

Assessing the Evidence Base: Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Programs¹

Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) goals are to help an individual learn early-stage relapse management and coping strategies, to ensure the person has psychosocial support and to address individual symptoms and needs.

KEY LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS:

- Intensive Outpatient Programs are defined by SAMHSA for the purposes of this review as “a minimum of nine hours of service per week in three, three-hour sessions.”
 - IOP can be longer and become less intensive over time
 - IOPs can include partial hospitalization and day treatment (5-7 days/week)
 - IOPs encompass a wide variety of program components
- IOPs are second in treatment prevalence only to regular outpatient treatment for substance use disorders.
- Duration of treatment varies with severity and individual treatment response.
- The level of evidence for IOPs was rated as high. The effectiveness of IOPs was rated as high as inpatient treatment.
- However, there was a noted considerable variability among program components in the research evaluated; this suggests that further refinement of IOP elements may further improve their effectiveness.

Resources:

McCarty, et al. (2014). Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Treatment: Assessing the Evidence. *Psychiatric Services*, 65, 1-9. <http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/data/Journals/PSS/0/appi.ps.201300249.pdf?resultClick=3>

v.5.2014

¹ *Assessing the Evidence Base Series* is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The goal of the AEB Series is to provide a framework for decision makers to build a modern addictions and mental health service system for the people who use these services and the people who provide them. The framework is intended to support decisions about the services that are likely to be most effective.