



# Getting Treatment for Dual Diagnosis

(Mental health & alcohol/drug issues)

## There are different ways to get treatment, including:

- Going to your local doctor/GP or asking at a hospital
- Contacting a Drug & Alcohol or Mental Health service directly.  
For example, you can call **Odyssey House** on (03) 9420 7600 and make an appointment to see a counsellor.
- Contacting an organization that can refer you to a service, e.g. for help with
  - Alcohol and other drugs call **Directline**: 1800 888 236
  - Mental health issues, call the **Mental Health Advice Line**: 1300 280 737
- Google “Mental Health services” or “Alcohol and Drug services” + “Victoria” for ideas, or go to the Australian Drug information Network (ADIN) at:  
<http://www.adin.com.au>

## Which comes first?

If you think you have a drug/alcohol issue **and** a mental health issue, you don't need to worry about which service you should contact first. Either service will be able to provide you with good information about treatment options for both.

## Assessment

Generally when you go for treatment, they will ask you questions about

- Your mental health now and your mental health history
- The drugs you are using and your drug use history
- The people who support you and your current living/financial arrangements
- They may also ask you about your family and your past

These questions help the service plan the best treatment options for you. **You do not have to tell them anything you don't want to** but the more honest you are about your drug use and mental health, the more useful the treatment plan will be.

**Types of Treatment** - different treatments are available depending on your needs:

Counselling/Therapy: for both mental health and substance use issues. Counselling can be individual or family inclusive.

Medication: This can help with both mental health and substance use issues and is prescribed by a GP or a psychiatrist. Medication can reduce symptoms including alcohol/drug cravings, depression, anxiety and unwanted thoughts or hallucinations.

Detox (Drug Withdrawal) Services including:

- **Home-based**: Drug withdrawal happens at home with the help of health care workers who visit you every day, and someone close to you who is able to support you.
- **Outpatient**: You withdraw at home but stay in regular contact with the health care team or your doctor.
- **Community residential**: (Adult or Youth) withdrawal occurs in a specialist residential unit, where you receive care and supervision. This can be particularly helpful if you are likely to get very unwell or don't have someone to support you during detox.

In-house/Residential treatment programs: This can be anything from short stay programs (a few weeks), such as Odyssey House's Circuit Breaker to long stay services, such as the Odyssey House Therapeutic community (more than a year). Residential treatment is based on different philosophies that decide how they work for example 'the twelve step model' (Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous). Each service has its own way of thinking and operating but there can be a lot of overlap.

Supported Accommodation: You live with others who also have alcohol/drug and/or mental health issues. A support worker keeps in contact with how you are and helps you to sort out what you need including further treatment, social activities, employment and further accommodation.

## **What treatment comes first?**

- The treatment you have will depend on what you want to get out of it, how you want to live your life and what a healthy life would look like to you.
- This means that any service you go to will be making sure you have a treatment plan that fits the goals you agree to. This will help to decide what are your best options.
- Often drug withdrawal is the starting point, because a period of time without drugs will help you and your counsellor better understand what symptoms come from where.

**How to find treatment?** For a list of services or other places to find information,

- Call **DirectLine** or the **Mental Health Advice Line** (*numbers above*),
- Contact **Odyssey House Victoria** on (03) 9420 7600, **OR**
- Ask at any Alcohol & Drug or Mental Health service.

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