

What Makes Ashburn Different?

A patient's perspective

From my experience, the therapeutic community here at Ashburn focuses on treating the whole person and not just the surface presenting symptoms or maladaptive coping strategies. This means that the focus is on looking at things like underlying trauma, feelings and emotions and using the support of the groups and individual therapy to work through the often-painful things that have brought patients to Ashburn Clinic.

I have observed that Ashburn uses a very holistic approach to treating mental health difficulties and patients work together to problem solve and make decisions about treatment. An example of this that I have noticed is when reviewing a patient's observation status, patients have a say as well as staff as to whether a patient comes off or stay on observation. It is a decision that is made as a community and I believe this sets Ashburn aside from other treatment centres.

As chairperson, I have the very important role of chairing meetings where patients work together to understand behaviour and to challenge each other. This creates a culture of enquiry in which patients are able to engage in and be a part of each other's healing in a very unique way. Often this can seem upon arrival to be confronting but it is a part of a community approach to helping understand behaviours and thought patterns.

Being a part of this community has been a very unique experience and one that has benefited my treatment in more ways than one. I feel honoured to be able to work alongside so many others who are also working through difficult emotions, feelings and experiences. I have learned so much from other patients and the similar experiences and feelings we share. Learning and working together to heal is how I believe the therapeutic community works best and what is different about Ashburn compared to other treatment centres I have been in.

In my time here, I have been able to work through a lot of very painful experiences, thoughts and feelings in both a group setting and in individual therapy and talking one on one with other patients. Sometimes the connections you make in a casual setting outside of groups can be just as healing as the therapeutic program that is offered through the day as you make connections with people who all have similar experiences and feelings.

This approach has helped me understand myself and my behaviours more deeply and I believe this has led to the changes I have made in my life in both my thinking and behaviours. I owe my life to this therapeutic community and am so honoured to be a part of something so unique and so healing.

Ashburn Patient February 2018