Things to Consider When Looking for Recovery Housing:

Safety and Environment

One of the most important features of recovery housing is a commitment to maintaining a safe, drug- and alcohol-free living environment. Here are some things to consider regarding general safety and the environment:

What to Look for in a Safe Environment:

- **Clean and Well-Maintained Living Space**
  The home should be clean, in good repair, and free from safety hazards (working utilities, secure doors/windows, adequate lighting).
- **Clear House Rules and Expectations**
  Look for established guidelines around sobriety, curfews, guests, and responsibilities that are consistently enforced.
- **Substance-Free Setting**
  Policies should support a drug- and alcohol-free environment, including accountability measures if needed.
- **Trained or Experienced Staff (if applicable)**
  Some homes have house managers or staff who help maintain structure and address concerns.
- **Oversight and Accountability**
  Ask who oversees the home (owner, nonprofit, agency) and whether the home follows recognized standards such as NARR guidelines. Some homes conduct background checks on staff and residents to promote safety.
- **Emergency and Crisis Procedures**
  A safe home should have clear plans for medical emergencies, fire safety, severe weather, and after-hours support. Staff may be trained in CPR or basic crisis response.
- **Security Measures**
  Look for secure entryways, appropriate lighting, visitor policies, and any safety features such as cameras in common areas.

What to Consider About the Environment:

- **Supportive Peer Community**
  Living with others committed to recovery can provide encouragement, accountability, and a sense of belonging.
- **Respectful and Inclusive Atmosphere**
  Residents should feel safe, respected, and free from discrimination, harassment, or intimidation.
- **Privacy and Personal Space**
  Consider whether bedrooms are shared or private, how personal belongings are stored, and whether there are clear policies around privacy and boundaries.
- **Location and Surroundings**
  Consider whether the home is in a safe neighborhood and accessible to transportation, work, treatment services, and recovery meetings.
- **Structure and Routine**
  Homes that offer regular house meetings or expectations can help create stability and consistency.
- **House Culture and Fit**
  Some homes are quiet and structured; others are more social or active. Consider the age range, gender makeup, and overall feel of the home.

Questions to Ask:

- Are there requirements for meetings, work, or treatment?
- How are conflicts between residents handled?
- Is the home certified or affiliated with a reputable organization?
- What emergency procedures are in place?
- How is resident privacy protected?
- Are accommodations available for disabilities or special needs?
- What is the visitor policy? Who do I contact if I have a concern or grievance?

Trust Your Instincts:

If something feels unsafe or unclear, it's okay to ask more questions or explore other options. A quality recovery home should be transparent, supportive, and focused on helping residents succeed. You deserve to live in an environment where you feel respected, comfortable, and confident in the support being offered.

Choosing recovery housing is an important step, and it's worth taking the time to find a home that truly fits your needs. Pay attention to how the home communicates, how residents interact, and whether the environment feels stable and welcoming. Your safety, dignity, and recovery goals should always come first.

If a home does not feel like the right match, keep looking. There are many recovery housing options, and the right one will provide the structure, community, and encouragement that help you build a strong foundation for long-term recovery.

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