Assessing the Evidence Base: Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Programs[1]

Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) goals are to help an individual learn early-stage relapse management and coping strategies, to ensure the person has psychosocial support and to address individual symptoms and needs.

KEY LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS:

- Intensive Outpatient Programs are defined by SAMHSA for the purposes of this review as "a minimum of nine hours of service per week in three, three-hour sessions."
    - IOP can be longer and become less intensive over time
    - IOPs can include partial hospitalization and day treatment (5-7 days/week)
    - IOPs encompass a wide variety of program components
- IOPs are second in treatment prevalence only to regular outpatient treatment for substance use disorders.
- Duration of treatment varies with severity and individual treatment response.
- The level of evidence for IOPs was rated as high. The effectiveness of IOPs was rated as high as inpatient treatment.
- However, there was a noted considerable variability among program components in the research evaluated; this suggests that further refinement of IOP elements may further improve their effectiveness.

Resources:

McCarty, et al. (2014). Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Treatment: Assessing the Evidence. Psychiatric Services, 65, 1-9. http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/data/Journals/PSS/0/appi.ps.201300249.pdf?resultClick=3

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