

What if I Don't Really Want Treatment? – “But I'm Court Ordered”
A Marula Rehab Telehealth Educational Article on
What can change when you don't really want to participate in treatment

Not everyone begins treatment because they want to. Some begin because they have to – because a judge, probation officer, employer, or child welfare agency requires it.

At Marula Rehab Telehealth, we understand this reality. Many individuals enter treatment feeling frustrated, resentful, or simply uninterested in change. And that's okay. Starting treatment reluctantly does not mean you are incapable of recovery. It simply means you are beginning from a different place.

This article explores what it means to be court-ordered into treatment, why motivation often grows after treatment begins, and how telehealth can make the process more manageable, respectful, and meaningful.

“I Don't Want Treatment – I Just Want to Get This Over With”

This is one of the most common statements we hear from court-ordered clients. It doesn't mean someone is “bad,” “unmotivated,” or “hopeless.”

It means:

They feel forced into something they didn't choose

They may not believe they have a substance use problem

They may feel judged or misunderstood

They may be overwhelmed by legal pressure

They may fear being labeled or stigmatized

These feelings are normal. Treatment is not about punishing you – it's about giving you tools that can protect your freedom, your health, and your future.

Court Orders Don't Create Motivation – But Treatment Can

Research shows that motivation often increases after treatment begins, not before. People frequently discover:

They feel better when they reduce or stop using

Their relationships improve

Their legal stress decreases

Their thinking becomes clearer

They gain control they didn't realize they had lost

In other words, you don't have to want treatment to benefit from it.

Why Courts Require Treatment

Courts don't mandate treatment to punish people. They do it because:

Substance use is strongly linked to legal problems

Treatment reduces re-offending

Treatment improves safety for families and communities

Treatment helps people stabilize their lives

Treatment is more effective than jail for substance-related offenses

A court order is often the first doorway to a healthier, more stable life — even if it doesn't feel that way at first.

“But I Don't Think I Have a Problem”

Many court-ordered clients feel this way. Sometimes the issue isn't addiction — it's patterns, risk, or behaviors that led to legal consequences

Treatment helps you explore:

What happened

Why it happened

How to prevent it from happening again

How substances may be affecting your decisions, health, or relationships

You don't have to label yourself. You don't have to agree with everything on day one. You just have to show up — and be open to learning.

How Telehealth Makes Court-Ordered Treatment Easier:

Marula Rehab Telehealth is designed for people who are balancing:

Work

Family responsibilities

Transportation challenges

Legal requirements

Stress and uncertainty

Telehealth allows you to complete treatment:

From home Privately

With flexible scheduling

Without missing work

Without the stigma of walking into a clinic

We meet you where you are — literally and emotionally.

What You Can Expect in Treatment

Even if you're not motivated yet, treatment will help you:

Understand how substances affect your brain and behavior

Learn coping skills for stress, anger, and triggers, Improve communication and relationships

Reduce legal risks, Build a plan for stability and safety, and Gain insight into your own patterns.

You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to be enthusiastic. You just have to participate.

A Message to Court-Ordered Clients

You may not want to be here. You may feel forced, frustrated, or misunderstood. But you are not alone — and you are not beyond change.

Many people begin treatment because they have to... and continue because they want to. Your story is still being written. Your future is still yours to shape. And treatment, even court-ordered, can be the turning point you never expected.

A Patient Speaks:

“I Fought It Every Step of the Way - Until Something Finally Shifted”

To understand what court-ordered treatment feels like from the inside, we spoke with “Jason,” a 34-year-old man who entered Marula Rehab Telehealth after a DUI conviction. He was angry, resistant, and convinced he didn’t belong in treatment. His story reflects the experience of many who begin this journey unwillingly — and discover something unexpected along the way.

“I didn’t want treatment. I wanted the court off my back.” Jason didn’t sugarcoat his feelings.

“I was furious. I felt like the whole thing was blown out of proportion. I told myself I didn’t have a problem — everyone drinks. I just got caught.” He admitted he joined his first telehealth session with his camera off claiming that his camera wasn’t working, and in reality, he sat with his arms crossed, rolling his eyes, and waiting for it to be over.

“I wasn’t listening. I wasn’t participating. I was just checking a box so I wouldn’t go to jail.”

“But then I started hearing things that sounded a little too familiar.”

During one session, the counselor described how alcohol can slowly shift priorities, relationships, and decision-making.

Jason paused.

“It was like she was describing my life — the fights with my girlfriend, the missed workdays, the excuses I kept making. I didn’t want to admit it, but something hit me.” He didn’t say anything out loud that day. But he listened.

“I realized I wasn’t being forced into treatment — I was being forced to face myself.”

Over the next few weeks, Jason began participating more. He turned his camera on. He asked questions. He completed assignments.

“I started noticing patterns I’d never seen before. I thought I was in control, but I wasn’t. Alcohol was making decisions for me.” He described the moment he realized he needed change:

“My counselor said, ‘You don’t have to want recovery to start it — but you might want it once you feel it.’ That stuck with me.”

“The biggest surprise? I actually felt better.” Jason didn’t expect improvement. He expected inconvenience.

But as he reduced his drinking, he noticed:

He slept better

His anxiety decreased

His relationship stabilized

He felt clearer, calmer, more present

He wasn’t constantly apologizing or explaining himself

“I didn’t know how bad I felt until I started feeling better.”

“Court-ordered treatment ended up giving me something I didn’t know I needed.”

By the end of his program, Jason’s perspective had shifted completely.

“I came in angry. I left grateful. I didn’t want treatment — but I needed it. And honestly, it probably saved my life.”

He now sees the court order differently:

“It wasn’t punishment. It was a wake-up call. I just didn’t recognize it at first.”

“If you’re where I was... just give it a chance.”

Jason offered one final message to others entering treatment unwillingly:

“You don’t have to believe you have a problem. You don’t have to be excited about treatment. Just show up. Listen. Something might click — and that moment can change everything.”