



## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

Your son has made the ‘next step’ in his recovery by moving into one of our apartment homes. This is a fantastic move in the right direction, and we applaud this decision. Our family handbook is designed to educate you, the family, about what you can expect from Next Step Recovery during your family member’s time with us.

While we wish there was a ‘magic bullet’ that would cure all addictions, unfortunately there is not. Next Step Recovery is not an in-patient treatment center but rather a 12-Step structured sober living environment. It is a step toward independence after in-patient treatment is complete.

Living sober is a new experience for most of our clients and therefore it is not unusual for them to experience frustrations as they work toward independent living. At NSR, there is always someone available for the client and for you, the family. We encourage you to ask questions, to contact us with worries, and most of all, to BREATHE. We will work with you as family members to understand that feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety and depression are predictable at this early stage of recovery. We believe that working with you is a sacred trust and we will never take the responsibility lightly.

### **Confidentiality**

Your loved one is Next Step Recovery’s client. As an adult, he can choose to whom to release his personal information. When it comes to confidentiality, you may have heard people refer to a federal law commonly referred to as HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996). This law provides blanket rules and regulations regarding how information can be disclosed, and to whom. An even more thorough piece of federal legislation, which is specific to those receiving substance abuse related services, is called 42 CFR Part 2. These sets of rules have a much deeper impact in terms of confidentiality and the use of Protected Healthcare Information in providing these services. We are governed by both rules and will always meet or exceed these standards per our professional duties. Please understand that if we are unable to share information with you, it is due to the scope of these rules as we otherwise committed to having healthy lines of communication with families.

## **Eating Disorder Diagnosis Policy**

Next Step Recovery does not admit clients with active eating disorders. If an eating disorder is diagnosed while the resident is in our program, NSR will follow the recommendations of a medical professional regarding continued participation. If treatment for the eating disorder is deemed appropriate within the structure of our program, the cost is the responsibility of the client/family. Next Step reserves the right to refer out those clients diagnosed with eating disorders when the client is in medical peril and/or requires more supervision than we can offer.

## **A Family Disease**

Addiction is a disease that never affects only one member of a family. Our clients attend 12-step meetings on a regular basis (required 4x a week). Because the years of use have taken a toll on everyone involved, we encourage family members to attend Al-Anon, Nar-Anon and/or some type of 12-step support group. As one member of the family changes, even for the better, all members of the family are impacted. The more you know about the disease of addiction and the process of recovery, the better and more quickly the family will be healed. Next Step can also recommend outside family therapists if the need arises. These professionals work with you as supportive team members, while we at NSR work primarily with the identified client. We also recommend all of our families to read *Co-Dependent No More* by Melody Bettie or any books by Pia Melody.

Susan, will also spend time with families of current residents for individual sessions at no additional charge. It's our way of saying that not only do we support the resident in his recovery, but we are also supporting the whole family and social system.

## **Family Communication and Staying In Touch**

It is helpful for people in recovery to learn to plan, anticipate their needs, delay gratification, and establish boundaries. Many of our clients have become too dependent on family members, which hampers their recovery process. We recommend that you schedule a weekly phone appointment with your loved one to catch up, discuss business items, and to connect.

A communication plan cuts down on random phone calls that can add to your loved one's anxiety. We understand for some families that more frequent communication is more suitable; however, we have found that planned communication once or twice a week helps people in recovery begin to reclaim their independence and also helps the family release some control over their loved one's life choices.

As regards mail and packages for residents, please send everything to our main office: **900 Hendersonville Rd, Suite 203, Asheville, NC 28803**. We will disseminate all mail daily. We also require that residents open packages in the presence of a staff member.

## Home Visits

For the first 30 days, residents are not allowed to return home for a visit. Families can come and visit at any time, but we do not encourage parents to spend their time in our recovery homes while visiting. Our residents share their space with many others who have schedules and lives of their own, and we ask residents and their families to be mindful of this fact.

A request for a home visit pass may be denied if a resident is not in compliance with our house policies that include, but are not limited to, attendance of mandatory meetings and daily chores. Please take a moment to read our **House Policies** located on our website.

Girlfriends and other intimate relations are not allowed to visit any of our men's recovery apartments. It is our belief that sexual relationships interfere with early recovery progress and we do not encourage dating until the resident has been in the program for at least 90 days or longer.

## Refund Policy

Our entrance fee and weekly rent payments are **nonrefundable**. If a resident is asked to leave NSR for any reason, the entrance fee and the current week's rent will not be returned.

## Relapse Policy

Next Step Recovery has a zero-tolerance policy for any drug or alcohol use. If a relapse occurs while living at NSR, your son will no longer be allowed to stay in any of our apartments and must leave as soon as a possible. If a relapse occurs in the middle of the night, we will have him stay with one of our staff members before calling in the AM (only with his permission). Upon admission to Next Step Recovery, every resident must develop a relapse prevention plan. This plan specifies whom we call in the case of a client relapse and the procedure to be followed to ensure the client's safety and the well being of our other community members.

We do ask that you complete our 'Crisis Plan' form in case of relapse. This will inform everyone involved of the next appropriate step ahead of time, so you don't have to figure it out in a time of stress. Please share with us your thoughts on this matter and your plan as soon as possible.

If we suspect a client to be intoxicated, we reserve the right to restrict driving privileges by whatever means necessary. If the resident is threatening to harm himself or others, NSR will make a professional decision to involve the emergency department, law enforcement, or area mobile crisis unit.

## **Urine Screens**

NSR performs daily drug and alcohol tests at random throughout the entire population. With the rising rate of designer drugs, Opiate abuse and the use of fake urine and other tools of deception, Next Step Recovery will be working with an outside lab (Keystone Lab) to collect and send urine screens once a week for further screening.

The use of a toxology lab will ensure the integrity of the sober living home for all residents, staff and the apartment community at large. Through these tests, Next Step Recovery will be able to see levels of substances go down and to rule out any false positives due to prescription medication.

In a 48-hour period, our samples are tested for spice, bath salts and all synthetic drugs. In addition, alcohol use is determined through ETG and ETS testing.

## **Contracts**

We utilize several types of ‘contracts’ at Next Step as motivational tools during challenging periods of your loved one’s recovery. These include (but are not limited to) Zero Tolerance Contracts, Behavioral Contracts, Motivational Contracts, and Vehicle Use Contracts. All of our contracts are time-limited, require the resident to meet measurable and achievable goals, and assist the resident in refocusing his efforts on what he came here for- recovery.

Zero Tolerance Contracts are used very sparingly and in exceptional circumstances; these typically address behaviors associated with relapse risk and are used to strictly reinforce community standards and escalate program participation to maximize benefits. Behavioral Contracts are written to help resolve problems arising in how a resident is conducting himself within any aspect of the program. If we choose to use this type of contract, trust that several warnings have been issued, or that the actions were severe enough to warrant an immediate plan of correction. We implement Vehicle Use Contracts when a resident is misusing their vehicle, or if it is a past or present impediment to their recovery. These are perhaps the most common form of contract, as residents will often ask for something to help hold them accountable in exchange for the ongoing privilege of driving.

## **Medication**

If a client is on prescription medication upon entering Next Step Recovery, he will be required to continue that medication, as it is prescribed by dose and frequency, until such time as a doctor or psychiatrist conducts an assessment.

It is our policy to require a psychiatrist or doctor follow up with all residents who are taking prescribed medications. Scheduling appointments, follow-ups and cost for these services will be the responsibility of the resident and/or family, although we will help locate appropriate medical professionals as necessary.

**Communication with Staff**

Staff members are available during business hours but if not able to take your calls, we will typically return non-urgent messages within 24 hours. Emergency calls will be handled after hours by our on-call staff, however, we encourage you not to contact staff after hours with non-emergency matters. For updates on progress, with a resident’s consent, you may find it helpful to schedule regular phone meetings with Susan Stader or a senior staff member by calling **828.350.9960**.

*If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please contact Susan Stader, Executive Director at **828.350.9960**.*

**Acknowledgement of Receipt**

We, the undersigned, acknowledge that we have received a copy of Next Step Recovery’s Family Handbook and are familiar with the policies contained within. We agree to abide by the policies stated in the Family Handbook.

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*Signature of Family Member* *Date*

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*Signature of Family Member* *Date*