

Addiction & Mental Health Services: BASE CAMP

Base Camp is an intensive, adventure-based wilderness program for youth and their families. Teens and their families who are trying to improve their lives are supported in a safe and structured environment. Base Camp offers an experientially based balance between individual and group addiction treatment, traditional school, outdoor education, and community experiences to support youth and families in creating change.

This 12-week voluntary program addresses substance abuse issues that require residential treatment and support in an isolated environment. Base Camp is a 10-bed wilderness based residential program provided in partnership with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and funded by AHS at no cost to clients and families. AHS staff are a vital part of the Base Camp team and work with clients onsite and at the Youth Addictions Services site located in Calgary.

A core aspect of programming at Base Camp are the goals created by the client and family. While learning a variety of skills in a group setting, clients also work individually with the staff and their families to decide what they would like to focus on during their time in treatment. Every day there are opportunities for clients to put their energy to what will be most meaningful for them and their growth.

Wilderness and Adventure Therapy at Base Camp includes a wide range of different outdoor activities. Trips and outings are intentionally planned with client and group goals in mind. They are designed to provide youth with experiences that will help them build the skills that will help them succeed in treatment and in life. The wilderness setting and outings allow clients to focus and reflect in a more meaningful way than in the familiarity and comfort of the normal, day to day world. Being in a different environment than where they face their usual challenges, allows the youth to see their life in a different way and grow from that experience.

Clients attend treatment groups daily that cover a variety of topics that help the youth develop social, emotional, and physical skills. These groups occur not only on site at Base Camp but also during wilderness trips, in the city at the Youth Addiction Services site, or anywhere else deemed appropriate for the needs of the clients at that time. These groups are a critical part of treatment and clients are expected to participate in them with their peers.

Another aspect of client treatment is attending classes on-site under the guidance of Calgary Board of Education teachers. The educational program is designed to meet students' individual needs by providing 1:1 instruction, getting youth re-focused on learning, and creating opportunities to earn high school credits. Base Camp is not just about the youth's efforts, but also about their families having a commitment to change. By working on personal and joint goals simultaneously, the family as a whole can create a healthier state of being.

Ten youth at a time are able to live at the Base Camp facility after being referred through Alberta Health Services, and the program helps approximately 40-50 children and families each year. Intakes occur every 2 weeks.

If you know someone who is interested in attending treatment at Base Camp, please contact Youth Addictions Services (1005 17 St NW, Calgary) at 403-297-4664.

Funded / Accessed by:

Alberta Health Services (AHS).



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