

*The following checklist of things to consider when you're looking for treatment for your Loved One, is a version of a list borrowed from a blog post at drugfree.org entitled *What I Tell Parents Looking to Get Their Child into Treatment*, which we've modified to apply to all types of Loved Ones (spouse, child, friend...).

Vet the treatment center you're considering. Use your consumer education skills that you would use in any serious health care decision. Trust your judgment and your feelings about the answers you get from the people you talk to. Here are some things to consider:

- Are they transparent?
- Is there staff listed on the website, with their experience and qualifications?
- Are they easily accessible to answer your questions? Make sure to listen to what they are saying. Are they just telling you what they think you want to hear? Treatment for addiction is uncomfortable, for both the Loved One and for the family. If a treatment center is explaining themselves and their programs to you, listen to see if they explain *why* they do what they do and what is the rationale behind their practices.
- Ask about their clinical philosophy. Every treatment center should be able to explain this, the philosophy behind their decision-making and ultimately their patient care.
- Ask about their programs and what they entail. If they say they offer detox, make sure that means an actual detox with 24-hour medical care. If they say they are residential, what does that look like?
- Ask about licensing and accreditation (although be careful if they sell themselves too much on their accreditation, as many centers hire consultants that basically walk them through the accreditation process.)

**Allies in
Recovery**

- Ask if the program uses a published assessment tool. Assessment is the cornerstone of the decision-making process from which all else should flow. As you look for a program, check to see if they use an assessment tool that has been tested and found to be reliable and valid versus an assessment that the program designed by itself.
- Because mental health issues often go hand-in-hand with drug and alcohol abuse, it is important that your Loved One be assessed for co-occurring mental health problems.
- Ask them pricing upfront. If they accept insurance, they should be easily able to give you a full amount of what treatment will cost.
- Ask about their urinalysis billing. If they are residential, there should be little need for your Loved One to be drug tested more than a few times. If it is an outpatient program, there is a need for drug testing but no more than twice a week unless there is suspicion of drug use.
- Listen if the treatment center is trying to sell you on their facility because of the amazing amenities. Single rooms, big-screen TVs and pools are nice, but are not treatment for addiction. Rather, they should be explaining their clinical services.
- Ask if the staff is full-time.
- Ask for references.
- If you're able to, visit the program with your Loved One, meet the staff and make sure everything seems legitimate.