

COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT APPROACH (CRA)

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT APPROACH?

The Community Reinforcement Approach (or “CRA”) works by using family, social, recreational, or occupational events to support you in changing your substance use. It helps you develop a substance-free lifestyle that you find more rewarding than a lifestyle that involves alcohol or other drugs. Involvement of a significant other is encouraged, when possible.

WHAT WILL I DO IN CRA?

You and your therapist will work to help you become more involved with pleasurable activities that do not involve alcohol or other drugs. You will work on building a community of people who you enjoy being with and who support the changes you’re making in your substance use. The treatment may also focus on helping you find and keep employment that is meaningful to you. If your significant other also participates in the treatment, the two of you will spend time practicing skills to improve your communication.

HOW LONG DOES CRA TAKE?

CRA usually lasts 12-16 sessions, though the actual length is determined by you and your therapist.

HOW OFTEN WOULD I MEET WITH MY THERAPIST?

Sessions are usually provided on a weekly basis.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF CRA?

You may feel discomfort when talking about difficult issues that you are currently facing in your life.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS CRA?

More than three decades of research has shown CRA to be effective for many individuals with alcohol use disorders. Research has also found it to be an effective treatment for stimulant use disorders. For many people, it leads to a reduction in substance use, as well as improvements in other areas of life, such as employment.