



DOCUMENT NAME: **BOP Substance Abuse Policy**

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Bureau of Prisons

Substance Abuse Treatment Program

In Fiscal Year 1989, the Bureau of Prisons designed a comprehensive substance abuse treatment strategy in an effort to change inmates' criminal and drug-using behaviors. This strategy begins with drug abuse education and ends with a strong community transition component.

Inmates are required to participate in a drug abuse education course if (1) there is evidence in their presentence investigation report that alcohol or drugs contributed to the commission of their instant offense; (2) they violated supervised release, parole, conditions of a halfway house placement, or conditions of home confinement based on alcohol or drug use; or (3) the sentencing judge recommended that they participate in a drug treatment program during incarceration. In the drug abuse education course, inmates receive information about alcohol and drugs and the physical, social, and psychological impact of abusing these substances. Inmates who are identified as having a further need for treatment are encouraged to participate in non-residential or residential drug abuse treatment.



Non-residential drug abuse treatment and counseling are available at every Bureau institution. Treatment includes individual and group therapy, group counseling, and the use of interactive cognitive restructuring treatment modules that provide skills-building activities and prepare inmates for their transition to the community.

In addition, more than 50 Bureau institutions have residential drug abuse treatment programs (RDAP). Inmates who participate in the residential program are housed together in a separate unit of the prison that is reserved for drug treatment. The residential program provides intensive half-day programming, 5 days a week. The remainder of the day is spent in education, work skills training, and/or other inmate programming. Upon RDAP completion, aftercare treatment services are provided to the inmate while he/she is in the general population, and also later at the residential re-entry center. This maximizes the carry-over of skills, ensuring an effective transition from the institution program to the community.

The 1994 Violent Crime Control Act provided a powerful incentive for inmates who volunteer to participate in the residential drug abuse program. Non-violent inmates who are diagnosed with a substance use disorder may be eligible for up to a year off his/her sentence, at the discretion of the Director of the BOP.

The Bureau and National Institute on Drug Abuse combined funding and expertise to conduct a rigorous analysis of the Bureau's residential drug treatment program. Research findings demonstrated that RDAP



participants are significantly less likely to recidivate and less likely to relapse than non-participants. The studies also suggest that the Bureau's RDAPs make a significant difference in the lives of inmates following their release from custody and return to the community.

Substance Abuse Treatment FAQs

What type of drug treatment does the Bureau of Prisons offer?

The Bureau offers a wide range of treatment services for offenders with varying levels of drug problems.

- Drug Abuse Education classes are offered at every Bureau institution.
- Non-residential drug abuse treatment is offered at every Bureau institution for offenders with low level drug problems, those waiting to enter a Residential Drug Abuse program (RDAP), or those who do not have the time to enter and complete the RDAP.
- RDAPs are designed for those with severe drug abuse problems and are available at nearly half of the Bureau's institutions.
- Transitional Drug Abuse Treatment is also offered at every institution as a required component of the RDAP or for inmates with a drug problem preparing to release to the community.
- Community transitional drug treatment is available to inmates with drug problems who have been transferred to community corrections centers (CCCs) in preparation for release from Bureau custody.

What does RDAP include?

In RDAP, inmates are engaged in group counseling for 3-4 hours per day over a 9 month period. Treatment is delivered by drug abuse treatment specialists, who are supervised by a drug abuse program psychologist.

RDAP participants live together in a housing unit separate from the general population. The cognitive-behavioral program includes components to break down criminal thinking, build rational thinking, improve relationships and interpersonal skills, and help inmates develop a strategy to maintain recovery and a



crime-free lifestyle.

After an inmate completes the unit-based phase of the RDAP, he/she must participate in institution and/or community transitional drug abuse treatment. Institution transition includes a review of RDAP when transferred to the general population. The community transition program is required of all inmates who complete the unit-based portion of RDAP and are later transferred to a CCC, usually for six months at the ends of his/her sentence. Community transition includes continued treatment with a community-based treatment provider and a formal treatment report to U.S. Probation when an inmate leaves Bureau custody and transfers to supervised release under U.S. Probation. This ensures a continuity of care for the inmate under supervision.

Who is eligible to participate in the Bureau's RDAP?

All inmates who volunteer for and meet the criteria of a drug use disorder, i.e., substance abuse or dependence, as defined in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). The determination for qualification is made by the drug abuse program coordinator, a psychologist, who will affirm or reject a diagnosis based on offender self-report and appropriate collateral documentation.

How does an inmate volunteer for treatment?

An inmate may volunteer by sending a request for treatment to his/her case manager or the institution's drug abuse program coordinator, available at every Bureau institution.

Are offenders able to gain early releases from incarceration if they complete residential treatment?

The 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act allows the Bureau's Director, at his/her discretion, to provide up to one year early release for non-violent inmates who complete the entire RDAP.



The RDAP coordinator, the offender's case manager, and, when appropriate, legal staff review the offender's record to determine if he/she is provisionally eligible for an early release. Offenders who are found to be provisionally eligible by policy must complete all components of RDAP, institution transition, and community transition, as well as sustain clear conduct.

Are inmates with detainers ineligible for early release?

Ordinarily, if an inmate has a detainer, they are unable to furlough transfer to a CCC, and therefore, are unable to complete the third component of RDAP (community transition services). Inmates with detainers who are accepted by a CCC may be eligible for early release consideration.

Can an offender participate in RDAP if he/she is not eligible for an early release?

If otherwise qualified for admission, an offender can participate in RDAP, regardless of his/her early release eligibility.

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