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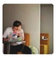
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Should Trauma Or Trauma Related Addiction Be Treated First?

By Louisville Addiction Treatment Center

Exposure to disturbing, life-changing, and life-threatening events can lead to long-term distress in more than one way. You could develop disabling chronic behaviors due to your exposure to trauma, including substance abuse and addiction.

Unfortunately, in many situations, trauma and substance abuse can go hand-in-hand. As an individual, the last thing you need is to be told faced with an ultimatum to “quit or else”. The truth is that your trauma could contribute to the addiction. In other words, the strategy to focus only on one issue is ineffective and could aggravate your addiction or other post-traumatic symptoms.

Our Impact Outpatient Program is specifically designed to address this dilemma, just outside of Louisville, Kentucky. Indeed, we believe that our patients should not have to choose between treating their trauma or their addiction. We appreciate that the addiction is a symptom of your trauma. To help you reclaim your life and regain your sobriety, we strongly encourage you to approach trauma and trauma-related addiction as a dual treatment.

The correlation between trauma and addiction

Addictive behaviors often develop as a coping mechanism for the long-lasting effects of the trauma. While substance abuse and other forms of addiction are harmful to your health, they also play a crucial role in your response to the trauma. They act as shields, helping you manage the repercussions of past trauma in day-to-day life.

Psychologists agree that it isn’t reasonable to remove someone’s coping mechanisms without being able to provide suitable alternatives. Without coping mechanisms, you are left exposed to debilitating post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (PTSD) as a consequence of unresolved issues from the past.

Additionally, an experience of trauma can significantly rewire brain chemistry, which can make you more vulnerable to other trauma-related triggers for addiction. Thoughts, behavioral patterns, and emotions can resurface regularly, triggered by uncomfortable emotions, flashbacks, etc.

Consequently, it is important for someone who has experienced trauma in the past to seek dual treatment in order to tackle both their trauma and their addiction.

What does trauma look like?

Trauma can happen to anyone at any age, and it can take a variety of shapes. Trauma is often assumed to be correlated to severe events, such as an individual experiencing childhood abuse or a war veteran living through the atrocities of the war.

But it is important to remember that trauma could be triggered by a huge variety of circumstances. Someone who witnesses an assault could be traumatized even if they were never injured in the process. Unexpected and unavoidable tragedies can also trigger a traumatic response, such as a natural disaster or the passing of a loved one.

In other words, it is impossible to define precisely which event is traumatic and which isn’t. According to the American Psychological Association, it’s the emotional response a person has to a negative event that defines trauma. When the effect of trauma disrupts a person’s ability to live their normal life, psychologists recommend treating both the stress and dysfunction related to the trauma to restore your emotional well-being.

Signs that a person is traumatized vary greatly between individuals. Not everyone exhibits visible symptoms, and trauma can be completely unnoticeable in many situations, even to relatives and close friends. Emotional symptoms, such as anger, sadness, mood swings, and emotional outbursts, can be present or triggered by specific trauma-related events. Physical symptoms, such as panic attacks, could also be related to the past trauma. The American Psychological Association strongly recommends getting a professional assessment if you suspect trauma. Indeed, a professional can prevent bias and incorrect self-assessment.

Where does addiction fit in the definition of trauma?

Addiction could be a type of dysfunction caused by a traumatic event. The response to trauma can take several weeks, months, or even years to develop. In other words, an adult developing a substance addiction could still be struggling with the long-term effects of unaddressed childhood trauma.

Many patients worry about how addiction affects their lives and can forget the initial trauma that led to the addiction. That is why inpatient treatments that focus only on your addictive behaviors can be ineffective in the long term. They miss out on the crucial part of your healing journey, namely dealing with the trauma.

Impact Outpatient Program difference for trauma related addiction

Our Impact Outpatient Program is specifically designed to accompany individuals along the recovery path from addiction. We appreciate that most people don't need to recover from substance abuse only, which is why our program allows you to seek psychological therapy support too.

One important element in building lasting and sustainable recovery after a traumatic event is everyday life. Indeed, inpatient treatment facilities tend to build a closed and self-contained environment to control potential triggers. While the solution can be effective in some cases, it can fail trauma related patients who need to build resilience to everyday triggers. Therefore, ensuring you can maintain your everyday life also helps you learn how to handle day-to-day triggers more effectively.

We also believe that nobody should feel uncomfortable about seeking help. Providing outpatient care means you can fit support and treatment into your routine without missing out on the things you love.

How do we help you address trauma and trauma related addiction simultaneously?

As mentioned above, our unique approach to providing a last and sustainable recovery to our patients is to focus on outpatient treatments. We appreciate that everyone has unique needs, which is why we provide a variety of recovery paths.

Our intensive outpatient treatment and outpatient treatment services allow you to attend the program while remaining with your loved ones. Unlike inpatient services, which include 24-hour medical care, residential services, nutrition, and therapy support, we focus our attention on helping you meet your addiction recovery objectives while maintaining elements of your routine. You are also free to seek the psychological support and therapy you need to address your trauma. This option puts you in charge, allowing you to decide how to fit your dual recovery treatment into your day-to-day life.

There is no such thing as one standard solution that can be applied to everyone. We appreciate that every person has a unique story and requirements. That is why we are committed to providing multiple pathways to addiction recovery, relying on traditional but also evidence-based therapies. Depending on your needs, you might find it more effective to join one of our process groups or to use CBT to help with addiction. Our team at the Louisville treatment center takes the time to get to know you to create a plan that will work for you.

What if you can't attend appointments at our center? We appreciate that managing everyday routine and seeking parallel trauma therapy can make it tough to maintain a manageable schedule. That is why we have also introduced a telemedicine service to schedule your appointments and receive the support you need when you need it. We know that professionals or students who need to carry out duties can find it difficult to get in-person treatment. Therefore, you can reach out to the Impact Outpatient Program center for a phone or a Zoom appointment.

Your trauma related addiction recovery is in good hands

We have made it our mission to provide innovative, intensive outpatient programs for substance abuse for trauma related abuse. We have already helped over a hundred individuals recover from a difficult situation.

Our team of 23 compassionate and experienced experts is available 24/7 to help you discuss and find the best support for your situation. Once we've scheduled your initial intake appointment and consultation, we can work together on creating a treatment plan that fits your needs. We believe in a rapid and dedicated response. Therefore, once we've completed your initial appointment together, you are able to begin your treatment within 24 hours.

Based in Kentucky, we thrive to maintain a close bond with our local community. You can enter the program safely without feeling judged or pressured by the team or your fellow peers. Our Impact Outpatient Program center is a judgment-free care zone where you can feel comfortable and supported.

We are committed to building for you the recovery path that will empower you to become the best version of yourself. You can rest assured that the treatment plan you will receive is fully individualized to your unique situation and life. Because not two persons are the same, not two treatment plans are the same.

We strongly recommend seeking psychological treatment at the same time, so you can be sure to address your trauma and your addiction effectively. Don't be afraid to discuss your substance abuse experience with a therapist, as they will be able to provide better support and more suitable resolution paths. Our team of compassionate experts in the heart of Mount Washington is ready to help you build a sustainable and long-lasting path to recovery.
Are you ready to seek help today? We work with most insurance for easy admission. However, please bear in mind that we do not currently work with Medicare and Medicaid policies. We also offer same-day admission for those who want to get help immediately.

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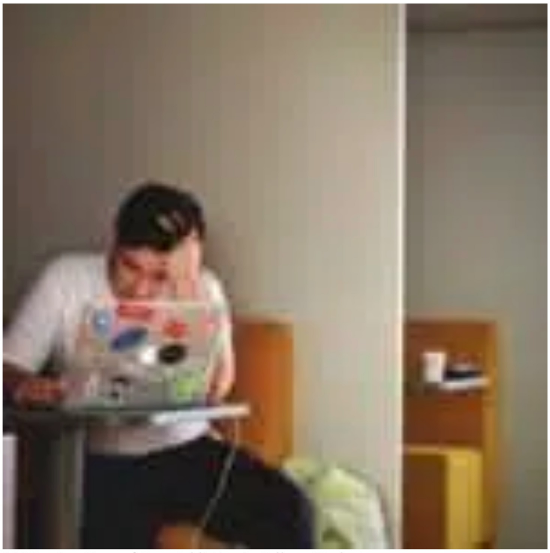

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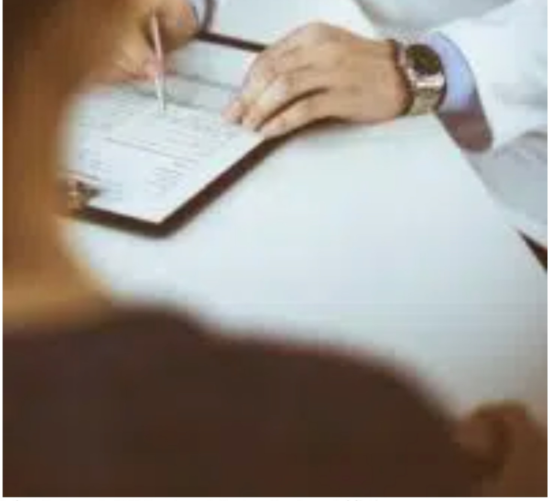

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Alcoholism

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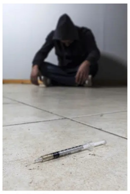

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dual-diagnosis

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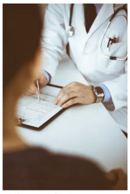

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