

Ironwood FAQ

Where is Ironwood located?

Ironwood is located in a rural setting adjacent to Maine's pristine Frye Mountain Wildlife Management Area, approximately 20 miles northwest of Camden, Maine. We are serviced by two major airports in Bangor (approximately 45 miles away, 1 hour 15 minute drive time) and Portland (approximately 95 miles away, 2 hours 10 minute drive time). Accommodations are available nearby in Belfast, Camden and Rockland.

[Directions to Ironwood](#) | [Where to Stay](#)

What are accommodations like for my teen?

The accommodations here at Ironwood are outstanding. When any key decisions are made regarding the accommodations, the directors ask themselves, What would we want for our child?. Thus, your child will experience the following amenities in our home-like environment: seasonal heat and air conditioning, healthy meals and snacks, the companionship of well-mannered cats and dogs, home-like bathroom facilities, laundry facilities, walls adorned with art work and bookshelves stocked with stimulating literature. Unlike other residential treatment centers, we are not deprivation-based. We believe that when one can trust their most basic needs will be met they will be more receptive and responsive to the higher level psychological, emotional, social, and academic work that we offer here. We have an open-door policy. Please call us to schedule a visit.

How long is the Ironwood Program?

The length of the youth's stay at Ironwood is on average six to nine months.

What would a typical day's activities be for my teen?

Download a schedule of a typical day's activities in PDF by [clicking here](#).

What kind of communication will I have with my teen at Ironwood?

During the initial period, it is imperative that the teen uses this time for reflection and without any outside influence. During this period, Ironwood encourages frequent letter-writing to his or her family. Ironwood respects the troubled teen's privacy and will not read any outgoing or incoming mail. Youths are required to write at least two letters to parents per week. This process establishes a pattern of thoughtful communication with parents. The teen's therapist will schedule weekly telephone calls with parents to update the family on his or her progress.

Once the resident has reached Level 2, weekly family therapy sessions, via telephone conference call, are implemented. When the resident reaches Level 3, he or she is allowed a once-weekly private, unsupervised phone call with his or her parents.

Weekly website updates are provided throughout the teen's stay at Ironwood, and provide the parent with photographs, a web site letter, and an update from the residential care staff. This site is password protected and encrypted.

How will I know my teen is safe at Ironwood?

The Ironwood staff has decades of experience dealing with camp security and safety issues. The Ironwood facilities have been outfitted with state-of-the-art security and fire protection systems. All residential areas have automatic sprinkler systems and independent electrical generating units.

Who else will be in the program with my teen?

Ironwood works with adolescents age 13-18. Adolescents who are suitable for our program are great kids who are struggling to get their needs met in a healthy way. They desire attention, acceptance, affection, a sense of control, and independence yet tend to use poor strategies to get these needs met. Some of these strategies include overuse of video games and computers, substance abuse, opposition, defiance, promiscuity, verbal aggression, and school refusal. Our kids may also be struggling with depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, coping with grief and loss, or adoption related attachment issues. We do not work with kids who have a significant history of physical aggression, sexual aggression, or who are a risk to themselves or others.

Who will be working with my teen?

Simply put, the professional staff at Ironwood have years of experience with troubled teen programs and know what they are doing. They are highly skilled in mentoring and providing therapeutic interventions at critical emotional and behavioral junctures. Using their collective compassion and wisdom, they guide the troubled teens with empathetic counseling, planned instruction and provide experiences to give them the opportunity to make and correct mistakes in a safe environment. The combination of provocative experiences, and adult mentoring assists teens in arriving at a decision point to make healthier decisions for their own lives. In other words, Ironwood treats the troubled youth with respect and sets an expectation that experience and self-discovery brings out the best that is within them. At Ironwood, we believe that the things we remember for the rest of our lives come from a combination of experience and mentoring.

Will our family's confidentiality be protected?

Your family's confidentiality is extremely important to Ironwood. Ironwood will safeguard your confidentiality through the use of a strict confidentiality policy and comprehensive confidentiality agreement signed by each Ironwood staff member.

How do I know if my teen is a good fit for the Ironwood program?

Prior to admission into the Ironwood program, the Admissions Director and Clinical Director, in concert with other members of the treatment team, review each application to determine if the center will meet your youth's needs. A complete review of available psychological, medical, and educational assessments in conjunction with interviews with the family, determines what degree your troubled teen may safely participate in and benefit from the programs at Ironwood. If necessary, a psycho-educational evaluation will be conducted. Special attention is given to the physical requirements for participating in the adventure component of the program. Our staff reviews information you provide and continues to be in contact with you regarding your teen's physical care. As soon as

possible after admission, assessments are conducted by your teen's primary therapist, nurse, and physician. These assessments are documented in the Service Plan, Nursing Assessment Form, and Intake Physical Examination Form.

Can we visit the program and facility before committing?

Yes, Ironwood has an open door policy. Please call our office to set up a convenient day and time.

Are one-on-one therapy sessions offered?

Ironwood provides every troubled teen with intensive one-on-one sessions, twice weekly. The use of group sessions to treat young people is used throughout the week and is effective when they are used in concert with individual therapies.

What is Ironwood's treatment program?

Ironwood offers a progressive system in which residents may graduate into a less restrictive program as they demonstrate progress and responsibility within the program. This primary program Ironwood offers is termed "Intervention." The secondary, longer, term program is termed "Rehabilitation and Transition." The Intervention program provides primary assessment, treatment, discharge planning, and after-care recommendations for students who continue to make poor choices and need to develop a greater awareness of the effects of his/her behavior on themselves, their family and future. The Intervention program combines group and intensive one-on-one therapies, outdoor expeditions, animal therapy and structured classroom academics each week. Family intervention is included as the troubled teen proceeds through the program. This is a challenging troubled youth program that utilizes our level system to determine length of stay and appropriate after care planning. The Rehabilitation and Transition program is less restrictive and more cognitive and academic than the Intervention program. Transitioning youth are those that will benefit from continued but gradually reduced, structure and increased intensity in therapy until completion of his/her service plan.

Will my teen be required to perform chores?

Yes, chores and work projects are key elements in Ironwood's rewards-based program. This is a rigorous and disciplined teen program with character and team-building responsibilities that instills a sense of achievement.

What is Ironwood's policy on administering prescribed medications?

For children requiring pharmacological treatment of psychiatric and mental health problems, Ironwood offers the services of a consulting psychiatrist and on-site psychiatric nurse. The psychiatrist works collaboratively with Ironwood therapists and staff in the conservative use of medication to alleviate symptoms that may otherwise hinder the child's progress, and the psychiatric nurse oversees a monthly medication clinic and follows each child individually from week to week, to ensure that benefits are obtained with a minimum of side effects. All staff is educated regarding psychotropic medication, and both the psychiatrist and nurse are available on-call to address questions and concerns.

It is Ironwood's policy to use psychotropic medication only when less restrictive alternatives have been tried and failed or are diagnostically eliminated. All decisions regarding medication are made cautiously and with parental parent collaboration. In many cases, we are able to discontinue or reduce medication as the child stabilizes and gains new insights and coping skills.

Is transportation available for doctor visits and other appointments?

Yes, transportation is provided to scheduled appointments. Local doctors and medical facilities are located within eight miles of Ironwood. Ironwood has 911 service available for emergency needs.

How will my teen's special dietary needs be accommodated?

Proper nutrition is an integral part of Ironwood's approach to treatment. A nutritionist will help determine what is best for your youth's dietary needs.

How will my youth's religious needs be met?

Ironwood respects each individual's religious freedom and the need for the troubled teen to have time to reflect on their spirituality.

As a parent, what support from Ironwood staff can I expect throughout the treatment journey?

The journey toward recovery is not easy, either for the family or teen. Life doesn't always hand us circumstances already shaped the way we want. Sometimes we need to be actively involved in the molding process. You will need courage, strength and tenacity to see treatment through to completion. There will be times when you doubt your teen's ability to change. There will still be moments, hours, even days of despair when you question how your family life could ever be okay again. The staff at Ironwood will support you through these bleak times. They have the experience and skills to envision the "beginning to end." They have worked with disruptive, defiant, and destructive teens and have seen them emerge into responsible and caring individuals willing and ready to take their place in the family unit once again. We include the parents of each resident in a mini-program, so that they gain the benefit and knowledge of their teen's experience, first hand. In addition, we engage the parents in a family therapy process which originates with them as they participate in developing the service plan, continues as the change process of the youth progresses.

Will my youth be allowed to communicate with our family?

During the initial Intake period, it is imperative that the teen uses this time for reflection and without any outside influence. After this period, Ironwood encourages frequent letter-writing to his or her family. Ironwood respects the troubled teen's privacy and will not read any outgoing or incoming mail. Youths are required to write at least two letters to parents per week. This process establishes a pattern of thoughtful communication with parents that can be converted into action when the troubled teen is ready to leave the program.

How does my teen continue with an educational program while at Ironwood?

Ironwood, as well as a treatment program, is an academic secondary school licensed by the State of Maine. Three certified teachers teach and tutor residents daily in our two school buildings, year around. All traditional high school subjects- English, math through calculus, history, government, chemistry, biology, physics, earth and environmental sciences, art and languages- are available, as are experiential and elective offerings. For high school graduates or advanced students we provide a variety of undergraduate level courses through several universities, and for residents not ready for secondary school work we match course level to the student. For high school juniors and seniors, we are often able to plan a program whereby the student leaves Ironwood with an accredited high school diploma. Our educational staff, if parents wish, will work with past and future schools so that transitions to and from Ironwood are as easy, smooth and problem free as possible. We can help students with college applications, and offer SAT testing on site.

What if my child has completed High School?

Ironwood's clinical and educational staff will assist you and your teen in determining a course of education that can be pursued via distance learning at an accredited college. Ironwood also offers certificate programs for teens who wish to develop an interest in horticulture, equine care and riding, and dog training and handling.

How will I get my child to Ironwood?

We at Ironwood recommend that you personally bring your child. However, if this is not possible, we can recommend reputable escort services.

What if I have a question that isn't answered here?

There are several ways to contact us regarding any questions you might have. Our phone number is 1-877-496-2463. You may e-mail us at questions@ironwoodmaine.com.