Things to Consider When Looking for Recovery Housing:

Structure, Rules, & Rights

Understanding the structure, rules, and resident rights within recovery housing is essential when choosing a safe and supportive living environment. The best recovery homes provide both structure and support: clear expectations paired with fairness, respect, and opportunities for growth. Structure should help residents succeed, not create unnecessary barriers.

Why Structure Matters:

Structure provides consistency and accountability, which can support long-term recovery. A well-organized recovery home helps residents build healthy routines and focus on personal goals such as employment, education, and recovery activities.

Common elements of structure may include:

- House meetings
- Curfews or quiet hours
- Assigned chores or responsibilities
- Expectations for employment, school, or recovery participation

Understanding Rules in Recovery Housing:

Rules should be clear, consistent, and focused on supporting recovery, not punishment. They help maintain safety, accountability, and a substance-free environment.

Common rules may include:

- Maintaining sobriety (drug and alcohol-free living)
- Participation in recovery meetings or treatment
- Drug and alcohol screening policies
- Visitor and overnight guest guidelines
- Payment of rent and shared household responsibilities

Knowing Your Rights as a Resident:

Residents should be treated with respect, fairness, and dignity. Quality recovery housing programs should be transparent about policies and provide clear expectations.

Key rights may include:

- A safe, clean, and supportive living environment
- Clear written rules and expectations
- Fair and consistent enforcement of policies
- Respectful treatment from staff and peers
- Privacy within the home (within agreed-upon guidelines)
- The ability to ask questions and understand decisions affecting residency

Questions to Ask Before Moving In:

- What are the house rules, and are they provided in writing?
- How are rules enforced, and what happens if a rule is broken?
- Are residents involved in creating or updating house expectations?
- What is the process if someone relapses while living in the home?
- What rights do residents have while living here?
- How are concerns or grievances handled?
- Are there curfews, meeting requirements, or mandatory activities?
- What are the substance use policies and expectations?
    - What are the drug and alcohol screening procedures? How often are they? Are they random or scheduled? Who conducts them? What happens with results?
- What are the medication safety policies?
    - Are medications stored securely? How are medications documented? What type of support is there for medications used in recovery?

For more questions to ask when selecting a recovery home, click here.

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