

# An Introduction to The ASAM Criteria

Overview based on “An Introduction to The ASAM Criteria for Patients and Families” Pamphlet

# Centene Advanced Behavioral Health

PROUDLY PARTNERING WITH HEALTH PLANS NATIONWIDE TO PROVIDE SUPERIOR SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE BEHAVIORAL WELLNESS

|    |                                                                                                                       |    |                                                                                                                                |    |                                                                                                                           |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AR | <br>arkansas<br>health & wellness.   | IA | <br>iowa total care.                        | NH | <br>nh healthy families.               |
| CA | <br>california<br>health & wellness. | LA | <br>louisiana<br>healthcare<br>connections. | NC | <br>carolina<br>complete health.       |
| FL | <br>sunshine health                  | MS | <br>magnolia health.                        | OK | <br>oklahoma<br>complete health.       |
| GA | <br>peach state<br>health plan.     | MO | <br>home state<br>health.                   | OR | <br>Trillium<br>Community Health Plan |
| IN | <br>mhs.                           | NV | <br>silversummit<br>healthplan            | SC | <br>absolute<br>total care.          |

# Agenda



- Introduction
- Define The ASAM Criteria
- Discuss The ASAM Criteria
- Stages of Change
- Overview of Levels of Care
- Utilization Management Process
- Q&A and Evaluation

# Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Define The ASAM Criteria
2. Name three Guiding Principles of The ASAM Criteria
3. Identify three of Six Dimensions of The ASAM Criteria
4. Apply the knowledge of Stages of Change to examples

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## Purpose:

To educate providers who treat Substance Use Disorders on the key elements of The ASAM Criteria including it's guiding principles, the six dimensions used for assessment, the various levels of care for treatment, and how to locate additional resources.

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# What is The ASAM Criteria?

- Treatment guidelines for substance related conditions
- Developed by American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)
- Created through a multidimensional patient assessment over five broad levels of interventions
- Based on the importance of utilizing a whole-person model
- Used by providers to create treatment plans and evaluate needs
- Used by managed care organizations to assess treatment needs and evaluate medical necessity for requested services

# Guiding Principles of The ASAM Criteria

Consider the  
whole person

Design treatment  
for the specific  
patient

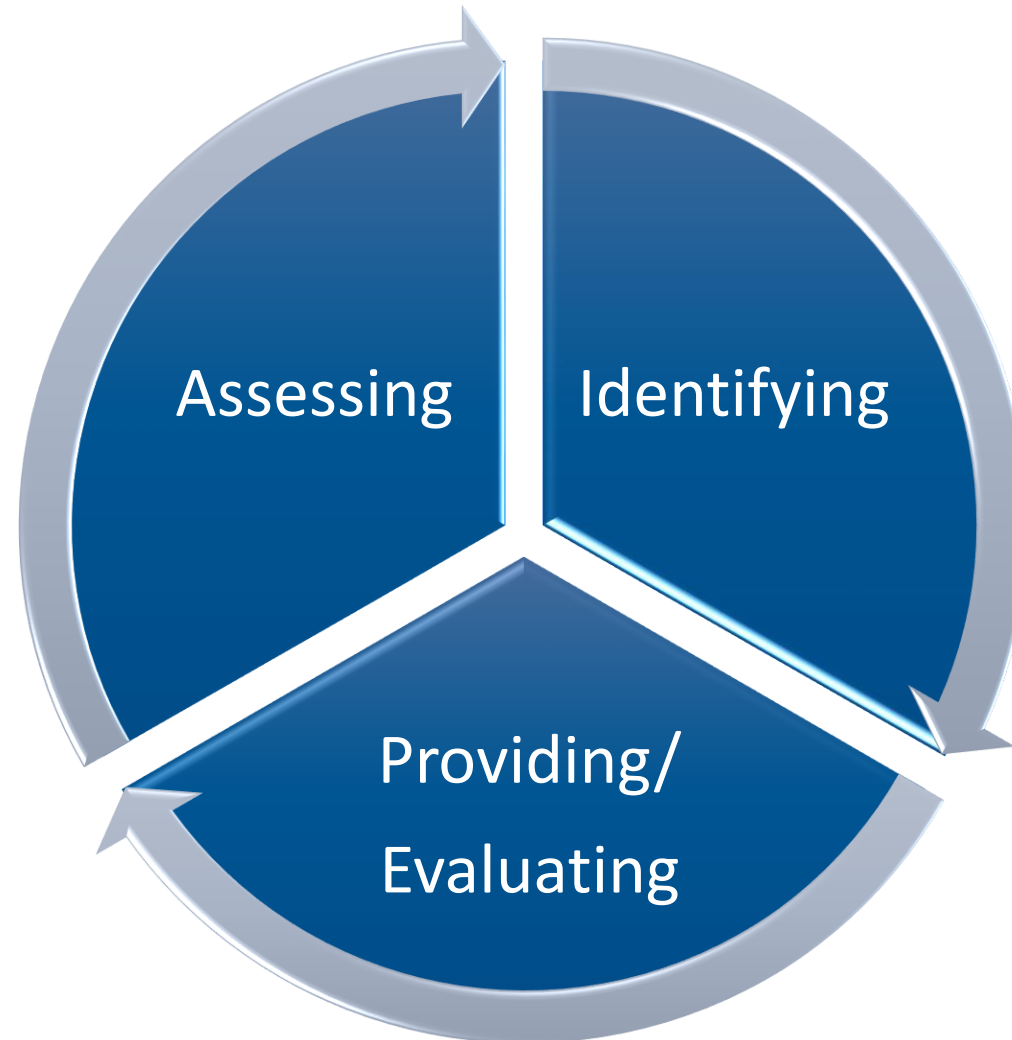
Individualize  
treatment times

“Failure” is not a  
prerequisite

Provide a  
spectrum of  
services

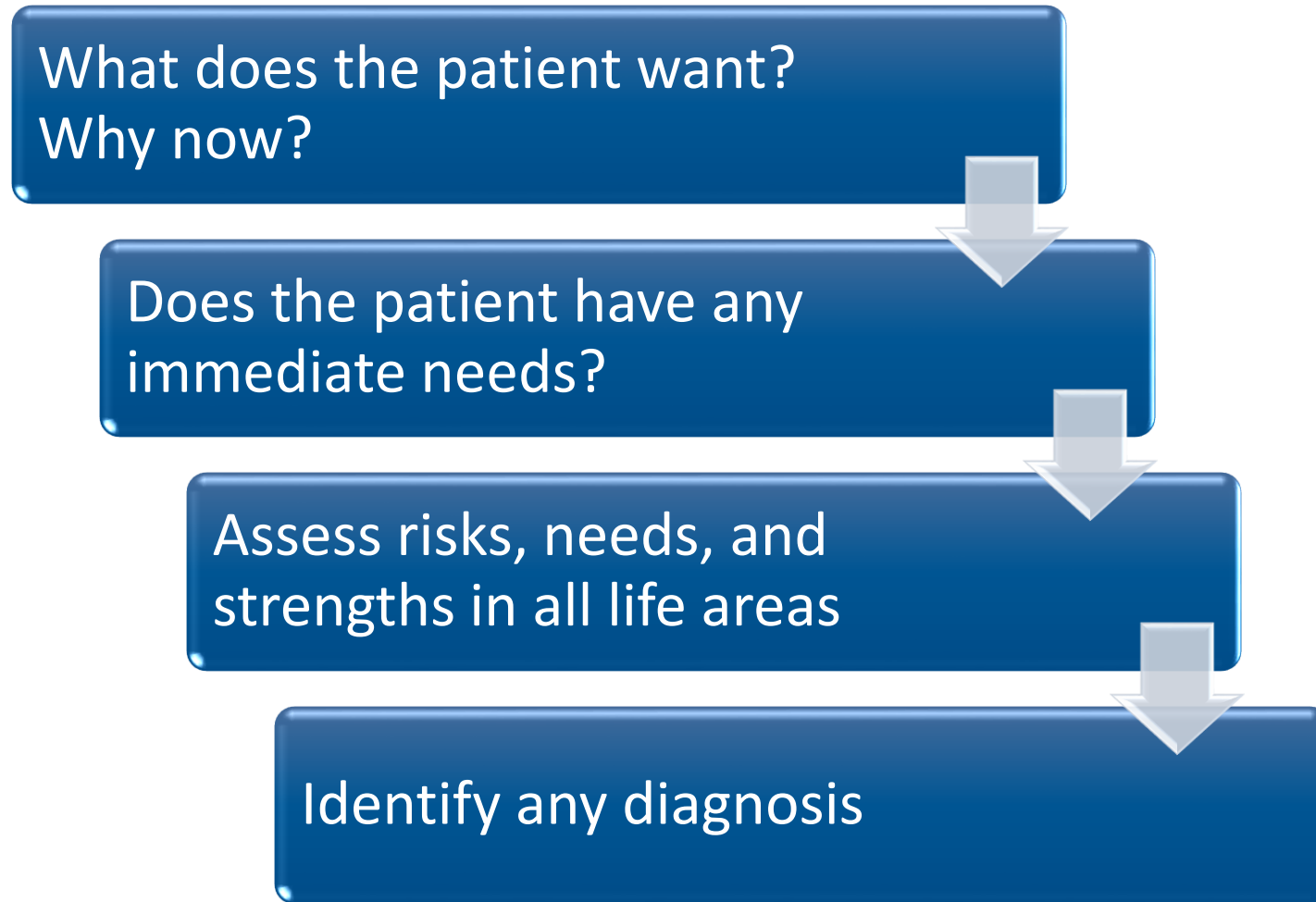
Re-conceptualize  
the definition of  
“addiction”

# Using the Criteria to Make Decisions About Care





# The ASAM Criteria: Assessing



# Six Dimensions of The ASAM Criteria



## **Dimension 1:**

Acute Intoxication and/or  
Withdrawal Potential



## **Dimension 2:**

Biomedical Conditions /  
Complications



## **Dimension 3:**

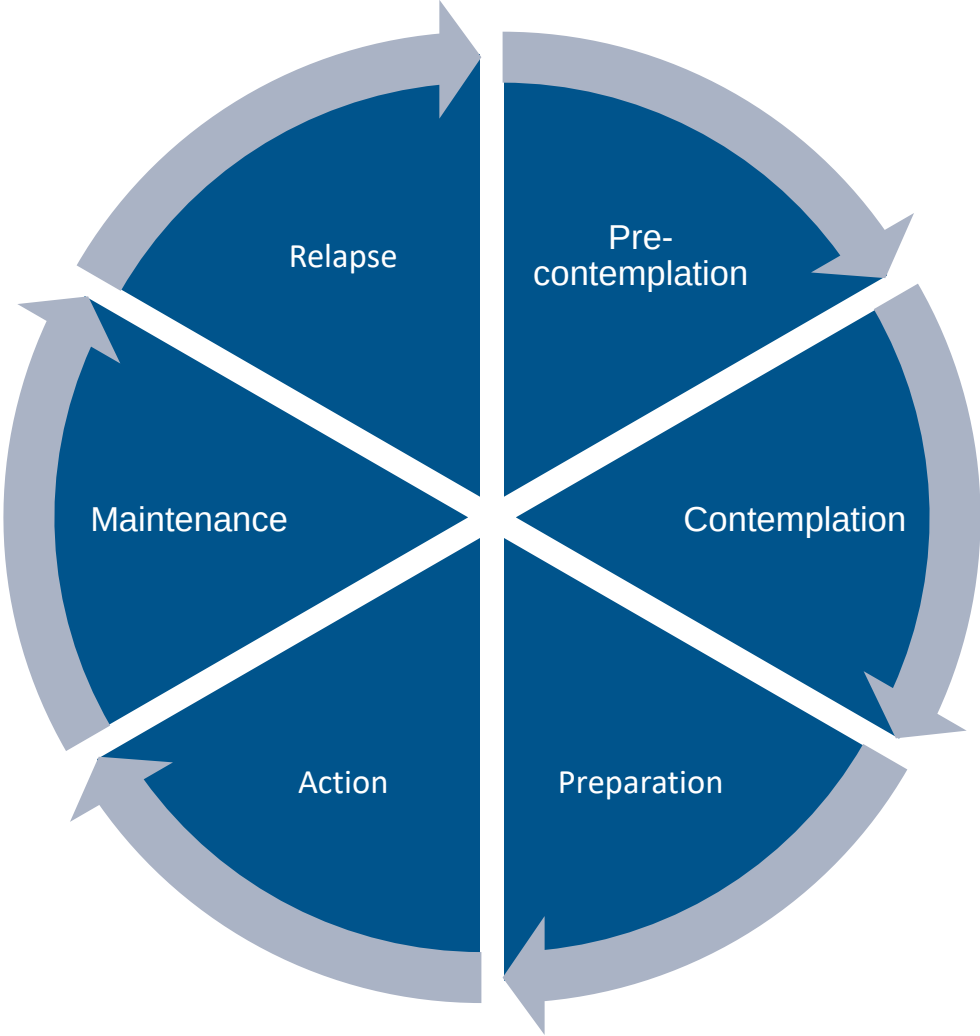
Emotional / Behavioral / Cognitive  
Conditions

# Six Dimensions of The ASAM Criteria



**Dimension 4:**  
Readiness to Change

# Overview of Stages of Change



# Stages of Change and Strategies

## Precontemplation

- Explore the events that led to entering treatment
- Commend the member for coming to treatment
- Agree on a direction
- Express concern, and leave the door open

## Preparation

- Clarify the member's own goals
- Negotiate a behavioral contract
- Explore and decrease barriers to action
- Enlist social support.

## Maintenance

- Engage and retain the member in SUD treatment
- Create a coping plan
- Identify new behaviors that reinforce change
- Reinforce family and social support.

# Stages of Change and Strategies

## Action

- Help the member determine which change strategies are working and which are not
- Change the strategies as needed

## Contemplation

- Shift focus from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation
- Summarize member concerns
- Assess where the member is on the decisional scale
- Explore pros/cons of substance use and behavior change

# Six Dimensions of The ASAM Criteria



## **Dimension 5:**

Relapse / Continued Use / Continued Problem Potential



## **Dimension 6:**

Recovery Environment

# The ASAM Criteria: Identifying

Identify the severity and level of functioning



Identify which life areas are currently most important to determining treatment priorities



Choose a specific focus and target for each priority life area

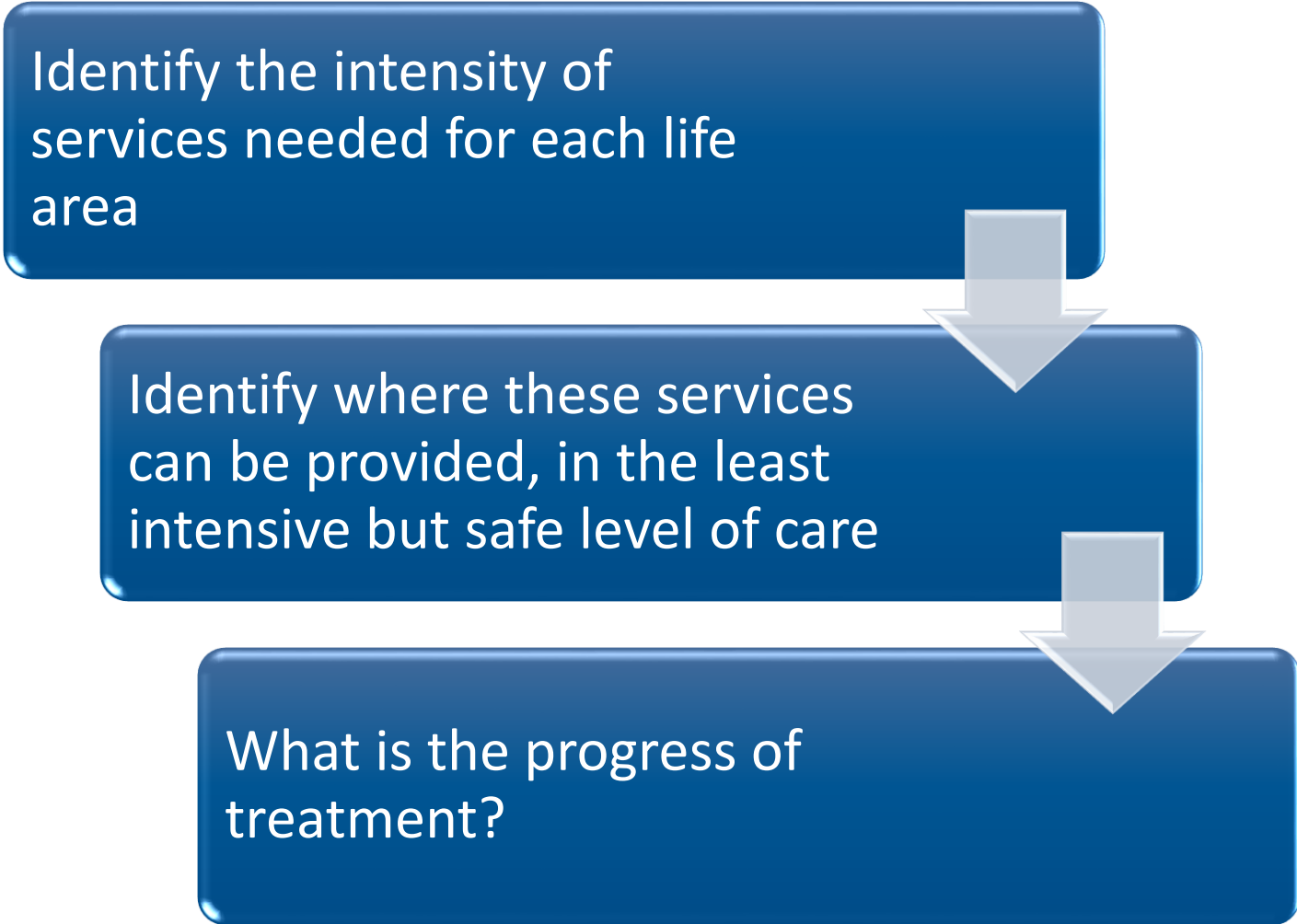


Determine what specific services are needed for each life area



# The ASAM Criteria: Providing/Evaluating

Identify the intensity of services needed for each life area

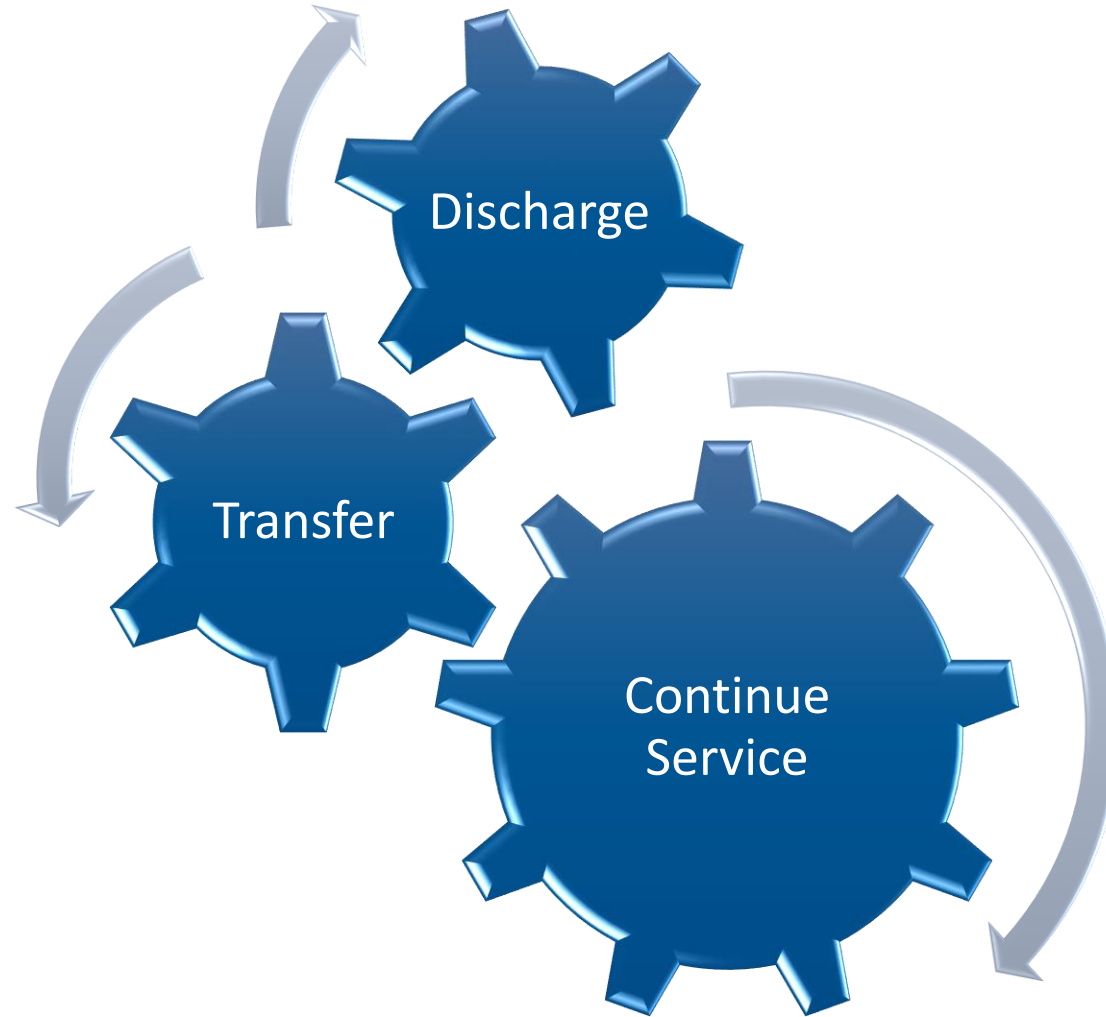


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graph TD; A[Identify the intensity of services needed for each life area] --> B[Identify where these services can be provided, in the least intensive but safe level of care]; B --> C[What is the progress of treatment?];
```

Identify where these services can be provided, in the least intensive but safe level of care

What is the progress of treatment?

# Discharge, Transfer, and Continuing Service



# Levels of Care: Adolescents and Adults

| Level of Care | Adolescent Title                                                                   | Adult Title                                                                | Description                                                                                                                 |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0.5           | Early Intervention                                                                 |                                                                            | Assessment and education                                                                                                    |
| OTP (Level 1) | *Not specified for adolescents                                                     | Opioid Treatment Program                                                   | Daily or several times weekly opioid medication and counseling available                                                    |
| 1             | Outpatient Services                                                                |                                                                            | Adult: Less than 9 hours of service per week<br>Adolescent: Less than 6 hours of service per week                           |
| 2.1           | Intensive Outpatient Services                                                      |                                                                            | Adult: More than 9 hours of service per week<br>Adolescent: More than 6 hours of service per week                           |
| 2.5           | Partial Hospitalization Services                                                   |                                                                            | 20 or more hours of service per week                                                                                        |
| 3.1           | Clinically Managed Low-intensity Residential Services                              |                                                                            | 24-hour structure with available personnel, at least 5 hours of clinical service per week                                   |
| 3.3           | *Not available because all adolescent levels attend to cognitive/other impairments | Clinically Managed Population-specific High-intensity Residential Services | 24-hour care with trained counselors, less intense environment and treatment for those with cognitive and other impairments |
| 3.5           | Clinically Managed Medium-intensity Residential Services                           | Clinically Managed High-intensity Residential Services                     | 24-hour care with trained counselors                                                                                        |
| 3.7           | Medically Monitored High-intensity Inpatient Services                              | Medically Monitored Intensive Inpatient Services                           | 24-hour nursing care with physician availability, 16 hour per day counselor availability                                    |
| 4             | Medically Managed Intensive Inpatient Services                                     |                                                                            | 24-hour nursing care and daily physician care, counseling available                                                         |

# Withdrawal Management Levels of Care

| Level of Withdrawal Management for Adults                                                                  | Level  | Description                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ambulatory Withdrawal Management without Extended On-site Monitoring<br>(Outpatient Withdrawal Management) | 1-WM   | Mild withdrawal                                                                       |
| Ambulatory Withdrawal Management with Extended On-site Monitoring<br>(Outpatient Withdrawal Management)    | 2-WM   | Moderate withdrawal                                                                   |
| Clinically Managed Residential Withdrawal Management<br>(Residential Withdrawal Management)                | 3.2-WM | Moderate withdrawal requiring 24-hour support                                         |
| Medically Monitored Inpatient Withdrawal Management                                                        | 3.7-WM | Severe withdrawal requiring 24-hour nursing care, physician visits as needed          |
| Medically Managed Intensive Inpatient Withdrawal Management                                                | 4-WM   | Severe, unstable withdrawal requiring 24-hour nursing care and daily physician visits |

# Example Charts

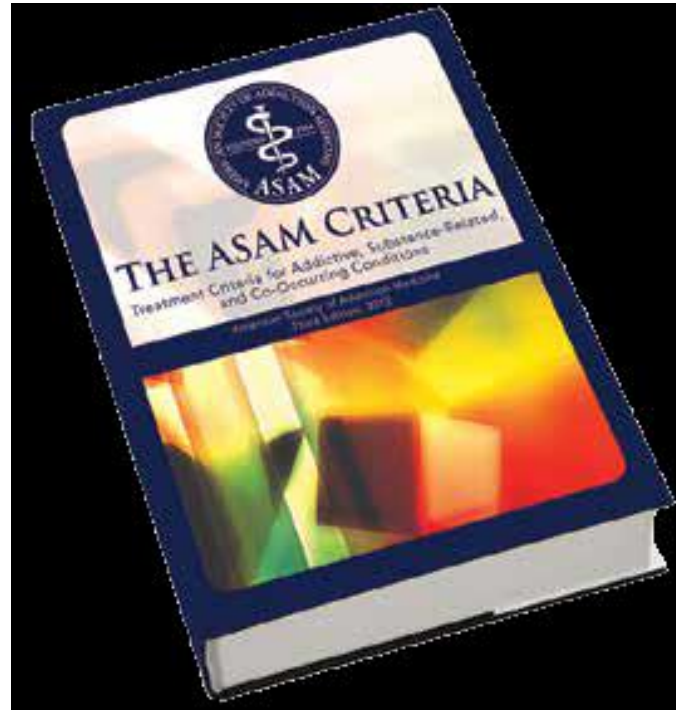
EXAMPLE CHART FOR ADULT LEVELS OF CARE

| Level of Care | Dimension 1                                                  | Dimension 2                                                             | Dimension 3                                            | Dimension 4                                                  | Dimension 5                                                               | Dimension 6                                       |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Level 0.5     | No withdrawal risk                                           | None, or stable                                                         | None, or stable                                        | Willing to explore how use affects personal goals            | Needs understanding or skills to change current use or high-risk behavior | Environment increases risk of use                 |
| OTP - Level 1 | Physiological dependence needing OTP                         | None, or manageable                                                     | None, or manageable                                    | Ready to change, but not ready for total abstinence          | At risk of continued use without OTP                                      | Supportive environment, patient has coping skills |
| Level 1       | No significant withdrawal, minimal risk of severe withdrawal | None, or stable                                                         | None, or stable                                        | Ready for recovery, needs strategies to strengthen readiness | Able to maintain abstinence or control use with minimal support           | Supportive environment, patient has coping skills |
| Level 2.1     | Minimal risk of severe withdrawal                            | None, or not distracting                                                | Mild severity                                          | Variable treatment engagement, requires structure            | High likelihood of relapse without close monitoring                       | Unsupportive environment, patient has             |
| Level 2.5     | Moderate risk of severe withdrawal                           | None, or not distracting                                                | Mild to moderate severity                              | Poor treatment engagement, needs structure                   |                                                                           |                                                   |
| Level 3.1     | No withdrawal risk, or minimal or stable withdrawal          | None, or stable                                                         | None or minimal                                        | Open to structure                                            |                                                                           |                                                   |
| Level 3.3     | Minimal risk of severe withdrawal, manageable withdrawal     | None, or stable                                                         | Mild to moderate                                       | Needs in engagement and                                      |                                                                           |                                                   |
| Level 3.5     | Minimal/severe withdrawal risk, manageable withdrawal        | None, or stable                                                         | 24-hour setting for stabilization                      | Has significant treatment concerns                           |                                                                           |                                                   |
| Level 3.7     | High withdrawal risk, manageable withdrawal risk             | Requires 24-hour medical monitoring                                     | Moderate severity, requires 24-hour structured setting | Low intensity needs modification in 24-hour                  |                                                                           |                                                   |
| Level 4       | High withdrawal risk requiring full hospital resources       | Requires 24-hour medical and nursing care, requiring hospital resources | Severe or unstable challenges                          | Challenges here do not grant admission                       |                                                                           |                                                   |

EXAMPLE CHART FOR ADOLESCENT LEVELS OF CARE

| Level of Care | Dimension 1                                                                           | Dimension 2                                                             | Dimension 3                                      | Dimension 4                                                                | Dimension 5                                                               | Dimension 6                                           |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Level 0.5     | No withdrawal risk                                                                    | None, or stable                                                         | None, or very stable                             | Willing to explore how use affects personal goals                          | Needs understanding or skills to change current use or high-risk behavior | Environment includes people with high-risk behaviors  |
| Level 1       | No withdrawal risk                                                                    | None, or stable                                                         | No risk of harm                                  | Willing to engage in treatment, needs motivating and monitoring strategies | Able to maintain abstinence or control use with minimal support           | Environment supportive with limited assistance        |
| Level 2.1     | Minimal withdrawal, or at risk of withdrawal                                          | None, or stable, not distracting                                        | Low risk of harm, safe between sessions          | Needs dose monitoring and support several times a week                     | High risk of relapse, needs close monitoring and support                  | Needs close monitoring and support                    |
| Level 2.5     | Mild withdrawal, or at risk of withdrawal                                             | None, or stable, not distracting                                        | Low risk of harm, safe overnight                 | Requires near-daily structured program to promote progress                 | High risk of relapse, needs near-daily monitoring and support             | Needs near-daily monitoring and support               |
| Level 3.1     | Withdrawal or risk of withdrawal managed at another level                             | None, or stable, receiving medical monitoring                           | Need stable living environment                   | Open to recovery, needs limited 24-hour supervision                        | Understands relapse potential, needs supervision                          | Needs alternative secure housing placement or support |
| Level 3.5     | Mild to moderate withdrawal, or at risk, not requiring frequent management/monitoring | None, or stable, receiving medical monitoring                           | Medium-intensity 24-hour monitoring or treatment | Needs intensive motivating strategies in 24-hour structured program        | Needs 24-hour structured program                                          | Needs residential treatment to promote recovery       |
| Level 3.7     | Moderate to severe withdrawal, or at risk                                             | Requires 24-hour medical monitoring                                     | High-intensity 24-hour monitoring or treatment   | Needs motivating strategies in 24-hour medically monitored program         | Needs high-intensity 24-hour interventions                                | Needs residential treatment to promote recovery       |
| Level 4       | Severe withdrawal, or at risk, requiring intensive active medical management          | Requires 24-hour medical and nursing care, requiring hospital resources | Severe risk of harm                              | Challenges here do not grant admission                                     | Challenges here do not grant admission                                    | Challenges here do not grant admission                |

# The ASAM Criteria



[Purchase \*The ASAM Criteria\* here](#)

# The ASAM Criteria & the Utilization Management Process

- Used in the utilization management process when authorizing levels of care for substance use disorders.
- The ASAM Criteria is applied for both admission/intake and continued stay requests
- Providers are encouraged to have access to The ASAM Criteria and its tools
- During utilization reviews, questions will be asked to:
  - Understand the diagnosis and clinical picture of the member
  - Gather the needs that were assessed in each dimension
  - Identify the risk rating
  - Identify if MNC has been met for the level of care being requested

# Resource: Possible Questions

- What was the precipitating event for this level of care?
- What are the current symptoms?
- What substances are being used?
- What is the previous and current SUD diagnosis and treatment history?
- What other behavioral health needs or diagnosis are or have been treated?
- What is the medical history?
- What is the current vitals/CIWA/COWS/BAL/UDS/?
- What are the treatment goals for this LOC?
- What is the readiness for change?
- What types of social supports exist to support recovery?
- What are the living arrangements?
- What are any current legal issues?
- What is the discharge plan?
- Other pertinent information to support the need for this LOC



# Resources

## ASAM Criteria Course

- Monthly Live Virtual Course
- Online course at your own pace

For more information and to register please visit The ASAM website or link <https://www.asam.org/education/live-online-cme/the-asam-criteria-course>

**Note:** This overview is based on the pamphlet titled: An Introduction to The ASAM Criteria for Patients and Families which is being shared with approval from ASAM.

# Resources

- The ASAM Criteria: Treatment Criteria for Addictive, Substance-Related, and Co-Occurring Conditions, Third Edition  
Mee-Lee D, Shulman GD, Fishman MJ, Gastfriend DR, Miller, eds. *The ASAM Criteria: Treatment Criteria for Addictive, Substance-Related, and Co-Occurring Conditions*. 3rd ed. Carson City, NV: The Change Companies; 2013. Copyright 2013 by the American Society of Addiction Medicine. <https://www.asam.org/asam-criteria>
- Tip 35: Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Use Disorder Treatment  
[https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-35-Enhancing-Motivation-for-Change-in-Substance-Use-Disorder-Treatment/PEP19-02-01-003?referrer=from\\_search\\_result](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-35-Enhancing-Motivation-for-Change-in-Substance-Use-Disorder-Treatment/PEP19-02-01-003?referrer=from_search_result)

**Thank You!**

**CENTENE ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

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# References

- American Society of Addiction Medicine. (“ASAM”). (2015). An introduction to The ASAM Criteria for patients and families. [Pamphlet]. The American Society of Addiction. <https://www.asam.org/asam-criteria>
- Prochaska, J.O. & DiClemente, C.C. (1983). Stages and Processes of Self-Change of Smoking: Toward An Integrative Model of Change. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. Volume 51, No.3, 390-395.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-SAMSHA (2019, Oct.). Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Use Disorder Treatment. [https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-35-Enhancing-Motivation-for-Change-in-Substance-Use-Disorder-Treatment/PEP19-02-01-003?referrer=from\\_search\\_result](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-35-Enhancing-Motivation-for-Change-in-Substance-Use-Disorder-Treatment/PEP19-02-01-003?referrer=from_search_result)