

Contingency Management (CM) TREATMENT APPROACH

Frequently Asked Questions

Treatment Description:

What is CM?	<p><i>Contingency Management represents one of the most effective ways to enhance motivation among substance abusers by leveraging their personal strengths and focusing on positive gains.</i></p> <p><i>Contingency management is a scientifically-based treatment approach grounded in the principles of behavior management and cognitive-behavioral therapy that provides incentives for abstaining from drug abuse. Techniques involved in this treatment include positive reinforcement for drug abstinence and negative consequences for returning to drug use, with the emphasis on positive reinforcement and the celebration of success. This celebration of success helps the family and youth remain motivated to change and provides a positive and welcoming treatment environment.</i></p>
Where are services provided?	<p><i>CM is an outpatient family therapy that is offered in outpatient office settings. CM can be offered in a school setting if the school setting allows family and/or caregivers to attend the majority of sessions.</i></p>
How long is treatment?	<p><i>The typical course of treatment is 14 to 18 sessions.</i></p>
What are the counselor qualifications?	<p><i>CM is unique in that it can be delivered by practitioners from varied backgrounds and theoretical orientations. However, the more closely a therapist is able to replicate the CM interventions in their clinical practice the greater the chances of success. Therefore, professionals who have formal training in social work, counseling, family therapy, psychology or psychiatry, and prior knowledge of cognitive-behavioral and behavioral interventions, will be able to quickly pick up the interventions.</i></p>
What are the goals of CM treatment?	<p><i>The goal of this treatment approach is assess the adolescent's substance use/abuse from an ecological approach. The goal is to determine what is maintaining their drug use on an individual level, family level and peer level. Once it is determined what is contributing to the drug use, a level system is developed to reward the youth when they are clean and offer disincentives when they are dirty. At the same time, the youth and their family develop a Self-Management Plan which is an individualized plan for managing triggers for use.</i></p>
Does CM drug test?	<p><i>Yes. It is the expectation that the youth will receive random drug screens as an objective indicator of whether or not they are abstaining from substances.</i></p>
Can CM be implemented in a group setting?	<p><i>While CM has been effective in group settings for adult clients, the greatest success for adolescents is found in family and individual sessions. Therefore, this approach is designed for individual and family sessions only.</i></p>
Does CM only focus on the drug use or can you target other behaviors in treatment?	<p><i>The CM model is flexible and has specific strategies for addressing other issues that arise, called Critical Clusters. These are clusters of other risks or problem behaviors that need to be addressed in treatment to help the youth succeed.</i></p>

Eligibility for Treatment:

How do I know if my client is eligible?	<i>CM is for adolescents, age 12-17 who are abusing substances and living with biological family, adoptive or foster family or another responsible adult who is willing to participate in treatment.</i>
Is CM appropriate when youth have co-occurring problems?	<i>Yes. CM is effective with youth with co-occurring concerns (e.g., delinquency, depression) so long as those concerns are identified and able to be addressed in treatment.</i>
What if the family/caregivers do not participate in treatment?	<i>For CM to be most effective it is important for a caregiver, or responsible adult, to participate in treatment. The CM training model works closely with each counselor to overcome barriers to engaging the caregiver in treatment.</i>
What drugs does CM target?	<i>CM interventions are effective for a broad range of substances, including alcohol, marijuana and cocaine.</i>

For additional information:

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