

21 Distinguishing Characteristics

Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center prides itself on the 40+ linkage agreements that it has with the many addiction treatment services and centers in the Chicagoland area (this is probably a record in and of itself, but certainly another distinguishing characteristic) and so any comments offered below are not intended to belittle or demean any of the other programs available to those in need. In fact, we honor our brothers and sisters in arms as we unite with them very regularly to fight the scourge of addiction which is growing geometrically with no discrimination of age, gender, education, income, or culture.

We list these Distinguishing Characteristics because we are proud of what we have constructed and what the evidence shows has worked remarkably well with populations that have been traditionally disregarded and discarded. In addition, they help us stand out in the robust technicolor of our unique creativeness against a backdrop of monochrome and gray.

1. We have created a distinctly non-clinical environment in which to accommodate our clients. The beauty of our decorating and warm furnishings is matched only by its equivalent, the beauty of our interactions and clinical protocol which is unequalled in the United States according to multiple nationally recognized experts in the addiction field,
2. We offer the highest level of addiction treatment services available anywhere to those who cannot pay for them. We offer FREE SERVICES to the homeless, invisible, vulnerable, and formerly incarcerated populations who cannot receive them anywhere else,
3. Our copyrighted "Vestibule" process gives our patients the ability to choose their support program, either Smart Recovery or AA, and requires them to attend the other and bring proof back to their primary counselor. This takes them out of their comfort zone, forcing them to experience different methodologies and make their decision based on what works instead of what they have done in the past (which typically has failed),
4. Offering four different treatment programs in-house: both SMART Recovery & AA, WRAP (an IDHS initiative), and gender-based Women for Sobriety and Men for Sobriety,
5. Creating unique Treatment Plans that match our client's personalities and beliefs, with the widest, most expansive programming available, using Motivational Interviewing techniques to uncover what is most likely to be effective for them. Rarely is one plan the same as another.
6. Integrating intensive REBT training (Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy), which positively changes clients' way of thinking about and reacting to stressful situations. This group is facilitated by one of the top experts on REBT in the world, Mr. Terry London,
7. Adding an A&B-developed training module based on the work of Dr. Gay Hendricks on, "Learning to Love Yourself",
8. Adding an A&B-developed module based on Dr. Viktor Frankl's pathbreaking work, to help clients discover and begin enacting, the meaning and purpose of their lives,
9. We identify clients who grew up in abusive households or with dysfunctional families, and help them identify this as a source of trauma that can be overcome through the use of "reparenting" techniques, trans-generational trauma education, and cognitive behavioral skills (specifically REBT),

10. Our “shared model” of offering more than one therapist to our patients reduces the incidence of “Abandonment Anxiety” when their main counselor is not available on-demand. We have built a community of counselors and therapists who work together to create a fabric of healing availability that is unique in the psychology field,
11. Near the conclusion of the assessment a second counselor (shared model) appears to fulfill a “second professional opinion” of the Primary Counselor’s diagnosis at which time a confidential moment is given to the patient to validate the authenticity of the “Therapeutic Bond” which has been created between us,
12. PSI (Patient Satisfaction Index) cards are given to each patient at the end of every group and every individual counseling session where they grade their experience. These are collected electronically and appear as a “dashboard” on our computer screens so that we can have a real-time indicator of the level of satisfaction as indicated by the end-users of our processes,
13. Assisting the Counseling Staff to identify and minimize the effects of Vicarious Trauma which is picked up as traumatic residue and collects in unhealthy ways. We have a unique and powerful program that catches all problematic second-hand traumatic accumulations so that our staff does not exhibit unhelpful Compassion Fatigue,
14. We have official Memos-of-Understandings (MOU’s) with six area Psychological Universities (UIC – Jane Adams, Adler, Loyola, DePaul, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Kennedy-King) who supply us with a steady stream of students who have finished their coursework for the Masters Degree in Mental Health (plus must have a certificate in Substance Use Disorder or a CADC). This provides us with the highest level of competence of any addiction treatment center, public or private, in the United States,
15. Our unique agreement with Bodhi Spiritual Center allows us to assign their Licensed Purpose Practitioners to our patients who have completed their treatment plans and Viktor Frankl’s Purpose and Meaning groupwork,
16. Graduates are not prohibited from attending program groups or receiving individual counseling sessions. They are encouraged to continue,
17. After our patient’s Treatment Plans are fulfilled and they graduate, they are assisted in putting together a “Life Plan” that will accompany them into the graduation back into society,
18. We follow graduates for three years to assist them in their transitions into purposeful and meaningful community members,
19. We offer highly specialized psychophysiological programs geared towards dispersion of body harbored trauma through Yoga and Acupuncture. They regulate the rhythmic alternations between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems in order to sustain balanced digestion, sleep, and immune system functioning,
20. At least twice annually we offer REBT Practicums at no charge to professionals who wish to take advantage of the 17.5 CEU’s offered along with the Primary Certificate in REBT which is issued by the Albert Ellis Institute in New York City.
21. We offer certified Brainspotting services, a ground-breaking evidence-based PTSD modality.