



Promising Practice

Eliminate the Blackout Period

Problem

Clients leave treatment because they feel isolated from family and friends.

Solution

Eliminate “blackout” period for phone calls and visitors.

Featured Stories

Fayette Companies in Peoria, Illinois reduced the percentage of discharges against medical advice within the first 7 days from 21 percent to 5 percent by eliminating the “blackout” week for phone calls and visitors—and by making other changes. Newly admitted clients do not feel as isolated from family and friends. For more information, see the [case study](#) and [change bulletin](#).

Lessons Learned

- Allow clients to stay in touch with family members and friends while in residential treatment.
- If concerned, have a counselor present during phone calls.

Tracking Measures

Cycle Measure

Dropout rate

Data Collection Form

[Residential Dropout Tracking Spreadsheet](#)

Action Steps

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Plan | 1. Collect baseline data for the dropout rate within the first 30 days of residential treatment. |
| Do | 2. For the next two-week period, eliminate the blackout period.
3. Track and calculate the dropout rate. |
| Study | 4. Check the fidelity of the change. Was the change implemented as planned?
5. Evaluate the change: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the dropout rate decrease?• Was it necessary to supervise phone calls? |
| Act | 6. Adjust system for making contact with loved ones and supervision during phone calls and re-test this promising practice for an additional two weeks. |

NIATx Aims

Reduce waiting time

Reduce no-shows

✓ Increase continuation

Increase admissions

Financial Impact

✓ Increase revenue

✓ Increase staff retention

Reduce costs



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7. Repeat this series of steps until you have established clear policies that allow elimination of the blackout period.

Related Promising Practices

- [Meet with a Counselor and Case Manager within 24 Hours of Admission](#)
- [Avoid Friday Admissions](#)
- [Eliminate Responsibilities During the First Two Weeks of Treatment](#)