

HOLISTIC THERAPY

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By Moira K. McGhee

Substance addiction involves an uncontrollable urge to use alcohol and/or drugs despite the negative consequences of this behavior, and it affects every segment of the population. In 2018, approximately [20.3 million U.S. residents](#) aged 12 or older had a substance use disorder, which included an estimated 14.8 million with an alcohol use disorder and 8.1 million with an illicit drug use disorder. Illicit drug use includes using illegal substances and misusing prescription medications.

Holistic therapy focuses on the whole person and provides alternative treatment options for treating substance use disorders based on individual needs. Adding holistic treatment methods, such as acupuncture, art therapy, yoga, massage therapy, meditation, and animal-assisted therapy, is meant to complement traditional treatment methods. The well-documented [Natural Recovery Program](#) found that people suffering from substance use disorders who participated in various alternative treatment methods were more likely to continue and complete their substance abuse treatment than individuals who did not engage in these alternative treatments.

This guide covers basic information on how holistic therapy works and how it's used to help with the treatment and recovery of alcohol and substance addiction. It includes details on how holistic therapy is administered, the cost of therapy, potential risks, and other considerations surrounding this type of therapy.

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[Holistic therapy](#) uses alternative forms of treatment that address the physical, emotional, and spiritual. Its purpose is to promote healing, positive social relationships, and healthy emotional expression, in addition to many other favorable benefits. Although there's limited research as to the effectiveness of holistic therapies for the treatment and recovery of alcohol and/or drug addiction, it has gained popularity as part of a comprehensive treatment plan at many rehab centers across the country.

Generic Treatment Name	Holistic Therapy
Other Names	Holism, Naturopathic Treatment, Fringe Therapy, Alternative Therapy, Complementary Medicine
Conditions Commonly Treated	Alcohol addiction withdrawal and recovery, substance addiction withdrawal and recovery, pain, depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, mood disorders
Availability	Some types of holistic therapy require a referral from a doctor and must be administered by a certified practitioner. Trained therapists may also administer specific types of holistic therapy at rehab centers or individual locations.
Common Types of Holistic Treatment	Acupuncture, art therapy, equine therapy, massage therapy, meditation, music therapy, Reiki, tai chi, and yoga
Benefits	Vary based on holistic therapy administered, but benefits of common options include anxiety, pain, or stress relief, relaxation, and improved mood and overall health
Drawbacks	Limited research exists on the use of holistic therapy in substance abuse treatment. Many counselors and treatment programs rely heavily on evidence-based practices; due to lack of evidence on effectiveness, alternative therapies are rarely covered by insurance and are often costly.
Potential Side Effects	Vary based on the type of holistic therapy being administered, but all types are generally considered safe when administered correctly

There is a long history of holistic methods used in the treatment of various conditions. Yoga has a 5,000-year history in ancient Indian philosophy, and acupuncture has been practiced in Asian countries for thousands of years. Other therapies, such as art therapy, have only been around since the 1950s. Hundreds of different types of holistic practices are available, with new therapies emerging all the time. In modern addiction treatment, many rehab programs have already recognized the importance of offering alternative therapies to complement traditional medical and clinical treatments.

Research is slowly revealing the potential therapeutic benefits of what were previously considered fringe therapies for people with substance use disorders. Therefore, more rehab centers may consider adding holistic therapies to provide a more diverse, comprehensive treatment program. In a [2009 survey](#) of 139 substance abuse treatment centers, 58% of centers used meditation as one component of treatment and 33% of centers used some form of self-designated holistic therapy.

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