

SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT JOURNEY MAP

what do peers experience?

NOT IN TREATMENT

"I don't believe help actually exists"

"I told counsellors what they wanted to hear to avoid being forced into treatment"

"There's a lot of trust [in the healthcare system] that's been broken"

"This is a human experience, not a criminal one"

"Using is ritualized, compulsive, comfort-seeking"

"The alternative for not being in treatment is death"

"You need to be honest, open, willing before seeking treatment"

It can be hard to leave this area because:

Need to be in withdrawal or already "clean" before treatment - and once you're in, you lose your autonomy

FEAR - of losing freedom, autonomy, privacy, friends and medication like benzos

Treatment means abandoning commitments to pets, work or family

Hard to work while in treatment; you can't claim addiction as a disability. Rent still needs to be paid

CONFUSION - There is a long wait for services - and it's confusing to know which ones to access

Don't want to feel the negative emotions that substances cover up

Peer pressure to keep using

HOPELESSNESS

WHY I LOOK FOR TREATMENT

Friends dying

FEAR - of overdose

MCFD, court system, employer mandating treatment

Loved ones ask you to quit

Overdose

Other health issues like HIV/HCV

TREATMENT & SUPPORT

It can be hard to stay in this area because:

Doctors offices are hard to get to

Need time off work and/or way to travel

Bills still need to be paid - but difficult to travel for work on OST

ID is needed

It's hard to know which treatment route will work - and different doctors needed for different medications

ENTRY POINTS

Emergency Department

Complementary therapies

Hospital 'Psych ward'

Peer networks

Mental health services

Walk-in clinics

Residential care

Family doctor

Team-based care

Jail

Detox

What is a good life for me?

RECOVERY

"Recovery means different things to each of us"

"Let me choose what success looks like"

These help me stay here:

Peer support networks

Counselling

Church

Holistic approaches

Gender/cultural needs met

Social media

12 step groups

Well educated, informed providers

Getting my life back

Being treated with respect/dignity

Pain
"Don't disqualify someone's pain because they have a history of drug abuse"

Mental Health
"This one size fits all treatment means we aren't allowed to use benzos any more"

Stigma/ Shame
"The climate doesn't allow us to talk openly about our addiction"

"As a society, we have a responsibility to care for one another. We've lost sight of this"

Financial Pressure
"If addiction is a disease like cancer, why does it cost so much for recovery?"

"I can't drive on OST - so how am I supposed to work?"

Access to Care
"I woke up wanting to start treatment, but my doctor told me to wait - there were no spots"

"I can wait a week for detox, or access my dealer with no wait at all"

Coercion
"Treatment centres are so controlling. I can't smoke in detox"

"Being in treatment is more punitive - worse than when you're using"

Lack of Trust
"Don't assume we're manipulating you!"

"The doctors say our visits are confidential, but I don't feel like they are"

Inflexible Treatment Options
"Methadone sets you up to lie"

"Methadone doesn't carry you for 24 hours"

"There needs to be transitions between therapies"