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House-full signs go up as rehab centres can't meet demand

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DEMAND is so high for the city's drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres, Gold Coast organisations are having to turn away as many people as they are accepting.

The Coast's rising substance-abuse issues are so bad one Southport centre could

double its numbers if it had the funding and support it needs.

Goldbridge Rehabilitation Services is turning people away who are desperate for help because it is constantly at capacity, with up to 20 locals on the waiting list.

The centre has now taken to enrolling clients in certified mental health education courses to help combat the problem and get those who

have recovered from addiction issues to help other addicts.

Joining forces with Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, the centre is funding a year-long program that allows its "residential supervisors" to complete a Certificate IV in mental health. Goldbridge chief executive Charlie Blatch said mental health problems went hand-in-hand with drug and alcohol issues.

"The residential supervisors have an important role in the centre, including supervising new residents, conflict management, as well as supporting and motivating all residents to stick with the program and their daily routine," Mr Blatch said.

"Not only does (the course) help our residential clients in treatment, it also helps the supervisors in their skills and

ultimately gives them a qualification which they could probably use to go on and work in the mental health area."

A residential supervisor, who only wanted to be known as Ralph, has been receiving help at the centre since 2007.

"I had to get to a stage where I wanted to help myself," Ralph said.

"I've had a lot of experience with mental health in the family, so I'm looking forward to doing something productive with the course."

Goldbridge receives state and federal funding but Mr Blatch said it was never enough to keep up with demand.

All rehabilitation centres on the Coast face the same problem, with groups unable to refer clients on because the other centres are full.