

MOMENTUM

Recovery

Is it Time for Treatment?

A Comprehensive Guide
for Parents

As a parent, nothing is more important than the well-being of your child. Watching them grow from a child into an independent young adult can be one of the most rewarding aspects of your life. Yet, unexpected road blocks can happen at any stage of that journey. When your son or daughter is suddenly caught up in a substance use problem or mental health struggle, even the most capable parent can feel crippled — overwhelmed and uncertain about the best course of action.

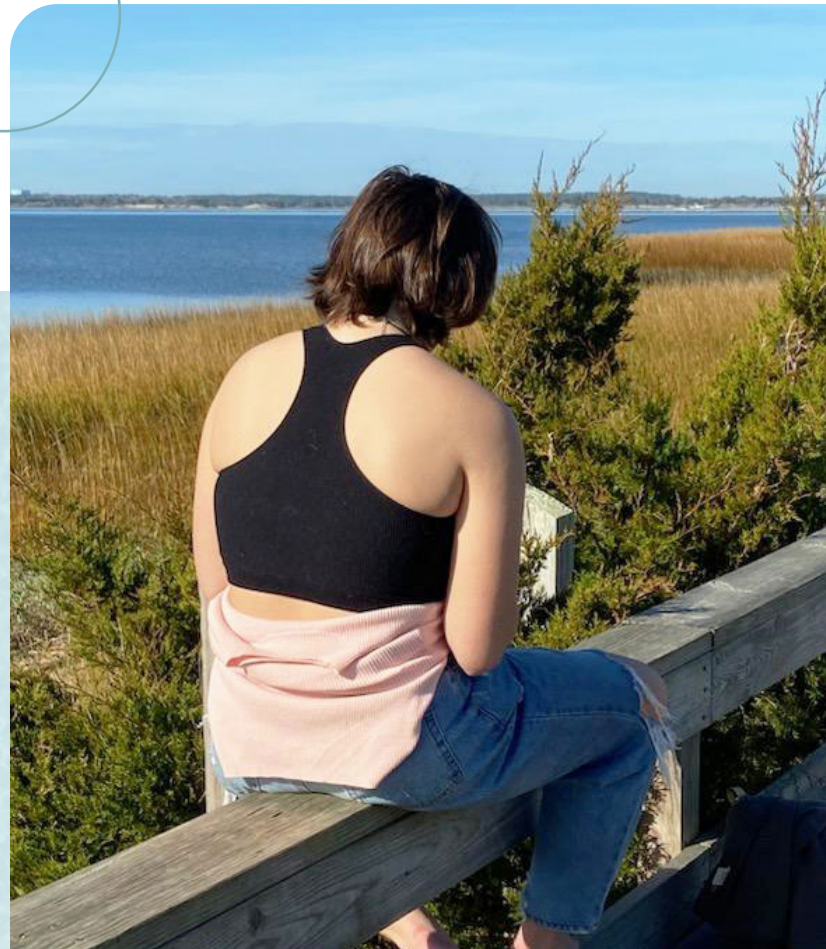
Unless you're well-versed in identifying the signs of substance abuse and aware of the mental health issues that can accompany addiction, you may not even know that your child is struggling — until it feels like it's too late. Even once you are aware, it still can be challenging to understand the nuances of levels of care, copays, etcetera. Knowing that you have a problem is certainly not enough to solve it. Navigating a family crisis is a lot for anyone to manage; but, with guidance, education, and a little bit of help, getting your son or daughter into residential treatment can be the beginning of a whole new chapter — for them and for the rest of your family.





Signs of Substance Use Disorder

One of the first red flags of substance abuse is a sudden change in behavior. Your child may become more secretive, distant, or irritable. They may also experience a decline in academic performance, miss school or work, or lose interest in activities they once enjoyed. Substance use can cause noticeable changes in appearance as well. Bloodshot eyes, frequent nosebleeds, weight loss, and a lack of personal hygiene are all potential indicators of drug use. Additionally, you may notice an unsteady gait, slurred speech, or tremors, which can signify a substance problem.



Mood swings are common in individuals with substance use disorders as well. Your son or daughter may experience periods of extreme euphoria followed by episodes of depression or anxiety. These mood changes can be exacerbated by the use of drugs or alcohol, leading to a vicious cycle of self-medication.

Another sign that your child may be struggling with addiction is if they begin to experience financial problems. Far too often, people caught in the grips of addiction prioritize drugs and alcohol over other essential expenses. They might ask you for money more frequently or even steal to support their habit.

Finally, finding drug paraphernalia — such as syringes, pipes, or small baggies — is a strong indication of substance abuse. If you discover these items in your child's possession, it's essential to address the issue immediately.

Signs of Mental Health Issues

Sudden shifts in your child's social life may indicate an underlying mental health problem: isolating themselves from friends and family, skipping social events, or losing interest in hobbies and activities, for example. Disruptions in sleep patterns — such as insomnia or excessive sleeping — can also be signs of a mental health issue. Substance abuse can exacerbate these issues, as drugs and alcohol can interfere with healthy sleep patterns. Along with sleep, changes in appetite — such as a significant increase or decrease in food consumption — are something you should not ignore. Substance use can also impact appetite, leading to weight loss or gain.

Additionally, frequent and intense emotional outbursts may indicate that your child is experiencing mental health challenges. These episodes may be suffused with anger, sadness, anxiety, and more — and may be aggravated by substance abuse. If your child is frequently expressing feelings of hopelessness or despair, it may be suggestive of a problem. In some cases, this can lead to suicidal ideation or self-harm, making it crucial to address these concerns immediately.



Residential vs. Outpatient Treatment

When considering substance abuse and mental health treatment options for your child, it's essential to understand the differences in levels of care — and when each level is appropriate.

Residential treatment involves admitting your child to a facility where they will receive round-the-clock care and support. This option is typically recommended for individuals with substance use disorder and/or co-occurring mental health disorders. If your son or daughter needs medically supervised withdrawal management, residential treatment is a requirement. In the hierarchy of levels of care, residential treatment is at the top. These programs traditionally last for 30 days, but there are long-term options that can extend treatment up to six months and beyond as needed.



Advantages of residential treatment include:

STRUCTURED ENVIRONMENT:

Residential treatment provides a structured, controlled environment where your child can focus solely on their recovery. This setting minimizes distractions and removes access to drugs or alcohol, promoting a more successful recovery process.

COMPREHENSIVE CARE:

Residential treatment centers offer a wide range of services, including individual therapy, group therapy, family counseling, and medication management. This comprehensive approach addresses the physical, psychological, and emotional aspects of addiction, ensuring a well-rounded recovery.

PEER SUPPORT:

Residential treatment allows your child to connect with others who are facing similar challenges. This camaraderie can create a supportive network full of accountability, which plays a vital role in maintaining long-term sobriety.

DUAL-DIAGNOSIS TREATMENT:

Some residential treatment centers are equipped to address both substance use disorders and mental health issues. By treating these co-occurring disorders simultaneously, residential treatment can improve overall recovery outcomes.





Outpatient treatment is a lower level of care that allows your child to attend therapy sessions and receive support while continuing to live at home or in recovery-supportive housing. This option is generally recommended for individuals with less severe substance use and mental health challenges, or those who have already completed a residential program. Outpatient programs typically meet three to five times per week for 5 or more hours at a time. During these meetings, clients are engaged in a mixture of group and individual therapy sessions. If a client is unable to meet the requirements necessary for outpatient treatment, there is a high likelihood that they will need a residential program first. Clients who have completed residential treatment often find an outpatient program to be a helpful and necessary transitional step back into the world outside of the treatment bubble.

Advantages of outpatient treatment include:

FLEXIBILITY:

Outpatient treatment offers greater flexibility, allowing your child to maintain their daily routine, attend school or work, and participate in family activities while receiving care.

LOWER COST:

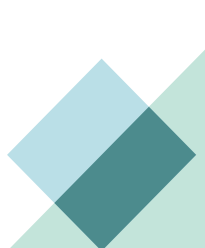
Outpatient treatment is generally less expensive than residential care, making it a more accessible option for many families. Insurance is much more likely to provide full coverage for outpatient services.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:

Outpatient treatment enables your child to maintain close connections with family members, who can provide essential support during the recovery process.

GRADUAL TRANSITION:

Outpatient treatment allows your child to gradually reintegrate into their daily life, helping them learn to navigate triggers and develop coping strategies in a real-world environment.



Getting Started

Ultimately, identifying signs of substance abuse and mental health issues in your child is a crucial first step toward getting them the help they need. Understanding the differences between residential and outpatient treatment options will empower you to make the best decision for your child's unique situation. Remember that you are not alone in this journey, and seeking professional guidance can be an invaluable resource in helping your child achieve lasting recovery.




MOMENTUM

Recovery 888.528.3361

MomentumRecovery.com