



Recovery Residences

WHAT IS A RECOVERY RESIDENCE (RR)?

A non-medical setting focused on providing a safe and supportive living community that encourages sustained recovery from alcohol and other drug use. RR are abstinence-based, and offer varying degrees of peer support and accountability. There are a variety of RR programs recognizing many pathways and philosophies to recovery. They are not “one size fits all”, some are 12- step based, some are faith-based and others incorporate more daily structure. Visit the National Alliance for Recovery Residences for established [quality standards](#) for recovery residences.

TYPICAL RR EXPERIENCE & EXPECTATIONS

Usually a single-family home or duplex, sometimes larger apartment buildings or ‘campus’ settings with program expectations such as:

- Regular in-house meeting
- Outside meeting attendance (2-4x per week)
- Productive time (School+Work+Volunteer+Tx)
- House chore/duty (vacuum, garbage/recycling, etc.)
- Find a mentor or sponsor outside home
- Abstain from alcohol and other substances
- Keep the home safe

WHAT IS TYPICALLY INCLUDED?

- Bed and often bedding
- Utilities
- High speed internet & cable

- Cleaning supplies, sometimes staples like coffee
- Shared kitchen, bathroom(s) & laundry facilities

PROTECTIONS

RR community regulation and RR resident status are protected under several Federal Guidelines that afford programs and program participants special designations and processes not governed by traditional housing regulations.

LANGUAGE

RR language should reflect:

- Program Fee or Resident Dues – Not “Rent”
- Resident or Participant – Not “Tenant”
- Program Document or Program Agreement – Not “Lease”

WHO OWNS AND OPERATES RR

Most often people in long term recovery or have a personal connection to recovery. For many RR owners/operators, running a RR is not their primary occupation. Many RR have “house managers” that have 8 months to one year or more of lived experience in a RR, live on site and are compensated with reduced or no program fees. Other RR may have managers that live off site.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Increased Engagement in Treatment – On average, participants in recovery housing spent an average of 37 more days in treatment than those not in recovery housing and were 20% more likely to be discharged with staff approval than those not in recovery housing.*

- Lower rates of substance use at discharge – Participants in recovery residences had significantly lower rates of substance use at discharge than participants not in recovery residences.*
- Higher Recovery Capital – At discharge, participants in recovery residences reported significantly higher rates of ability to cope without using substances, self-care, positive outlook on life, recovery importance, and success in managing money than participants not in recovery housing.*
- Individuals who used the structured sober living environment differed from their counterparts who did not on key demographic and clinical characteristics and that they were more likely to have a satisfactory discharge status and longer lengths of stay in outpatient services.**
- Rates of abstinence for individuals living on Oxford homes were high. About 13.5% of the respondents reported using alcohol or drugs the past 90 days. A second important finding was the high rate at which residents found employment. Throughout the course of the study employment ranged from 79% to 86%.***
- Residents who lived in an Oxford House, as compared to a usual after-care setting, had more successful outcomes in the areas of reported substance use, employment status, self-regulation and awaiting criminal charges.****
- Living in sober living housing has a positive impact on alcohol and drug use, arrests and days worked.*****

* U of M/Center For Practice Transformation study evaluation results (2022)

** [The Role of Recovery Housing During Outpatient Substance Use Treatment](#)

*** [The need for substance abuse after-care: Longitudinal analysis of Oxford House](#)

**** [An examination of main and interactive effects of substance abuse recovery housing on multiple indicators of adjustment](#)

***** [Eighteen Month Outcomes for Clients Receiving Combined Outpatient Treatment and Sober Living Houses](#)