

Discovery Program FAQs

What is the Discovery Program?

The Discovery Program is a recovery-oriented, 12 to 15 weeks-long intensive day hospital treatment program for individuals 17 (graduated high school) and older living with an eating disorder. This program is staffed by an interdisciplinary team, including a dietitian, a social worker for family therapy, an occupational therapist, a psychiatrist, several psychologists, and a spiritual health practitioner. All individuals who enter the Discovery Program must first complete the **Readiness Program**. The Discovery Program runs in collaboration with **Vista House**, a facility located in Vancouver.

What is Vista House?

Individuals in the Discovery Program live at and engage in programming at the Vista House for the duration of their time in Discovery Program. The house is staffed 24-hours a day by a team of registered nurses, counsellors, and support workers. The supportive home environment of Vista promotes practice of recovery-focused skills, such as meal planning and preparation, and to respond effectively to stressors without using eating disorder behaviours to cope. The focus is on building autonomy and self-accountability in recovery.

How do I prepare for the Discovery Program?

All individuals who enter the Discovery Program complete the mandatory Readiness Program. The Readiness Program is designed to provide support and assistance for individuals preparing for the intensive Discovery/Vista Program. To participate, you must be medically stable and motivated to make changes to your eating disorder symptoms. The Readiness Program occurs on Wednesdays from 10:30am-2pm via Telehealth and there are three major components: a) Goals and Victories Group, b) Supported Lunch, and c) Exploration and Awareness Group. In addition, you will have regular meetings with the psychiatrist, and with a dietitian for weekly nutritional counseling. Optional family therapy support is also available.

What is the treatment approach in the Discovery Program?

The Discovery Program is predominantly group-based, and follows an integrative therapy model to help face painful issues and feelings underlying the eating disorder, grieve and receive validation, and develop self-acceptance and self-compassion. Alongside, clients learn new coping tools, practice interpersonal skills, and become empowered to make significant changes in their lives. A balance of acceptance and change, or of compassion and responsibility, is encouraged.

Will I receive individual therapy in the Discovery Program?

All individuals receive weekly individual psychotherapy with a psychologist or psychiatrist, and weekly individual nutrition sessions with the dietitian. Additionally, all clients regularly meet with the program psychiatrist, and can choose to meet with the occupational therapist, and/or social worker for family therapy.

Do I stay at the Vista House for the entire 12 to 15 weeks?

As clients progress through the Discovery/Vista Program, they spend more of their time back in their home communities. Towards the end of their admission, clients are encouraged to return home on weekends in order to practice their new skills in their day-to-day environments.

What happens after I finish the Discovery/Vista Program?

Upon graduation, clients can participate in an outpatient Follow-Up Program for up to 6 months. This program consists of a weekly 1.5 hour group, as well as individual sessions with the dietitian and psychiatrist. During their participation in the Follow-Up Program, clients can also utilize meal and/or bed support at Vista House, and can choose to meet with the occupational therapist, spiritual health practitioner, and/or social worker for family therapy.

What are the eligibility criteria for the Discovery/Vista Program?

We work from a model of care that uses guidelines that hold the care team, as well all clients, accountable. We review these guidelines with all clients at the beginning of treatment and make revisions based on input from clients who have graduated our program. This guidelines model promotes transparency in decision-making, limits favouritism, and sets clear expectations and consequences agreed upon by all clients and care team. Individuals must be medically stable and have a desire for recovery to be eligible for the Discovery/Vista Program. Individuals must also abstain from alcohol/substance use and self-harm for at least 6-weeks prior to the start of the program, and during the program. We ask for this to allow a safe and stable environment at the house, so that all clients can get the most out of their limited time in our intensive program. To promote normalized eating patterns and recovery, clients are expected to: complete their meal plan without liquid replacements; show a willingness to work on food variety and flexibility; be able to eat meals with co-clients, including food prepared by others; actively participate in care; engage in weight restoration if their BMI is less than 20 or if their natural weight is a BMI more than 20; and demonstrate an openness to Health at Every Size® principles. To further support clients' recovery, the Discovery/Vista Program premises are designated eating disorder symptom-free zones.

What does weight restoration involve?

We ask all individuals of the Discovery/Vista Program to be open and curious about principles of Health at Every Size® and set point theory so they can explore ways of nourishing their body that are not related to controlling weight. Weight restoration supports the ability to participate in deep psychological work. As such, while in program, individuals will work with the dietitian to establish an appropriate meal plan and activity protocol, and are expected to continue with weight restoration to a *minimum* BMI of 20. As most individual's natural weight is beyond a BMI of 20, individuals may need to continue weight restoration as determined in conversation with the dietitian and care team.