Center for Community Engagement at Chestnut Health Systems

Understanding Levels of Recovery Housing

There are different types of recovery housing. Some offer more structure and support, while others offer more independence. This guide explains the different levels in simple terms so you can think about what fits your needs right now. Generally, the main differences between levels are staffing, structure, access to services, and how much independence is expected. The four levels of support recognized by the *National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR)* differ by the intensity of staffing, governance, and recovery support services.

Level I – Peer Support Housing

Level I recovery housing is the most independent option. People live in a sober home and support each other, but there are no paid staff on site. Residents usually share responsibilities, follow basic house rules, and help keep the home recovery focused. This level is often a good fit for someone who is already stable in recovery and mainly needs a safe, sober living environment with peer accountability. NARR describes Level I as peer-run, democratically governed housing with no paid staff on site.

- No staff on site
- Residents support each other
- Basic rules, such as staying sober and contributing to the home
- Best for: People who are stable in recovery and want more independence

Level II – Monitored Recovery Housing

Level II recovery housing offers more structure than Level I, but still allows a good amount of independence. These homes usually have a house manager, senior resident, or another person who helps monitor the home and reinforce expectations. Residents are expected to follow house rules, participate in recovery activities, and stay accountable. Clinical services are usually not provided in the home, but residents may be connected to treatment or support services in the community. NARR describes Level II as monitored housing with at least one compensated position and structured expectations.

- Some staff or monitoring presence, such as a house manager or senior resident
- More structure and accountability than Level I
- Usually connects residents to outside services rather than providing clinical are on site
- Best for: People who want support and accountability but still want some independence

Level III – Supervised Recovery Housing

Level III recovery housing provides a higher level of structure and supervision. These homes often have facility managers, case managers, or other trained staff who support residents with daily routines, life skills, and recovery goals. This level is helpful for people who need more support staying organized, building healthy habits, and following a recovery plan. Clinical services may be

coordinated through community providers, and some recovery-focused services may be offered in the residence. NARR describes Level III as supervised housing with organizational oversight and trained staff.

- Staff are present in a more active support role
- More daily structure, routine, and supervision
- May include recovery programming, life skills support, and case management
- Best for: People who need more support and a more structured environment to maintain recovery

Level IV – Service Provider Housing

Level IV recovery housing offers the highest level of support. It is usually connected to a licensed treatment provider or treatment program and includes clinical services in the residence or as part of the program. Staff may include licensed or credentialed professionals. This level is often best for people who need close supervision, ongoing treatment, or medical and therapeutic support while living in recovery housing. NARR describes Level IV as service provider housing with clinical and administrative supervision and in-house clinical programming.

- Licensed or credentialed staff are involved
- Highest level of structure and supervision
- Clinical services such as therapy, treatment, or medical support may be provided on site
- Best for: People who need clinical care and a highly structured recovery setting

What Kind of Recovery Housing Might Fit You?

☐ I need a lot of structure and daily support
☐ I'm okay with some rules but still want some independence
☐ I'm mostly independent and mainly need a sober environment
☐ I need clinical support, such as therapy, treatment, or medical care

If You Checked...

I need a lot of structure and daily support → Consider Level III or Level IV

I'm okay with some rules but still want some independence → Consider Level II

I'm mostly independent and mainly need a sober environment → Consider Level I

I need clinical support, such as therapy, treatment, or medical care → Consider Level IV

The right recovery housing choice depends on where you are in your recovery right now. Some people do best with more independence, while others need more structure, staff support, or clinical care. Choosing the right level can help create a safer, more supportive path forward.

Quick Reference Summary- Levels of Recovery Housing

Level	Staff Presence	Structure	Clinical Services	Independence	Best For
Level I Peer Support Housing	No paid staff on site	Low structure; basic house rules and peer accountability	Not provided on site	Highest independence	People who are stable in recovery and mainly need a sober living environment
Level II Monitored Recovery Housing	Some monitoring, such as a house manager or senior resident	Moderate structure; house rules and regular accountability	Usually accessed in the community, not on site	Moderate independence	People who want support and accountability but still want independence
Level III Supervised Recovery Housing	Staff present in active support roles	Higher structure with daily routines, supervision, and support	May coordinate recovery services and case management	Less independence than Levels I–II	People who need more daily support and structure to maintain recovery
Level IV Service Provider	Paid, Licensed, and credentialed Staff, administrative support	Highly structured, social model of care in therapeutic community.	Onsite, clinical treatment services	Continuous, intensive support	People who need treatment, daily support, and structure to maintain recovery

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