



Indiana
CENTER FOR RECOVERY

Parent's Guide

To Teen Addiction &
Mental Health Treatment



Hi, Welcome!

You may feel overwhelmed, hopeful, uncertain, or all of the above right now. That's completely normal. This Parent's Guide to Adolescent Addiction and Mental Health Treatment is here to support you while your teen is in care. If you are a parent of an addicted teen, or supporting a young person struggling with mental health challenges, this guide is designed to help you understand what to expect and how to stay involved.

Family involvement is an important part of adolescent treatment at Indiana Center for Recovery. Parents and guardians are included throughout the process and supported in understanding how treatment works, how to communicate more effectively, and how to set boundaries that actually help.

Whether you are co-parenting, navigating complex family dynamics, or supporting a teen on your own, the care team works with families to help you stay informed, involved, and supported at each stage of treatment.

If you have questions about travel, arrival, or anything else, I'm here to help!



Jeffrey Hashberger

Jeffrey Hashberger
Executive Director

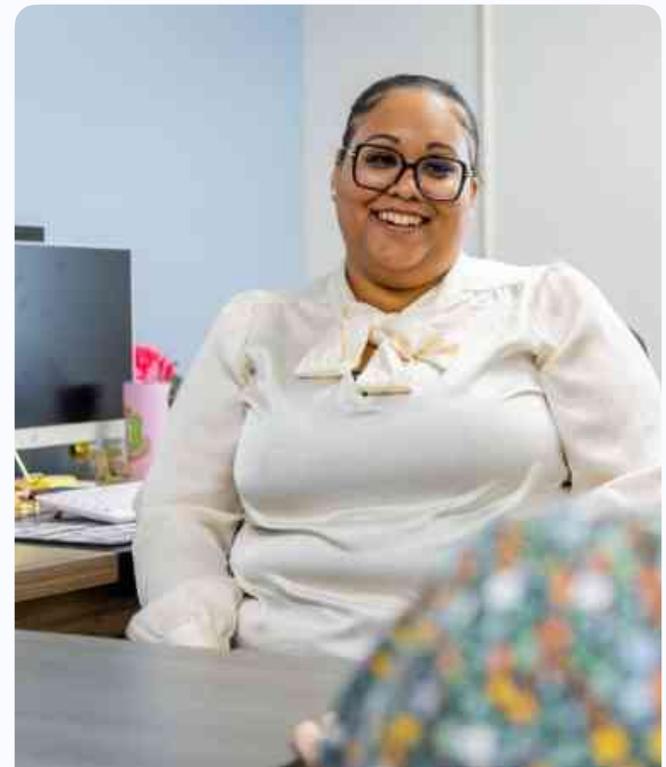


Indiana
CENTER FOR RECOVERY

✓ **24/7**
Medical Staff

✓ **Masters-Level**
Therapists

✓ **98% Patient**
Satisfaction



A large window with a view of a green lawn and trees. The window is framed in a light-colored material, possibly wood or metal, and the view outside shows a well-maintained lawn, a paved path, and several large, leafy trees under a clear sky. The interior of the room is partially visible, showing a dark, patterned carpet.

Common Questions Parents Ask About Adolescent Treatment

These are some of the most common questions we hear from families, especially from a parent of an addicted teen or a teen with mental health issues, navigating treatment for the first time.

Does My Teen Need Addiction or Mental Health Treatment?

Many parents struggle with this question, especially when problems escalate gradually. Residential treatment may be appropriate if your teen's behavior is significantly impacting one or more areas of their life, such as:

- School performance or attendance
- Relationships with family or peers
- Physical or mental health
- Safety, including substance use, self-harm, or risky behavior

Other signs may include:

- Needing emergency services or psychiatric hospitalization
- Limited improvement after outpatient care, such as therapy or psychiatry
- A pattern of behaviors that do not seem to be improving on their own

If you are unsure, the best next step is a **complimentary assessment** with one of our counselors. This phone-based assessment helps determine whether residential treatment is appropriate and what level of care may best support your teen.

What If My Teen Refuses to Enter Treatment?

This is very common. Many teens enter treatment because a parent or guardian sets a clear boundary around safety and care.

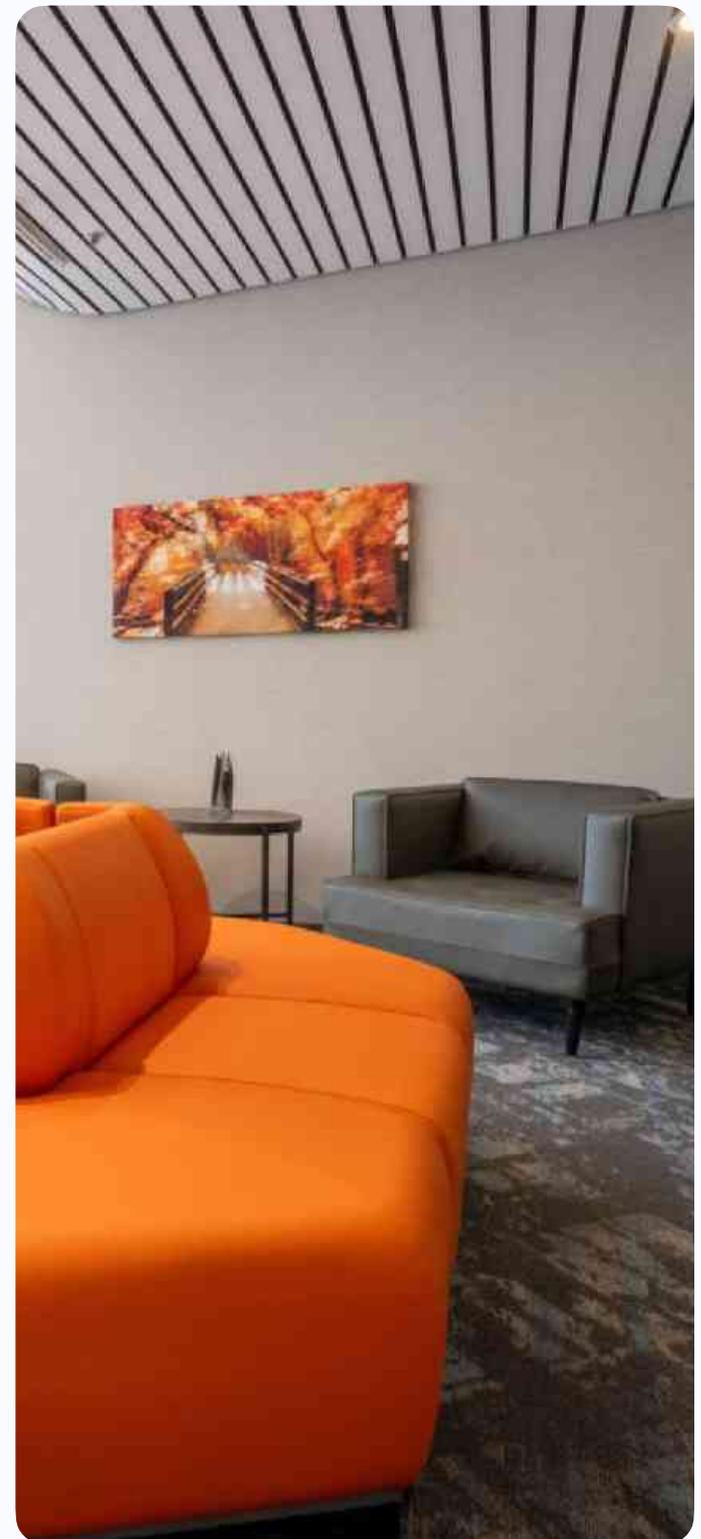
Indiana Center for Recovery has experienced professionals who evaluate each situation and guide families through next steps. This support is provided at **no additional cost**, and it is something our team handles every day.

Parents are supported in:

- Setting boundaries that prioritize safety and well-being
- Making informed decisions, even when those decisions are uncomfortable
- Understanding how to move forward without escalating conflict

It is normal for teens to resist treatment or express anger when limits are set. This does **not** negatively affect their prognosis or long-term outcome. When needed, referrals can also be made to professional interventionists who specialize in **trauma-informed transitions into care**, helping reduce stress for both teens and families.

Most teens enter treatment because a parent made a difficult but necessary decision. That is part of responsible parenting, not a failure.





What to Expect During Treatment

Who makes decisions during my teen's treatment?

Parents and legal guardians stay involved in major decisions about care. Nothing important happens without family input. Recommendations are based on safety, clinical needs, and how your teen is doing.

Teens are also given some say in their treatment. That doesn't mean they're in charge. It helps them take ownership while still keeping clear structure in place.

Why can't I know everything my teen talks about in therapy?

Not knowing every detail can feel unsettling, especially when you're trying to protect your child. Therapy works best when teens can speak openly without fear of guilt or consequences.

While session details remain private, parents are kept informed about safety concerns, overall progress, and how to support their teen. If something affects your teen's well-being, it will be communicated.

How Expectations and Privileges Work During Treatment

Adolescent treatment at Indiana Center for Recovery uses a loss of privileges (LOP) system to support safety, structure, and accountability.

Teens are expected to:

- Maintain safety
- Treat themselves, other clients, and staff with respect
- Participate in required groups and educational programming

When a teen engages in unsafe behavior or does not meet daily program expectations, they may lose certain privileges for that day. **This is not a punishment.** It is a direct, predictable response to behavior that compromises safety or participation.

Each day is a reset. If a teen has an LOP, they have the opportunity to start fresh the following day by meeting expectations.

If privileges are lost multiple times during the week, the teen may not be eligible for weekend privileges or community outings.

These privileges may include:

- Arcade or gym access
- Movie nights
- Community outings
- Video games
- Haircuts
- Elective activities such as piano or guitar lessons and equine therapy

Losing privileges is a **natural consequence**, not a disciplinary measure. The goal is to help teens understand how their choices affect themselves and others, and to reinforce pro-social behavior in a clear, consistent way.

This same type of structure can be used at home. When expectations and consequences are predictable and tied to safety and participation—not emotion or punishment—they create a feedback loop that supports long-term behavior change.

What if my teen is angry, withdrawn, or says they don't want to be here?

That's actually very common, especially early on.

Many teens need time to settle in before they're ready to talk or fully engage. Participation can be uneven at first. The treatment team gives teens time to settle in and doesn't force conversations before they're ready. Families are supported in learning how to respond in ways that don't escalate tension or turn every moment into a power struggle.

Should I be worried about other teens influencing my child?

It's normal to worry about this.

Adolescent programs are structured and closely supervised. Group interactions are guided by clinicians, and staff pay close attention to dynamics between teens. While peer relationships can be challenging at times, they can also help teens feel less alone. Safety and appropriate behavior are monitored consistently.



Supporting Your Teen and Yourself

Supporting a teen in treatment is emotionally exhausting, and many parents question themselves along the way. Loving an addicted child or a child with a mental health condition, can create fear, guilt, anger, and uncertainty about what helps and what harms.

How involved am I expected to be as a parent or guardian?

Family involvement is an important part of adolescent treatment, but expectations vary based on clinical needs, family structure, and circumstances.

Your role may include participating in family therapy sessions, staying informed about progress, supporting structure at home, and learning new ways to communicate and set boundaries. The treatment team helps families understand what involvement looks like at each stage.

What happens when my teen comes home?

Preparing for home is part of treatment planning. Family sessions often shift toward discussing routines, communication, school, peer relationships, and expectations before discharge.

The goal is not perfection, but clarity. Families leave treatment with a shared plan for support, structure, and next steps.



What if I feel overwhelmed or unsure I'm doing this right?

You're not alone in that.

Supporting a teen in treatment is emotionally exhausting, and many parents question themselves along the way. Family programming is meant to support parents and guardians too. Asking questions, needing reassurance, and feeling uncertain at times is part of this process.

Your Role as a Parent or Guardian During Treatment

When a teen enters treatment, many parents feel caught between two fears: doing too much and doing too little. It's not always clear when to step in, when to step back, or what actually helps.

Your role during treatment is not to fix everything or have all the answers. It's to stay connected, provide structure, and learn new ways to support your teen as they work through difficult emotions and behaviors.



You are still the parent

Treatment does not take away your role as a parent or guardian. You are not being replaced, sidelined, or excluded.

At the same time, adolescent treatment encourages teens to take some responsibility for their own growth. This can feel uncomfortable at first, especially if you've been carrying a lot of worry or control. The treatment team helps families find a balance between guidance and independence that supports long-term change.

Support looks different than control

Many parents enter treatment in high-alert mode, trying to monitor everything to keep their teen safe. Over time, support tends to look more like clear communication and consistent boundaries.

Expectations still matter. The difference is holding them without constant monitoring or ongoing power struggles.

Boundaries help more than arguments

Boundaries are not about punishment. They are about predictability and safety.

During treatment, families often work on setting boundaries that reduce emotional back-and-forth and make expectations clearer. What works will vary by family, age, and situation, but common examples include:

- **Technology boundaries**

Limiting phone or social media use during certain hours, keeping devices out of bedrooms at night, or agreeing on expectations around online activity.

- **Routine and structure**

Setting consistent times for sleep, school, therapy appointments, meals, or family time

- **Communication boundaries**

Taking breaks from conversations that become heated, agreeing to pause and revisit discussions later, or setting limits on repeated arguments about the same topic.

- **Accountability expectations**

Clarifying responsibilities related to school, treatment participation, or household expectations, and following through consistently rather than renegotiating in moments of stress.



- **Safety-related boundaries**

Establishing clear rules around substance use, self-harm risk, driving, or leaving the home, with the understanding that safety concerns take priority over comfort.

- **Parent role boundaries**

Allowing treatment providers to handle therapy and clinical decisions while parents focus on support, consistency, and home structure.

Boundaries tend to work best when they are clear, consistent, and communicated calmly. Families are often supported in adjusting boundaries over time as trust and stability grow.

You don't have to do this alone

Supporting a teen in treatment can bring up guilt, fear, anger, grief, and a lot of exhaustion. Many parents try to carry that quietly.

Family sessions are there to support parents and guardians too. This can look like:

- getting help with how to respond when your teen is dysregulated or shut down
- talking through boundaries, consequences, and expectations at home
- understanding what's part of the treatment process vs. what needs more attention
- learning how to support recovery without policing or arguing constantly
- having a place to ask questions and say the hard things out loud

Needing support doesn't mean you've done something wrong. It means you're showing up and taking this seriously.

Progress takes time

Progress takes time. With adolescents especially, it's rarely a straight line. There are steps forward and steps back, and that's normal. Your job isn't to track progress day by day, but to **stay supportive** while your teen works through some really hard emotions.

The treatment team can help you understand what progress might look like at different points, and when something is worth paying closer attention to.

What progress can look like (even if it doesn't feel like it yet):

- Being more honest about use, urges, or emotions; even when it's uncomfortable
- Fewer blowups, or shorter ones, and some ability to recover afterward
- Willingness to show up to therapy, groups, or school more consistently
- Using coping skills *sometimes* (not perfectly) instead of always defaulting to old habits
- Asking for space or help instead of shutting down or acting out
- Better sleep, appetite, or daily routines
- Setbacks that are talked about instead of hidden



When Treatment Feels Hard or Confusing

There are points in adolescent treatment when things may feel unclear or even worse than expected. This can be unsettling for families, especially when you are watching closely for signs of improvement.

Common experiences during treatment include:

- Your teen expressing anger or blame toward you
- Mood swings or emotional intensity that feel sudden
- Pushback around rules, therapy, or participation
- Feeling unsure whether progress is actually happening

These moments do not necessarily mean treatment is failing. Often, they reflect your teen adjusting to structure, boundaries, and emotional work they have been avoiding. When things feel confusing, it can help to:

- Stay consistent rather than reactive
- Use family sessions to ask direct questions
- Focus on patterns over time, not daily fluctuations
- Reach out for clarification instead of assuming the worst

Feeling uncertain does not mean you are doing something wrong. It means you are navigating a process that is rarely straightforward.



How Family Involvement Works in Adolescent Treatment

Family therapy at Indiana Center for Recovery is integrated into the adolescent's treatment plan from the beginning. Typical components include:

- **Regular family therapy sessions** with your clinician
- **Check-ins with your teen's treatment providers** to stay informed
- **Support resources** like parent groups, workshops, or educational sessions
- **Care planning** to prepare for transitions and daily life after treatment

Family involvement continues throughout treatment so that you can grow with your teen and apply what you're learning in real time.

What You Work On in Family Therapy

Family therapy sessions at Indiana Center for Recovery are structured to help families work through the patterns and challenges that often accompany adolescent mental health and addiction treatment.

These sessions focus on what actually helps:

- Building clearer, calmer communication
- Understanding emotional responses and stress patterns
- Setting boundaries that are consistent and sustainable
- Learning how to support your teen without enabling
- Practicing tools that help de-escalate conflict
- Creating routines and structures that support growth

This work is shaped around your family's unique structure, history, and goals so that your time together has purpose and direction.



Your Team in Family Therapy

Family therapy is delivered by a coordinated team of professionals who understand adolescent development and family dynamics. This may include:

- **Licensed Family Therapists** who specialize in communication-focused therapy
- **Program Coordinators** who help integrate family work with individual and group treatment
- **Psychiatric Providers** who monitor emotional and medical needs
- **Case Managers** who help plan for ongoing support after treatment

Our team works collaboratively to make family sessions a seamless part of your teen's overall care strategy.

Why Family Involvement Matters for Your Teen

Adolescence is a developmental stage where connection, boundaries, and support systems matter deeply. Research and clinical practice show that involving families in treatment leads to:

- Better communication at home
- More consistent follow-through on treatment goals
- Reduced risk of relapse or symptom escalation
- Stronger emotional support for both teens and caregivers

Family therapy is not just "another requirement"; it is an opportunity to build tools that improve life long after treatment is complete.

