

Program Philosophy

The Area Substance Abuse Council (ASAC) is a private, nonprofit corporation organized to provide comprehensive alcohol/drug abuse treatment and prevention services in Benton, Jackson, Jones, Clinton, and Linn counties. ASAC services a variety of clients, including persons who want to explore the effects of their substance abuse, concerned others, persons who habitually abuse alcohol/drugs, persons who are addicted to alcohol or other drugs, and persons who only want information. Services are individualized based on the needs of each client.

An important aspect of ASAC's treatment philosophy is that the individual through his/her decision-making processes, can dictate his/her present and future.

The focus of treatment is twofold: **first**; the individual is dealt with in the here and now, his/her current substance abuse problem and the interpersonal interactions established with the staff and other residents, **second**; an emphasis is placed upon helping each individual clarify his/her values and then develop individual decision-making skills. Total abstinence is mandatory while the client is in treatment.

A basic assumption in the agency's philosophical approach is if an individual learns better decision-making skills and is exposed to alternative courses of action, the individual will exhibit better judgment in dealing with the substance abuse problem and other areas of his/her life.

The following tenets are the basis for the agency's treatment philosophy:

- 1) Treatment services are available to all without regard to race, religion, age, sex or ability to pay. Each client will be charged for services on a sliding fee scale based on income. United Way, state grants, and contributions will be used to cover the cost of treatment for those who are unable to pay.
- 2) As of yet, there is no cure for alcoholism/drug addiction. The recovery process is a life-long process that requires total abstinence to ensure success. The primary purpose of treatment is to assist the client in beginning the recovery process, to provide support during the initial stages and to help the client develop a life-time plan for maintaining sobriety.
- 3) Treatment is designed not only to stop alcohol/drug abuse, but also to help the client resolve the underlying issues associated with the abuse. As such, therapy includes self-esteem, family issues, children of alcoholism issues, interpersonal relationships, sexual issues, stress management, and other groups to address problems that may lead to relapse.
- 4) ASAC recognizes that no single approach is effective for all clients. We therefore hire counselors with a variety of backgrounds and attempt to match client needs to an appropriate counselor.
- 5) Outpatient counseling is the most appropriate treatment modality for the majority of clients because it allows them to proceed with treatment while remaining in their normal environment.

- 6) Residential or inpatient treatment may be required for some clients whose substance abuse has caused them to become unable to function in their normal environment and when constant support is required to ensure abstinence. Separate youth and adult residential programs are maintained.
- 7) Outreach is provided to make treatment more accessible to special populations, including minorities, youth, elderly, and persons in the criminal justice system. Outpatient offices are established in Benton, Jackson, Jones, and Linn counties to make treatment available to individuals living outside of the Cedar Rapids metro area.
- 8) Clients participating in treatment need to remain abstinent. Urinalysis testing, antabuse, and naltrexone may be employed to reinforce treatment.
- 9) Because of the possibility of relapse, aftercare and follow-up are critical to a successful treatment experience.
- 10) Participation in a mutual support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous should be encouraged as an adjunct to treatment and as an effective aftercare component. Participation in Alanon or Alateen is encouraged for individuals who have a family member abusing drugs/alcohol.
- 11) The primary goal for the person addicted to alcohol or other drugs should be total abstinence.
- 12) The most effective mechanism for addressing the alcohol and drug problem in our community is through an aggressive prevention program to educate the individual before the use/abuse begins.
- 13) All treatment involvement must be kept totally confidential.
- 14) Continuing Care: many people believe that recovery is abstinence from alcohol/drug use and relapse only occurs when one begins to use alcohol and drugs. Abstinence from alcohol and drug use is necessary for recovery but it is not recovery in itself. Aftercare services teach people how to live a lifestyle without alcohol/drug use behaviors. Aftercare services are critical aspects of recovery in teaching people to learn how to cope with the stress of life without returning to the use of alcohol or illicit drugs.