Best Practices of Top Psychiatric Hospitals
Introduction

Since the day Sierra Tucson opened for business in 1981, we have placed great importance on adhering to the highest standards of patient care – and have made a priority of identifying and implementing industry-wide best practices for psychiatric hospitals.

Over the ensuing decades, we are proud to have retained this dedication to superior care and best practices. As a leader in the field of residential psychiatric care, Sierra Tucson has endeavored not only to develop and incorporate best practices into our treatment milieu, but also to encourage other providers to do the same.

Though no one set of standards or expectations could be applied to all residential psychiatric treatment facilities, the following nine areas encompass the practices that we consider essential to the establishment and maintenance of a quality psychiatric hospital:

1. Holistic Treatment Philosophy
2. Comprehensive Care
3. Individualized Treatment
4. Multidisciplinary Treatment Teams
5. Trained & Experienced Staff
6. Strong Family Component
7. Transition Planning & Aftercare Support
8. Close Coordination with Referring Professional
9. Licensure & Credentials

The following pages discuss each of these areas in greater detail, with specific examples of their incorporation into daily practice at Sierra Tucson.
Holistic Treatment Philosophy

At Sierra Tucson, we believe that a dedication to a **holistic treatment philosophy** is the foundation upon which successful psychiatric treatment is based.

Providing optimal care for those who choose to heal with us is a matter of identifying the unique needs of each patient, and providing a treatment plan that addresses the whole person, not merely a list of symptoms.

At Sierra Tucson, we have pioneered a holistic approach to the treatment of addictions and behavioral health disorders by developing the **Sierra Model®**. This bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach recognizes that all of us exist as mind, body, spirit, and emotions, and represents our commitment to treat the whole person.

The Sierra Model® integrates philosophies and practices from the medical, psychological, family systems, and self-help communities.

The Sierra Model® defines disease as a dysfunctional state with characteristic form, whether that form is associated with a mental health disorder, an addiction, or a physical problem.

Patients learn to understand underlying causes of emotional and behavioral disorders and recognize how to avoid subsequent addictions and dependencies during the recovery process.

Comprehensive Care

In order to provide optimal benefits to patients, a psychiatric hospital’s holistic treatment philosophy must be accompanied by a **commitment to comprehensive care**.

The Sierra Tucson clinical program, based on our bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach, employs treatment modalities that include experiential work such as Gestalt techniques, psychodrama, and focused expressive work, as well as cognitive-behavioral approaches, psycho-educational groups, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).

The patient is assessed for his/her ability to participate in appropriate modalities. The group process facilitates the patients in learning how to identify issues that have contributed to their dysfunctional behavior and how to adopt new coping skills and healthy behaviors. Patients also learn about relapse triggers and relapse prevention strategies.

These relapse prevention concepts apply to patients with mental health disorders as well as substance addictions and compulsive behaviors.
At Sierra Tucson, we combine Twelve-Step philosophy with medical/psychiatric services and traditional, experiential, and integrative therapies.

Western Medicine and Eastern Medicine practices are blended, allowing patients to gain maximum healing benefits.

Our dynamic Family Program is included with treatment to enhance each patient’s recovery and extend healing to the family.

Male and female patients, age 18 and over, are accepted into every Sierra Tucson program.

Sierra Tucson provides broad and deep treatment programs for the following issues, challenges, and disorders:

- Alcohol & Chemical Dependency
- Eating Disorders
- Mood & Anxiety Disorders
- Trauma & Abuse
- Sexual Compulsivity
- Chronic Pain
- Progressions Program – for advanced recovery skills
- Assessment & Diagnostic Program – for brief, intensive in-depth evaluation

Sierra Tucson treats not only addiction issues but also chronic pain and mental/behavioral health issues, including depression, anxiety, trauma, eating disorders, etc. Patients are not required to struggle with current substance abuse or have a history of addiction. Sierra Tucson’s programs provide healing for patients with many needs.

Sierra Tucson has developed specific, comprehensive treatment programs that allow patients with similar issues to support one another. Process groups generally consist of seven to nine patients to allow for a therapeutic, intimate, and confidential atmosphere.

**Individualized Treatment**

While the concepts of holistic treatment and comprehensive care focus on “big picture” considerations, the ability of a psychiatric hospital to effect real and lasting change in a patient’s life is often dependent upon the program’s ability to ensure that each patient receives a truly individualized treatment plan, based on the patient’s history, thorough assessment, progress in treatment, and ongoing reassessment.

At Sierra Tucson, we believe that complex issues are best treated simultaneously, not sequentially, because this is what leads to sustainable results.
Top psychiatric hospitals need to feature the clinical expertise to combine many powerful treatment methods in a way that serves a patient’s specific development needs and enables them to break the links in their disease or addiction loop.

At Sierra Tucson, our commitment to individualized treatment allows us to develop personalized and customized treatment plans that feature the following options:

- Twelve-Step philosophy with multiple on-site and off-site meetings
- Group Process & Individual Therapy
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills Training
- Psychodrama
- Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Psychopharmacology
- Nutritional & Fitness Consultations
- Grief & Spiritual Work
- Therapeutic & Recreational Activities Program – including Challenge Course/Adventure Therapy and Equine-Assisted Therapy
- Biofeedback
- Meditation
- Nutraceuticals (vitamin and herbal supplements)
- Integrative Therapies -- including Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Massage Therapy, Qigong, Reiki, Shiatsu, Somatic Experiencing®, Somato-Emotional Massage Therapy, Yoga, Zero Balancing
- Family Program (with age-appropriate groups for young family members 11 - 17 years of age) included in each person's treatment program
- Creative Arts Therapy
- Aquatic Therapy
- Demo Kitchen for Eating Disorder patients
- Couple’s Workshops

All of the therapies and activities enumerated above are available on-site at Sierra Tucson’s self-contained campus.

**Multidisciplinary Treatment Teams**

In order to put a philosophy of holistic treatment, comprehensive care, and individualized treatment into meaningful practice, a top psychiatric hospital needs to employ the **multidisciplinary treatment team** concept.

Multidisciplinary treatment teams benefit both patients and programs by combining specific insights, experiences, perspectives and understandings in a collaborative professional
environment. The result, to borrow from a famous phrase, is a treatment program in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

At Sierra Tucson, our multidisciplinary treatment teams consist of the following personnel:

- Full-time medical and psychiatric staff
- Pain specialists
- Certified addiction specialists
- Psychologists
- Master’s-level therapists
- Eating disorder specialists
- Registered dietitians
- Therapeutic activity and fitness specialists
- Exercise physiologists
- Licensed integrative therapy practitioners

Each Sierra Tucson patient is assigned a multidisciplinary core treatment team, which meets one to two times per week for treatment planning.

This multidisciplinary core treatment team consists of the following personnel:

- Medical provider
- Unit therapist
- Family therapist
- Continuing care coordinator.

A registered dietitian and exercise physiologist are also appointed to the core treatment team for some patients. Many other therapists are involved in patients’ care – for example, a grief/spiritual therapist, EMDR therapist, therapeutic and recreational activities therapists, and various licensed Integrative Therapy practitioners.

Trained & Experienced Staff

The presence of trained and experienced staff members may seem more like a fundamental than a best practice – but the importance of ensuring that patients are cared for by highest quality professionals cannot be over-emphasized.

At Sierra Tucson, full-time on-site staff allows a team of professionals to work with patients daily, not just periodically. We tap the expertise of a highly experienced full-time staff of clinicians and experienced on-call staff.

At Sierra Tucson, our professional, experienced, and caring staff members are dedicated to providing “Compassionate Care and Clinical Excellence.”
Strong Family Component

Because family members and significant others are considerably affected by addiction and mental health disorders, the presence of a strong family component is often an essential element in a patient’s recovery process.

A strong family program allows family members and other loved ones to learn about addictions and related mental health disorders, discuss issues that have involved them for many years, and heal together. This is often a life-changing week where relationships can begin to mend from confusion, hurt, and misunderstandings.

At Sierra Tucson, patients are strongly encouraged to invite family members and/or significant others to participate in our four-day Family Program. This program is designed to assist patients and family members in identifying problems that have had significant impact on the family system; in changing attitudes and, ultimately, behaviors between family members and patients; and in clarifying the role of healthy support.

Family members are also guided to work on their own issues, develop self-care techniques, and learn how to support their loved one.
A family therapist works with family members during the week, providing support and education specific to the patient’s issues. In afternoon sessions, the family group includes the patient, the patient's process group members, and the primary therapist. A family therapist may provide individual counseling for family members, as deemed necessary, and will include other clinical staff if appropriate.

Our therapists model and teach new communication skills, which give the patients and family members a means to change behaviors and enhance the healing process.

A Couple’s Workshop provides an opportunity for all couples in the Family Program to tend to their relationship issues and to receive educational and therapeutic support for recovery.

If a family member evidences the need for inpatient treatment or requests admission to Sierra Tucson, the family therapist will refer to the Intake Department for assessment. Continuing care recommendations are given to family members to support their ongoing recovery.

Transition Planning & Aftercare Support

In most if not all cases, residential psychiatric treatment is just the first step in a long-term recovery process. To ensure that the patient is put in the best possible position to pursue lifelong recovery, it is essential that psychiatric programs provide transition planning and aftercare support services.
At Sierra Tucson, highlights of our transition planning and aftercare support services include the following:

- Every patient is provided with a written Continuing Care Plan with three recommendations for their next level of recovery.
- Patients work with a Continuing Care coordinator, who helps arrange their initial follow-up appointments prior to discharge.
- Alumni Coordinators provide ongoing support to patients and family members who request contact. Patients receive a follow-up call or email after one week, one month, three months, six months, nine months, and one year.
- Family members also receive a follow-up call.
- The Alumni Services Department offers resources; maintains communication through the Alumni eNews and Afterwords Newsletter; assists with local Alumni Support Groups; and schedules events, workshops, and the annual Alumni Reunion.

For patients to more fully prepare for the next level of recovery, we are proud to offer our Progressions Program. The Progressions Program provides patients with the opportunity to extend their time in our inpatient, primary treatment environment beyond the initial 30- or 45-day program to gain another two to four weeks of therapeutic experience and relapse prevention.

For patients dealing with chemical dependency, mood or anxiety disorders, eating disorders, trauma, sexual compulsivity, or chronic pain, prognosis improves when they can extend their time in the primary care setting. The Progressions Program is designed to enhance the patient’s transition into another level of care, whether that be extended care, an intensive outpatient program, or outpatient therapy.

The Progressions Program is also available as a two-to-four-week program for Sierra Tucson alumni, those who have completed treatment at another inpatient facility, or individuals who want to further their recovery skills. Each person is evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if they will benefit from this program.

**Close Coordination with Referring Professional**

As is also the case with transition planning and aftercare preparation, close coordination with referring professionals plays an important role in ensuring continuity of care while placing the patient in the best possible position for pursuing long-term recovery.

Coordinating with referring professionals enhances the ability of the psychiatric hospital to provide optimal care, and facilitates the establishment of the most effective comprehensive, holistic, and personalized course of treatment.
Sierra Tucson’s clinical team is committed to maintaining contact, as requested, with each patient’s referring professional. Our Clinical Outreach Coordinators have a strong clinical background to assist professionals with clients’ needs, resources, referrals, and related issues.

Licensure & Credentials

Pursuing all relevant licensures and credentials ensures that a psychiatric hospital continues to adhere to the highest level of professional standards. Participation in licensure and credentialing programs also signals to patients and potential patients that the program is committed to clinical excellence.

Sierra Tucson is dually licensed as a Special Hospital and a Level 1 Psychiatric Acute Hospital, and is dually accredited by the Joint Commission as a “Hospital” and for “Behavioral Health Care.”

Our Pain Management Program is accredited by the American Academy of Pain Management and is the only Academy-accredited inpatient pain program in Arizona.
About Sierra Tucson

Since 1983, Sierra Tucson has provided “Compassionate Care and Clinical Excellence.”

Multi-licensed as a Psychiatric Hospital and Behavioral Health Residential Treatment Center, Sierra Tucson excels at treating coexisting disorders and has developed internationally acclaimed programs for Chemical Dependency, Eating Disorders, Mood and Anxiety Disorders, Pain Management, and Sexual and Trauma Recovery.

For over 27 years, Sierra Tucson has provided world-class treatment to thousands of people using the most progressive, effective therapies available. In-depth Assessment Services are available on an inpatient or outpatient basis. Sierra Tucson has been awarded dual Accreditation by The Joint Commission and Pain Program Accreditation by the American Academy of Pain Management.

For more about Sierra Tucson visit www.sierratucson.com or call (800) 842-4487.

Sierra Tucson is a proud member of CRC Health Group, which offers the most comprehensive network of specialized behavioral healthcare services in the nation.

With the largest array of personalized treatment options, individuals, families, and professionals can choose the most appropriate setting for their behavioral, addiction, weight management, and therapeutic education needs.

CRC Health Group is deeply committed to making its services widely and easily available to those in need, while maintaining a passion for delivering the most advanced treatment available.

For more about CRC Health Group visit www.crchealth.com or call (877) 637-6237.