

American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Level of Care (LOC) Summary

The ASAM criteria are designed to serve as a resource for mental health and addiction treatment clinicians and counselors. They are not intended to substitute for independent clinical judgment based on the particular facts and circumstances presented by individual patients. This summary contains descriptions of the various ASAM Levels of Care. These levels of care represent intensities of service along a continuum, each of which may be provided in a variety of program types, including those that offer more than one level of care. Referral to a specific level of care must be based on a careful assessment of the patient by a professional evaluator such as a mental health or addiction treatment clinician or counselor.

Level of Care	Hours	Necessary Staff	Structure	Intensity	Length
0.5 Early Intervention Services	Varies	For adults and teens: Staff must be knowledgeable about the Dimensions, able to recognize substance-related disorders, and provide education and motivational counseling. For teens: Staff must be knowledgeable about developmental issues and mental health concerns of youth.	Education classes review signs, symptoms, and risk factors. May also include group and/or family counseling.	Low	Brief
I Outpatient Services	Adults = fewer than 9 hours per week Teens = fewer than 6 hours per week	For adults and teens: Staff must be professionals with the necessary credentials to treat substance-related disorders. They must be able to assess readiness for change, knowledgeable about the Dimensions, and capable of monitoring mental health issues. For teens: Staff must be able to engage, assess, and treat teens. They must be knowledgeable about co-occurring psychiatric issues and able to recognize the need for intoxication and withdrawal services.	Similar to Level 0.5, but should also include an ER available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Medical and psychiatric care should be available within 24 hours by phone or, if in person, within a time frame appropriate to the severity and urgency of the consultation requested.	Low to medium	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual goals.
2.1 Intensive Outpatient	Adults = at least 9 hours per week Teens = at least 6 hours per week	Staff must be professionals with the necessary credentials to treat substance-related disorders, including at least one physician. Some members of the staff should be trained to deal with mental health issues, including co-occurring disorders and the use of medications.	Similar to Level I, but medical and psychiatric care should be available by phone within 24 hours and in person within 72 hours.	Medium to high	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual goals.

LOC	Hours	Necessary Staff	Structure	Intensity	Length
2.5 Partial Hospitalization	20 or more hours per week	Same staff requirements as Level 2.1.	Similar to Level I, but with direct access (within 8 hours by phone, within 48 hours in person) to psychiatric, medical, and lab services so that issues in Dimensions 1, 2, and 3 can be monitored daily.	Medium to high	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual
3.1 Clinically- Low-Intensity Residential	24 hours per day, 7 days a week	All staff must be knowledgeable about substance abuse and mental health issues. They must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and be able to assess and treat co-occurring disorders for medication adherence. Staff must be able to access other services as needed through collaboration or consultation. Lab services should be available as needed.	Similar to Level 2, but stresses interpersonal and group-living skills so that a positive recovery environment can be established and maintained (for example, a halfway house). At least 5 hours a week of professional treatment.	Medium to high	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual
3.3 Clinically- Population- High-Intensity Residential Criteria Only)	24 hours per day, 7 days a week	In addition to staff requirements in Level III.1. 3.1, substance-abuse treatment professionals must be available on-site or by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Staff should have specialized training in behavior management techniques, be knowledgeable about treatments for substance abuse and mental health issues, and be able to identify acute psychiatric symptoms. Medical, lab, and toxicology services should be available as needed.	Similar to Level 3.1, but focus is on clients with cognitive impairments, poor abstract skills, and those who need repetitive, slower-paced treatment until they stabilize—clients who cannot make use of a more active residential environment and may need more individualized care in the safety of a residential setting (for example, DDE residential care).	High	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual goals.

LOC	Hours	Necessary Staff	Structure	Intensity	Length
3.5 Clinically-Managed High-Intensity Residential	24 hours per day, 7 days a week	Same staff requirements as Level 3.3. In addition, staff should be able to make arrangements for additional services if necessary.	Similar to Level 3.1, but includes services for clients who have significant social and psychological problems that cause multiple deficits, including criminal activity and disaffiliation from mainstream values, but whose cognitive abilities are less impaired than those in Level 3.3.	High	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual goals.
3.7 Medically-Monitored Intensive Inpatient Services	24 hours per day, 7 days a week	Same staff requirements as Level 3.5. In addition, a physician or other appropriate medical clinician should assess clients within 24 hours of admission and be able to monitor as needed. Psychiatric services should be available, through consultation or referral, within 8 hours by phone or within 24 hours in person. Staff needs to be able to provide a continuous, planned regimen of professional evaluation, care, and treatment.	Care similar to Levels 3.1, 3.3, and 3.5, but it is delivered by an interdisciplinary staff including physicians and nurses who are trained to treat addiction-related medical problems.	High	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual goals.
4 Medically-Managed Intensive Inpatient Services	24 hours per day, 7 days a week	Same staff requirements as Level 3.7. In addition, an interdisciplinary team of addiction professionals, physicians, and nurses should be available for counseling 16 hours a day and should be available for care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All staff members should be aware of the symptoms of substance abuse and mental health disorders and knowledgeable about medication use.	Includes treatment for clients with co-occurring disorders, such as an acutely suicidal client who needs medical detox—the focus is on stabilization and preparation for transfer to a less intensive LOC.	High	Based on client's treatment plan and progress made toward individual goals.