

Levels of Care, Explained

Detox to outpatient, what each level means, and when it tends to fit.

Immediate danger: call 911.

Crisis support: call or text 988.

Treatment locator: findtreatment.gov or 1-800-662-4357.

Names vary by program, so ask each provider what the level includes, how often care happens, and how they decide what fits.

Quick guide

Detox

Short-term medical supervision while substances leave the body. Often fits when withdrawal could be unsafe. It is a first step, not the whole plan.

Residential

Living at a facility full-time with structure and 24-hour support. Often fits when home is not safe or stable, or lower levels have not held.

PHP

Partial hospitalization is intensive daytime treatment most days. The person sleeps at home or in sober housing.

More care levels

IOP

Intensive outpatient treatment is several hours of therapy a few days a week, often around work, school, or family.

Outpatient

Lighter therapy and check-ins. Often fits ongoing accountability after more intensive care.

Sober living

Substance-free housing with peers. Often pairs with outpatient care or aftercare while someone rebuilds stability.

Questions to ask

☐ What level do you recommend, and why?

☐ What does a normal week look like?

☐ Who provides care?

☐ What happens if this level is not enough?

☐ What is the aftercare plan?

Notes
