

# **HOLISTIC**

TREATMENT FOR

# **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

# **ADDICTION**

**Holistic** addiction treatment centers acknowledge the complexity of addiction by striving to heal the mind, body, and spirit.

**Holistic treatment** centers and programs use practices such as meditation, yoga, acupuncture, massage, and nutrition to treat addictions to **drugs or alcohol** and prevent relapses.



# WHAT DOES HOLISTIC MEAN?

As our knowledge about addiction continues to grow, so does the number of addiction treatment options. One increasingly popular treatment option is **HOLISTIC TREATMENT**.

Actually, holistic treatment isn't one particular offering.

**HOLISTIC TREATMENT** is an umbrella term for a number of treatment options.

Holistic means taking a whole, well-rounded approach to care. This makes sense because it comes from the Greek word holos, which means whole.



# HOW **HOLISTIC ADDICTION** REHAB PROGRAMS ARE DIFFERENT

By addressing the body, mind, and spirit, holistic rehab programs acknowledge that addiction is a condition that affects many aspects of people's lives, not just their bodies.



**In the past, addiction treatment primarily focused on healing the body.** That's important, because addiction can ravage the body and can create physical consequences that can be uncomfortable, painful, or even fatal.

But treatment needed to address more than the body because addiction also affects the mind and spirit, and

## **HOLISTIC TREATMENT** RECOGNIZES THAT



# What does **HOLISTIC** MEAN

in terms of treating substance abuse  
and addiction?

It means not only addressing the body but also  
acknowledging the mind and the spirit or soul.

Holistic practices are also popular in all areas, not  
just in recovery.



One study  
found that

**36.7** MILLION

**U.S.** residents  
practiced **yoga in 2016**



When used for addiction recovery, **holistic care** utilizes practices that take  
multidimensional approaches to heal from drug or alcohol addiction.

Often, centers use more than one of these approaches or combine  
them with other treatment options.

To provide holistic care, rehab facilities and programs incorporate practices such as



Acupuncture



Yoga



Art and music  
Therapy



Exercise



Neurofeedback

Biofeedback  
and Neurofeedback



Meditation



Psychotherapy



Nutritional  
Therapy



Massage



# PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELLNESS



Some people have anxiety, depression, or another mental illness. They use drugs and alcohol to cope with their struggles, only to become addicted while their mental conditions grow worse. Other people might abuse drugs and alcohol and find that this substance abuse triggers a mental illness.



When someone has an addiction and another mental illness such as **depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder**, they have a condition known as a dual diagnosis, co-occurring disorder, or comorbidity. This is a complex yet common condition that affected **9.5 million** adults in the United States in 2019, which increased from 8.1 million adults in 2015.

Rehab centers and programs aim to treat both conditions. Otherwise, a person who has only received assistance for an addiction might not know what to do if they experience a panic attack or symptoms of anxiety. Or a person who has received assistance to treat depression might continue to struggle with a drinking problem that ultimately makes them depressed again.

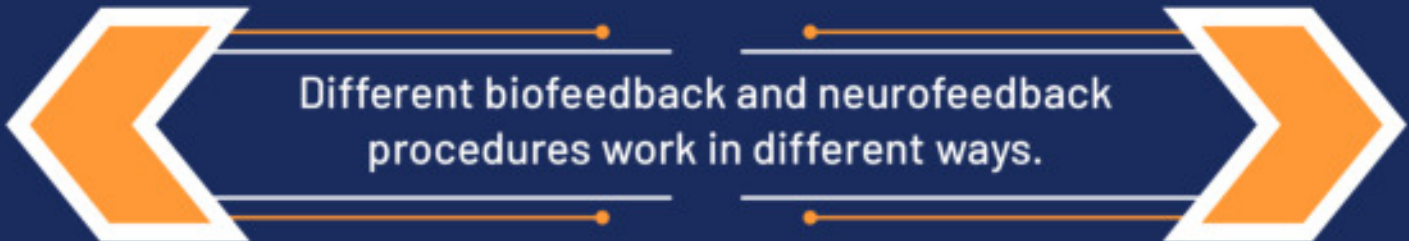
Mental illnesses and addiction are both complex diseases of the brain and body. Treating the brain, body, and spirit increases a person's likelihood of healing. **Holistic treatment aims to do that.**

# TYPES OF HOLISTIC ADDICTION THERAPIES



Acupuncture is one example of a **holistic addiction therapy**. So are yoga, music and art therapy, journal writing (also known as journaling), massages, hypnotherapy, exercise, and other approaches.

**BIOFEEDBACK AND NEUROFEEDBACK** are two therapies that could aid in addiction therapy. The processes measure bodily responses and use them to help people heal.



Different biofeedback and neurofeedback procedures work in different ways.

One neurofeedback approach is also known as **EEG BIOFEEDBACK** or **NEUROTHERAPY**. During this approach, professionals place electrodes on a patient's scalp. The electrodes are connected to a computer that uses a software to monitor when the patient's brain waves are of the wanted frequency and then send signals to the patient.

Such signals encourage patients to keep thinking and doing the same things to regulate their brain waves. They could encourage people to shift their thoughts away from cravings and anxiety and instead focus on the present.



# YOGA

## AND

# MEDITATION

Meditation and yoga also encourage people to focus on the present. They're also holistic approaches used by a growing number of addiction treatment centers.

## YOGA IS HOLISTIC

because it addresses the mind, body, and spirit.

It encourages participants to try a variety of poses, stretches, and breathing exercises. These activities can help people focus while reducing stress, anxiety, and depression.

They can also help people sleep better. Withdrawal and early recovery can affect a person's sleep. Researchers have found that people are five to ten times more likely to have some sort of sleep problem during recovery.

Since people sometimes use alcohol or drugs to treat sleep problems, insomnia could lead to relapses. **Yoga might prevent such negative outcomes.**





# YOGA

## AND

# MEDITATION

Sometimes people use meditation while they're practicing yoga.

Meditation often encourages people to focus on their breathing or other actions while minimizing other stimuli.

**MEDITATION** is a holistic practice that incorporates mindfulness. It urges people to be mindful of what they're currently experiencing while not attaching importance to any other thoughts and feelings that may arise.

One study examined 19 randomized controlled trials of people who practiced mindfulness and were actively in a substance use. Researchers found that mindfulness techniques reduced substance use in 15 of the trials and reduced cravings in five of the trials.

Mindfulness and meditation teach people that cravings are natural and that they shouldn't judge themselves for having them. Instead, people can recognize that they're uncomfortable, note what they're thinking and feeling, and be compassionate with themselves.



# NUTRITION IN RECOVERY

Proper nutrition is another way recovering people can be compassionate with themselves. Healthy food and nutritional advice are important **HOLISTIC** offerings at several addiction rehabilitation treatment centers.

People with addictions often don't eat properly and experience poor nutrition for a number of reasons.

## T H E Y   C O U L D   B E :

Using substances that reduce or increase their appetites

Consuming substances that damage their teeth, making it difficult to eat

Spending money on drugs or alcohol instead of food

Spending money on drugs or alcohol instead of food

Having cravings that prompt them to eat junk food instead of healthier options

Experiencing vitamin and mineral deficiencies due to the substance use



# NUTRITION IN RECOVERY

Due to such factors, malnourishment and weight loss are common in addiction. Scholars have found that **24 PERCENT** of people who entered detoxification programs **"exhibited mild to moderate malnutrition."**

Similarly, as many as 70 percent of people who enter detoxification programs have lower-than-average body mass index (BMI) measurements or lower average weight values than the population at large.

## A PERSON'S

# BMI

indicates a person's body fat based on their height and weight.



**Rehabilitation centers** serve healthy food and snacks. They might employ professionals who can instruct patients how to plan meals, shop, and cook in ways that help patients regain the strength they've lost due to their addictions.



They provide such assistance because good nutrition not only strengthens the body and the brain but also boosts the mood. Practicing good nutrition is therefore a **HOLISTIC APPROACH TO AID ADDICTION RECOVERY.**



# HOLISTIC AND CONVENTIONAL APPROACHES IN TREATMENT



One of the benefits of holistic options is that people can – and do – use them alongside more conventional approaches in treatment.

While people are detoxing, they can use prescription drugs to ease withdrawal symptoms. They can also use meditation to acknowledge their cravings but remove the power they have over them.

If they're attending rehab and are tense because their therapy sessions have brought up unpleasant memories or feelings, people might receive massages at their rehab centers.

**MASSAGE THERAPY IS HOLISTIC**  
because it promotes relaxation in the muscles and the mind.

According to researchers, massage can help people become more aware of



The symptoms  
of stress



Tension



Patterns in  
the way they  
respond  
to stress



# HOLISTIC AND CONVENTIONAL APPROACHES IN TREATMENT



People who are more aware of such feelings may be better equipped to prevent relapses from their sobriety.

Preventing relapses is a major goal of aftercare, the assistance a person receives after he or she leaves a rehab treatment center or program.

**HOLISTIC APPROACHES** may work very well here too.

After they leave rehab, people can continue to practice mindfulness to examine how they're feeling. If they find that they're anxious or are craving substances, they can use yoga or mindfulness exercises to urge them to focus on their breathing and stretching instead of their desire for drugs or alcohol.

They can also join groups of people who meditate, use mindfulness techniques, or practice yoga. The groups can reinforce their

## **HOLISTIC PRACTICES.**

Groups can also provide social opportunities that can provide a social interaction that can further bolster people's recovery.





# HOW EFFECTIVE ARE **HOLISTIC** TECHNIQUES?

Different studies have indicated that **HOLISTIC TECHNIQUES** might be effective treatment options, especially if used in conjunction with other approaches.

One study examined people with heroin addictions who used the prescription drug methadone as part of their treatment. When receiving two weeks of acupuncture therapy, the study participants used lower daily doses of methadone and fell asleep more quickly.

**YOGA** could be an effective tool to treat addiction because it spurs positive changes in the body, brain, and mood:

It helps patients by strengthening the body once weakened by addiction



It changes brain density and the size of some areas of the brain, which could promote better concentration, self-awareness, and decision-making



It increases the levels of neurotransmitters that promote relaxation and boost mood and teaches people how to observe their cravings and feelings without acting on them



**HOLISTIC** approaches acknowledge the complexities of addictions and the people who struggle with them. They understand that the spirit, brain, and body are connected, so treating them all can help people improve them all.