate in doing chores, and will not let you lie in bed after a certain time. This is to keep you busy and keep your mind off using and to help you develop better life skills and routines so that when you are there and when you get out, you are a nicer, more cooperative person to live with.

Many rehabs expect you to participate in regular meetings and sessions to help you start to uncover the feelings and habits that may lead you back into the bad old habits again.

What happens with my house?

If you have a Housing NSW property, or Community Housing (Wentworth, Mission etc.) you are able to have a reduced rent rate (approx. \$5 a week) for up to 3 months while you are in rehab. This can be extended if you make a strong case. Staff at Marrin Weejali or even staff at the Rehab you attend can assist with arranging this.



What can I do after rehab to stay safe?

Some rehabs have an 'Aftercare' program, where they stay in contact through phone calls or outpatient counselling.

You can manage your own aftercare through finding AA or NA meetings in your area, or coming to Marrin Weejali or Mt Druitt CAMS (Centre for Addiction Medicine) for casual groups or counselling.

It is important to remember that recovery is a lifelong challenge, and it's a good idea to get into a routine as soon as you leave rehab of going to meetings and having a key clean person who can support you when you are feeling bad.



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What happens if I relapse?

LAPSE V RELAPSE

The first step is to determine whether you need to go back to rehab. If it was a one-off incident and you're committed to never letting it happen again, you may not need to go back to rehab. BUT, if you've fallen back into a continued pattern of substance abuse, you might need to get back into a strict treatment program.

SIGNS THAT MAY PREDICT AN UPCOMING RELAPSE INCLUDE:

Not making sobriety your top priority.

Without a firm commitment to long-term sobriety, you're more likely to relapse. To be successful, you must be willing to put in the hard work required to stay sober. This includes attending 12-step meetings, having a committed sponsor and getting therapy or counseling for mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety.

Not having a support system. A newly sober person needs to have a solid support network right away, as this can make the difference between continued recovery or relapsing back into addiction. Having a support group of others in recovery is vital. Ask your family to keep you accountable, seek spiritual guidance through meditation or religion and join sober group activities.

Not wanting to quit for yourself.

In some cases, the addict enters treatment because they are trying to please their family or friends rather than being committed to quitting for their own sake. Unless someone truly wants to quit for themselves, the risk of relapse is much higher.

Not being prepared for life after rehab.

It's important to create a relapse prevention plan for transitioning back to regular life after rehab (aftercare). It is really important to understand how certain things can sabotage recovery, such as dysfunctional family dynamics, toxic friendships, social isolation and unhealthy daily routines. Clearly identifying triggers early on can help you protect your newfound sobriety.



Myths about Rehab

MYTH #1 Addicts must hit rock bottom before they are ready to accept treatment.

THE TRUTH: It is true that addicts often don't seek treatment until they've hit the skids and their lives have become a complete mess, but that doesn't mean that drug abusers and alcoholics must bottom out before they are ready to seek help. The sooner a person gets into treatment after developing an addiction, the better their chances will be of staying clean and sober for the duration.

MYTH #2 Addicts must really want to be in rehab for it to work.

THE TRUTH: This is a myth. Drug and alcohol rehabilitation counselors are experts at breaking down the walls of denial thrown up by people who are resistant to treatment, which is why recovery rates generally don't vary much between addicts who come in on their own and those who are doing it because of family or in response to a court order.

MYTH #3 Getting help to overcome addiction or alcoholism means you are too weak to do it yourself.

THE TRUTH: Addiction is a disease that causes changes in the brain and people cannot hope to conquer it through willpower alone. Smart strategies are needed to beat the disease of addiction, and only those who go at the process in a smart way are likely to find lasting sobriety. Addiction specialists have great experience in this area, and those who try to go it alone will be doing it hard.

MYTH #4 When addicts really work hard, they can recover from addiction in a short period of time.

THE TRUTH: There are no shortcuts to recovery from addiction, and those who suggest differently are setting people up to fail. Research has shown that those who stay in treatment for a full year - 60 to 90 days in a rehab facility followed by extensive aftercare - are twice as likely to remain clean and sober as those who seek treatment for a shorter period of time.



Myths about Rehab

MYTH #5 When addicts who have been through rehab have a relapse, it puts them right back to square one.

THE TRUTH: Relapse is common during recovery. If you have been counseled by professionals who understand all the slips and trips of recovery, this helps recovery from addiction, even if the recovery must start again after a relapse. Treatment provides tools for change that will stay with them forever, no matter how many setbacks they have. People who try to give up drugs and alcohol on their own will be much less prepared to handle such slip-ups.

MYTH #6 When people have mental health issues AND addiction (depression, anxiety disorder, OCD, etc.) mental health must be treated first or it will wreck the drug and alcohol rehab process.

THE TRUTH: Exactly the opposite is true. Addiction is a life-threatening condition, and every attempt should be made to help addicts and alcoholics overcome this disease before their other problems are dealt with – although they will need to be dealt with eventually, in part because the continuing mental health issues will make it more difficult to stay clean and sober in the long run.

MYTH #7 Treatment for drug and alcohol is all really strict, so it really doesn't matter what rehab you attend.

THE TRUTH: A one-size-fits-all approach won't help very many addicts recover from their illness; treatment should suit the individual, and before checking into any rehab facility clients should talk to the rehab to make sure their specific needs will be met. There are many excellent rehabs out there, some are specialized for a particular group of people, but there are also some that are not so good, and no one should enter rehab before getting advice.

MYTH #8 When addicts really work hard, they can recover from addiction in a short period of time.

THE TRUTH: Relapse is common among addicts and alcoholics who go through treatment, and it may make it seem as if rehab really doesn't work very well. Successful recovery from a drug or alcohol addiction takes quite a bit of time. People who enter rehab willing to stick with their aftercare programs and not afraid to return to treatment more than once if they run into trouble, will have a solid chance of overcoming their addiction. Addicts and alcoholics who try to get clean and sober on their own, are much less likely to succeed.



Common traps and excuses to leave rehab before finishing include:

“I don’t need rehab because I could stop if I really wanted to. I just don’t want to.”

This excuse is very common for not going to rehab. Unfortunately this excuse is full of denial, the thing about this excuse for not going to rehab is the person who said it believes it. Addicts and alcoholics believe that if they really got serious about quitting drugs and alcohol they could and they would. The catch? They may never get to the point of seriously wanting to quit and even if they did they probably couldn’t stop.

“I can’t leave my job to go to rehab, I will get fired.”

This sounds like a good excuse not to go to rehab but it isn’t. Anyone who uses this as an excuse for not going to rehab is really just saying they don’t want to stop getting high or drunk. How do we know this? Well, any addict or alcoholic who continues drinking and using drugs to excess is going to end up losing their job anyway, most addicts and alcoholics who are ready to go to rehab realize this and know the job can wait.

“What about my kids? I can’t leave them.”

This excuse sounds so real many people believe it. The truth about this excuse for not going to rehab is that the addict or alcoholic is not talking about their kids out of concern for the kids, they are talking about the kids as a way to help themselves. It sounds terrible but it is the truth. The reality is if an addict or alcoholic doesn’t get help they are going to end up damaging their family even more and possibly losing their kids anyway. Not only that but if they continue using and drinking they won’t really be there for their children in the long run.

“I’m not an addict.”

If a person has to tell you they are not an addict because you are having a conversation with them about rehab, chances are this excuse is just that, an excuse. People who are not addicts and alcoholics never end up having conversations about going to rehab and never even have to come close to saying the words “I am not an addict”

“I can’t leave my partner.”

Chances are if an addict or alcoholic doesn’t leave their partner to go to rehab, the partner will end up leaving them. Like some of the other excuses this is just one excuse for not going to rehab that actually means “I don’t want to go, I am not done getting high or drunk.”



Common traps and excuses to leave rehab before finishing include:

“It isn’t as bad as you think it is.”

In the eyes of an alcoholic and addict it really isn’t that bad. This is because they have met people and seen places that truly are a lot worse. This is not a good excuse for not going to rehab though. The idea of doing well or doing poorly is not the same in an addict or alcoholic’s mind like it is in someone who doesn’t suffer from the disease. The idea of doing good and bad is warped. Doing badly to an alcoholic or addict may mean homeless, in an alleyway, shooting up etc.

“I have to go to... (Insert some big event Christmas, wedding, kid’s graduation, etc. here)

This is just another one of those things that makes a great excuse for not going to rehab when really there is a high chance if an addict or alcoholic is still drinking or using, they won’t make it to the big event to begin with.

“I can’t afford to go to rehab.”

Rehabs usually just garnish your Centrelink payment, and may also apply for rent assistance on your behalf to cover the costs. Plus, an addict and alcoholic always manages to find money for booze and drugs but not for rehab? That is why this is just an excuse for not going to rehab.

“I am happier when I am on drugs or drinking.”

This is a classic denial statement. The mind is so powerful in an addict and alcoholic that it has convinced them that they are only happy when they are using when in reality they are most likely miserable. Addicts and alcoholics do have good times when they are using or drinking but those times begin to get less and less, but their mind only focuses on the fewer and farther between good times.

“Rehab doesn’t work for me, I have been before.”

Most of the time if rehab doesn’t work it has less to do with the rehab and more to do with the addict and alcoholic themselves. This is a very common excuse for not going to rehab, used by someone who has been before. Things change and people change, which means their experience in rehab may be different this time around. It is not that rehab doesn’t work for people it is that people don’t want to work to become rehabilitated.



My experience with rehab

Before entering rehab:

I felt scared, not knowing what to expect and not fitting in. Fear of being around people I didn't know. Had feelings of separation from my children and partner because I knew I was going to be away for a long time and didn't know if they would cope without me there.

When I was in rehab:

Once I arrived at the rehab I did my induction and urine sample as expected. I was introduced to a number of workers then I became settled a little, they showed me the room I would be staying in. One worker showed me around and introduced me to other people staying in the rehab at that time. A huge weight lifted off my shoulders as they made me feel so welcomed and accepted - I instantly became excited about the programme.

Activities in rehab:

Meetings every morning in the rehab, 12 step meetings every night outside rehab, 1 on 1 counselling, working and chores inside and around rehab. Learning skills on how to live a life without the use of substances included: fishing, swimming at the beach, community events.

Leaving rehab:

I left rehab after two weeks of the twelve week programme because of the madness inside my head. This is a common time to break. I was worried about my family and children, everything I left behind. The reason I decided to do rehab was because I told my partner that if I ever relapsed I would admit myself to rehab and so I did. The two weeks I was there I had learnt a lot about recovery and the steps I needed to take to stay clean and sober. Everyone made me feel welcome while I was there but I knew rehab wasn't for me and so I left. Once I left I didn't know how I would explain to my partner because I felt angry, ashamed, and guilty and thought that she would feel the same. As soon as I came home I put in a lot of effort towards my aftercare treatment to stay in recovery such as anger management, S.M.A.R.T recovery, living with addictions, alcoholics anonymous, narcotics anonymous and one on one counselling. I am proud to say I'm still clean & sober today. There is a lot of mixed feelings when leaving rehab; some of these were worry and fear because you feel that you are on your own and you don't know if you can keep safe. Then there is a feeling of excitement to be around your family and friends, and a feeling of determination to stay clean and sober