

# Frequently Asked Questions

Georgia Strait  
WOMENS CLINIC

## **Why is this program only for women?**

Most private treatment programs are co-ed. For some women, that is not an issue. Our clients are specifically looking for a treatment experience where male clients are not present. Likewise, men who come to our men's program, Sunshine Coast Health Centre, are also looking for a treatment experience where there are no female clients.

## **What does non-12 step programming mean?**

12 step programs to treat drug and alcohol addiction developed out of the Alcoholics Anonymous program. For decades, what is called "twelve step facilitation" (TSF) has been the only type of programming available to people in addiction treatment centres. However, in the last 20 years, the weight of scientific research has determined that TSF has not been proven effective for the majority of addiction sufferers. We are an applied research facility, meaning we do not use treatments that don't have an evidentiary basis.

## **Do I need a referral from a doctor to be admitted?**

No, you do not need a doctor's referral to attend any of our treatment programs.

## **How many clients do you take at one time?**

We take a maximum of 30 clients at one time. We are an open intake facility, meaning clients can start at any time there is a bed available.

## **Can I bring my dog with me?**

Definitely, if your dog is a registered service animal. We would also need to have a specific pet-friendly apartment unit available and an additional cleaning fee will apply. Dog owners will be 100% responsible for damage or injury caused by their pet. All clients bringing their service animal will be required to pay a damage deposit prior to admission. We reserve the right to say no to any pet/animal or to insist a pet/animal be removed from the facility if issues with other clients, pets, or operations arise.

## **How long is the program?**

After withdrawal management is completed (if needed) and the doctor says you are ready to start programming, we ask you to stay a minimum of 30 days. Research is clear that longer stays produce better results, but our clients and their Funders must decide this for themselves based on work and family demands and whether they believe that further progress can be made by staying longer.

Mental health and addictions treatment programs typically organize their programs around a number of days or weeks. While these lengths of stay are helpful for organizing programs, they have no special magic in helping a person find recovery.

Basically, it will take any client as long as it takes to find recovery from their challenges and no one can tell in advance whether they've had enough help.

For clients only staying for 30 days, we highly recommend having outpatient services/individual counselling ready in your home community for you to start shortly after returning home.

## **How do I get from my city to the treatment centre?**

Our admission coordinators make getting to our treatment centre very easy. They can arrange any airport transfers (we have companion staff in Vancouver to help with switching terminals) and airport/ferry pick-ups free of charge.

In some cases, we can arrange for a companion to pick you up from your home and drive you to the airport or our treatment centre. Please speak with admissions for more information.

## **What happens after treatment?**

We believe it's critical to follow our clients through the process of returning home once treatment is complete. We offer in-person coaching in several Canadian cities (as well as by phone or Zoom for clients outside of these cities), weekly support groups run by a professional, 24/7 hour support by phone or text, and alumni events. All post-treatment services are included in the cost of treatment and are available to our alumni indefinitely. See our "Alumni Services" Card for more information.

## **Am I allowed to keep my phone and laptop?**

Absolutely. 95% of clients attending treatment centres do not struggle with conduct issues or a lack of motivation. Unfortunately, most treatment programs have developed their entire program structure around controlling clients. We refer unmotivated clients (e.g. sometimes clients who have had an intervention) to programs that specialize in rigid controls.

This has allowed us to provide a treatment environment that recognizes clients do not require unusual levels

of control over their conversations and interactions. A number of our clients will be using their laptops and phones outside of programming hours so that they can perform some elements of their career or business. In our experience, this freedom allows clients to stay in treatment longer.

## **What kind of recreation activities will I be able to take part in?**

In the afternoons and on weekends, our team members will be following a fitness and recreation schedule that clients help plan during the weekly community group meeting. Activities are chosen based on what the majority of clients wish to do. Some examples of activities include going to the local recreation complex, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, pickleball, art classes, yoga, sightseeing, trying out the local climbing gym, and cooking/baking.

*Note: Some of these activities are unavailable due to COVID-19.*

## **Do you search my bags?**

Part of providing a safe environment means making a real effort to ensure alcohol and drugs are not being brought into the facility. For the protection of you and your peers, all bags and belongings are respectfully searched by staff when you arrive. If you are unsure about whether you can bring any item with you, we encourage you to check with your admissions coordinator at 1-866-487-9010. If you are taking prescribed medications, please only bring a three-day supply and ensure it is kept in original prescription packaging. Existing prescriptions will be assessed by the medical director and re-prescribed and packaged by our pharmacy.

## **What about cavity searches?**

Please know that you will NOT be subject to cavity or skin searches or pat-downs. We recognize that if someone is determined enough, they will find a way to smuggle drugs or alcohol into the facility. We are a therapeutic treatment program for successful, motivated women, not a lock-down facility. We are committed to a safe treatment environment while maintaining your dignity and trust.