






Term	Definition
Substance Use	The use of any substance, including alcohol, drugs, or other psychoactive substances, for casual, recreational, or experimental purposes.
Substance Use Disorder (SUD)	A clinically diagnosed condition marked by compulsive substance use. It ranges from mild to severe, involving control struggles, negative impacts on wellbeing, and persistence despite known harm. SUD often co-occurs with mental health conditions like depression or anxiety.
SUD Treatment	A continuum of clinical interventions to help reduce or stop harmful substance use.
Substance Use Care Navigation	Helps participants who use substances to access person-centered information, resources, treatment, or any other support they may need in relation to their substance use.
Harm Reduction	Community-driven public health strategies (risk reduction, health promotion, and prevention) to empower participants and their families with the choice to live healthy, self-directed, and purpose-filled lives. It can help when someone is not ready for or hasn't accessed treatment, or if relapse occurs.
Aftercare and Relapse Prevention	Involves continued support after SUD treatment, helping participants navigate recovery and lower the risk of returning to harmful use.
Recovery	A personal journey to improve health, wellness, and self-direction. Recovery is not just a lack of symptoms. It involves striving to reach one's full potential. It is rooted in hope and respect. For substance use, recovery can begin at any stage, with or without diagnosis or treatment. It can involve building healthy relationships, securing housing, working, accessing education, addressing mental health/trauma, and reconnecting with a sense of purpose.


 Substance use may be a coping mechanism for trauma and/or instability.

 SUD treatment offers tools, stabilization, and insight that support long-term recovery.












 **Order Free opioid overdose prevention kits:**
[Order Form](#)

 **Harm Reduction strategies and resources:**
[Info Center](#)

 Many people start their recovery in SUD treatment, but it is just one of many possible pathways.

 Barriers like trauma, stigma, cost, or cultural mismatch may lead people to avoid substance use care.

Harmful substance use may impact housing stability and increase the risk of eviction.

-  Noise complaints
-  Health and ADL/IADL impairments
-  Property damage
-  Isolation and support disconnection
-  Conflicts with neighbors/landlords
-  Arrests, incarceration, and parole violations
-  Unstable income, job loss, and rental arrears
-  Housing voucher eligibility impacts
-  Impacts on timely rent payment
-  Stigma and discrimination
-  Inconsistent budgeting

The Relationship Between Harm Reduction, SUD Treatment, and Recovery

	Harm Reduction	SUD Treatment	Recovery
Nature	Recognizes substance use may occur as part of the recovery continuum.	Clinical. Time limited.	Personal. Ongoing.
Goal	Reduce harm and risk. Support autonomy and dignity.	Stabilize or stop substance use.	Build a meaningful life with or without abstinence.
Scope	Safer use, being practical, person-centered, non-judgmental.	Treating the diagnosis or symptoms of addiction.	Holistic. Health, purpose, connection.
Provider	Peers, community orgs, self.	Certified and licensed professionals.	Self-driven, with or without support.
Overlap	May coexist with or lead to SUD treatment or recovery.	May initiate or support recovery.	May include or exclude SUD treatment and/or harm reduction.

[Learn more about Substance Use Care Navigation](#)

Types of SUD Treatment



Outpatient Treatment: Flexible, non-residential treatment with therapy sessions at a clinic, working toward recovery while staying in one's own living space.



Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT): Combines meds, counseling, and therapies to help effectively guide the SUD recovery process.



Inpatient/Residential Treatment: Structured live-in program for SUD or mental health recovery, offering 24/7 care away from triggers.



Detoxification Process: Clears drugs or alcohol from the body under medical care, managing withdrawal symptoms after heavy or long-term use.

Use CENS to Connect ICMS Participants to LA County's SUD System of Care

Client Engagement Navigation Services (CENS):

Tailored, hands-on, in-person navigation in the SUD system of care.

Confirm universal sharing consent status before CENS referral.

Outreach, Engagement, and Education (usually connect within 3 days)

- Targeted outreach to referred ICMS participants.
- Participant, Group, and Agency Presentations:
 - SUD and Treatment
 - Mental Health and SUD Connection
 - Healthy Coping
 - Harm Reduction
 - Cannabis Risks
 - Opioid Overdose Prevention
 - Syringe Exchange
 - Relapse Prevention

Personalized Substance Use Care Navigation

- Ongoing personal support navigating the SUD system of care.
- Screens for SUD and the type/level of substance use care needed.
- Schedules and arranges transportation for SUD treatment.

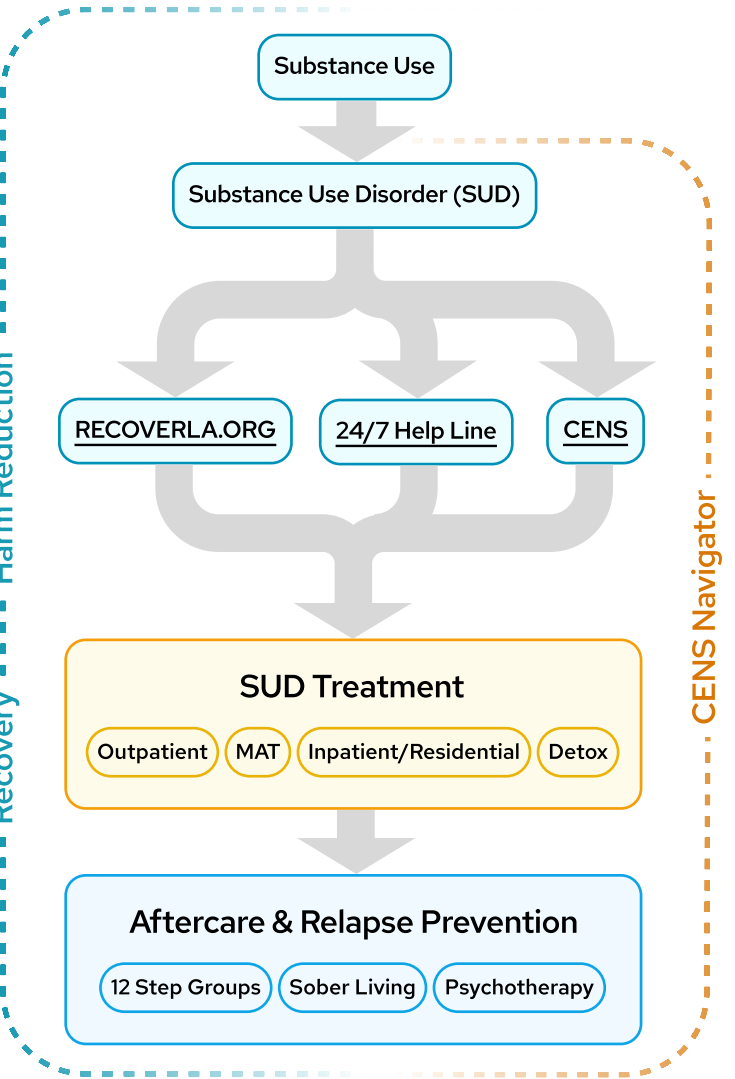
Tracking Treatment Progress and Collaborating with ICMS

- Provides ICMS with ongoing updates on SUD treatment progress.
- Collaborates with ICMS in linking participants to additional resources, health care, and social services.

The multilingual **24/7 Help Line** (1-800-854-7771) is a unified entry point for mental health and substance use care in LA County.

RECOVER LA is a publicly accessible mobile platform for communities, providers, and residents to easily explore and connect with local SUD prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support. This interface includes the **Service & Bed Availability Tool (SBAT)**.

For project-based ICMS, submit CENS referrals onsite (if applicable), or to the **CENS Area Office** for the SPA where the participant is located.



For scattered site ICMS, submit CENS referrals to the **CENS Area Office** for the SPA where the participant is located.

CENS is available to all ICMS participants regardless of housing, immigration, or income status.

CENS Linkage

- ICMS uses the 5x5 and HAI to monitor functioning and needs.
- ICMS identifies potentially harmful substance use and updates Care Plan.
- ICMS submits **CENS referral**.
- CENS coordinates with ICMS to complete SUD screening.
- CENS coordinates linkage to appropriate type/level of SUD care.
- CENS follows up to ensure meaningful support in the SUD system of care.

LA County's Permanent Housing Integrated Services Program (ISP) includes the critical interventions of ICMS, Full Service Partnership (FSP), Housing Support Services Program (HSSP), and CENS to support housing retention and improved health and wellbeing. Each time ICMS coordinates care in collaboration with a CENS navigator, the "ISP Care Coordination" Service should be recorded in the Case Notes in CHAMP.

Comments, Questions, or Feedback about this guide? [Let us know](#)