



# Why Treatment Should Include Life Skills Training



More than 2.5 million people in the United States are receiving treatment for addictions in rehabilitation centers. That number is skyrocketing as we discuss it, due to the increased pressures related to COVID-19 and the social/economical ramifications.

**Receiving support and training that help liberate patients from the effects of harmful substances is of course critical. Also crucial, yet often overlooked, is the necessity in learning basic life skills training alongside therapy, to prepare for life outside of rehabilitation center walls.**

Reintegrating into society without the crutch of substances is incredibly challenging, especially to those who had poor skills to begin with, which hastened the path to self-medicating in the first place. Reinforcing these skills during treatment help clients transition home, and gives them a fighting chance to rebuild and experience a better quality of life.

## Types of Life Skills

There are many types of life skills, and a good rehabilitation center should offer the following:

**Communication** – This isn't just public speaking. When referring to a patient, this is more about teaching them how to express their thoughts and feelings without resorting to dangerous behaviors. Centers are employing trainers and speech therapists to work with patients. Among other things, good communication skills would allow the patients to perform better in school by asking for help, or find jobs easier by being able to handle an interview or interact with a customer.

**Problem Solving** – This involves teaching patients how to re-frame a situation by creating solutions rather than fixating on problems, encouraging the mind to look for answers to questions rather than catastrophizing and making a problem larger than it actually is. This is a skill used in both personal and professional situations daily, and many patients when entering treatment are very weak in this ability.

**Self-care and Hygiene** – Many people who have mental health issues or became dependent on drugs and alcohol cease taking care of themselves. By re-learning skills for self-care and hygiene, the goal is to restore a patient's interest in caring for their physical body as well as their emotional self, and that they are *worth* being taken care of. Eating well, staying physically fit, and Patients are taught what they need to do to maintain a healthy, hygienic lifestyle.

**Stress Management** – Many dependent on substances have problems on how they manage stress, and sometimes they resort to violence or other behaviors to express their feelings. Therapists and counselors work with patients to understand what stress is, how to recognize it before it becomes out of control, and how they can manage it effectively. Some strategies include identifying the stressor and creating solutions and alternate responses, breaking from routines that trigger stress and trying new things to evoke happiness and interest. Many different therapies and modalities that help with this issue, including DBT, CBT, and

**Prioritizing** – Skills on how to prioritize tasks is important because it teaches patients how to manage their time, and how to finish tasks based on their importance.

**Organization** – Being organized automatically makes the brain calmer. Clutter creates a chaotic environment. By learning how to keep track of important belongings, stress is alleviated. It is important especially for study or work habits upon returning home.

**Anger Management** – For patients who have a history of violence when stressed and anxious, this is paramount to master in any setting. Learning methods to control their outbursts and help them integrate with others in is a turning point toward success.

**Financial Planning** – Patients who are admitted to rehabilitation centers across the country should also have the option to learn about managing their finances effectively. This may span from receiving information on how to open a bank account to investing what money they do have in other platforms.

**Leadership** – Leading others allows patients to understand how to work as a team, how to direct peers in a non-combative way, and invest themselves in the positive outcome of a group activity. It is a vital skill when applying for a job, and in dynamic social groups.

**Social** – Acquiring any of the above skills rests on the ability to develop healthy relationships with family and friends, based on respect and trust rather than dependency and manipulation. Learning social skills can help heal relationships that were strained or broken before entering treatment.

## Life After Treatment

Learning life skills helps prepare patients for the transition to the home environment, and is a vital step in addiction treatment.

The skills taught inside rehabilitation centers help patients develop new personal routines, which is especially important if they want to resist falling back into bad habits. These skills impart healthy habits to aid those working to achieve a better life.

Addiction is a complex disease. If you or someone you know needs support, [contact us](#) today for assistance in finding the right resources.