

Brief Descriptions of ASAM Levels of Care

Level 0.5: Early Intervention

Early intervention are services for specific individuals who, for a known reason, are at risk of developing substance-related problems, or a service for those for whom there is not sufficient information to document a substance use disorder.

An individual who is an appropriate candidate for level 0.5 services evidences problems and risk factors that appear to be related to substance use or addictive behavior. However, the individual may not meet the diagnostic criteria for a substance use or addictive disorder defined in the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as described below:

Example: Diagnostic Criteria for an Alcohol Use Disorder

A problematic pattern of alcohol use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by at least two of the following, occurring within a 12-month period:

1. Alcohol is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.
2. There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control alcohol use.
3. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain alcohol, use alcohol, or recover from its effects.
4. Cravings or a strong desire or urge to use alcohol.
5. Recurrent alcohol use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home.
6. Continued alcohol use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of alcohol.
7. Important social, occupational or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of alcohol use.
8. Recurrent alcohol use in situations in which it is physically hazardous.
9. Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by alcohol.
10. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following: a. A need for markedly increased amounts of alcohol to achieve intoxication or desired effect. b. A markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of alcohol.
11. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following: a. The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for alcohol. b. Alcohol (or a closely related substance, such as a benzodiazepine) is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.

Where the Level 0.5 service is a Driving under the Influence (DUI) or Driving While Intoxicated (OWI) program, the length of service is often determined by program rules and law, and completion of the program may be required for reinstatement of driving privileges or removal of charges from their criminal record.

Level 0.5 program services encompass educational programs for groups such as DUI (Driving under the Influence) offenders and other populations with increased risk (other substance use –related offenses).

Interventions offered at Level 0.5 may involve individual. Group or family Counseling, SBIRT services, as well as planned educational experiences focused on helping the individual recognize and avoid harmful or high-risk substance use and/or addictive behavior.

Prior to admission, a diagnostic assessment should be performed to determine whether the person meets the diagnostic admission criteria of Level 0.5, which requires that a person does not meet diagnostic criteria of a substance use disorder.

If the assessment of such an individual indicates a need for more intensive treatment than Level 0.5 services, refer to a program that provides more intensive, clinically appropriate level of care such as outpatient services.

Level 1: Outpatient Services

Level 1 outpatient services are designed to treat the individual's level of clinical severity and function. They can help individuals achieve permanent changes in their alcohol and drug dependence and in their mental and physical health functioning. Persons being admitted to Level 1 must have met at least 2 of the diagnostic criteria for a substance use disorder as described in DSM-5.

To accomplish this, Level 1 services must address major lifestyle, attitudinal, and behavioral issues that have the potential to undermine the goal of well ness and recovery or inhibit the individual's ability to cope with major life tasks without the non-medical use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, a pathological involvement with gambling, or with other addictive behaviors.

Mental health or general health care treatment personnel provide professionally directed screening, evaluation, treatment, and ongoing recovery and disease management services. Such services are provided in regularly scheduled sessions and follow a defined set of policies and procedures or medical protocols.

Services can also include counseling and psychosocial therapies for substance related and co-occurring disorders offered by professionals who specialize in addiction care or by other health care and mental health professionals.

Level 2: Intensive Outpatient/Partial Hospitalization Services

Level 2 encompasses services that are capable of meeting the complex needs of people with addiction and co-occurring conditions.

It is an organized outpatient service that delivers treatment services during the day, before or after work or school, in the evening, and/or on weekends. For appropriately selected patients, such programs provide essential education and treatment components while allowing patients to apply their newly acquired skills within real world environments. Programs have the capacity to arrange for medical and psychiatric consultation, psychopharmacological consultation, addiction medication management, and 24-hour crisis services, if those services are not already designed to be components of the Level 2 service.

Level 2 programs provide comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments and individualized service plans, and can address multiple co-occurring issues. Including formulation of problem or need statements. Measurable treatment goals and specific strategies and methods-all developed in collaboration with the patient.