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Suggested Guidelines for Integrating a Person in Early Alcohol or Substance Abuse Recovery into the Home:

It is a good idea to develop a written agreement, or contract, spelling out very specifically all of the household rules and have everyone living in the home sign it (including minors). The agreement should be dated and time-limited, and it must be understood by all parties that the rules are absolutely non-negotiable. A good suggested timeframe for the contract is 30-days. After the contract expires, a new one is developed and signed, and this process continues. This process allows for the rules and agreements to potentially evolve as time passes and it also allows everyone to be knowledgeable of and therefore, held accountable to the agreements.

The following are some guidelines that we suggest you consider including in the contract. It is by no means an exhaustive list, and there may be a need to alter some of these guidelines to fit a specific situation, but in general, we have found these rules to work effectively, to provide the crucial structure necessary in the early stage of alcohol/drug treatment. We use the term “Recovering Person” to indicate the addict or alcoholic.

- If any single one of the guidelines on the contract is violated at any time during the contract period, the entire contract is considered null and void, and the Recovering Person is required to vacate the premises by the end of the day (8 p.m.) on the day of the violation. If the adult(s) in the household are not willing to enforce this first guideline, none of the others will make any difference.
- Recovering Person agrees to attend at least ninety 12-Step (AA, NA or other 12-Step based support group) meetings within ninety days. There is no excuse for missing a meeting unless a true medical emergency presents itself and a Medical Doctor substantiates that the Recovering Person should stay home (eg: due to contagious illness, serious injury, etc.). In this case, the Recovering Person makes up the meetings they miss, such that after 90 days, they have still attended at least 90 meetings.
- Recovering Person keeps a written record of all attended meetings. While family members are not required to keep track of or check up on the attendance, if any adults in the family wish to see this record, Recovering Person is willing to present it at any time it is requested, and without complaint.
- Prior to moving in, Recovering Person presents all adult family members with a list of all prescribed medications s/he is taking and updates the list ongoingly, as necessary. If s/he has been prescribed any psychotropic medications (such as anti-depressants, mood stabilizers, anxiety pills, etc.), s/he takes them exactly as prescribed and commits not to accidentally or on purpose, forget to take them or take more than the prescribed dose.
- Recovering Person abstains from using any form of alcohol. S/he also abstains from using any illicit drugs, mind-altering substances, or medications other than that which is prescribed by a family doctor or psychiatrist and named on the list mentioned above.
- Recovering Person must attend some form of alcohol/addictions therapy or coaching a minimum of once a week during the duration of the contract.
- Recovering Person strongly considers acquiring a 12-Step sponsor and working the 12-Steps of AA. If s/he chooses to get a sponsor, s/he is also required to sign a release form and/or consent to allow the therapist or 12-step coach s/he is seeing, to occasionally consult with this sponsor, if deemed necessary by therapist/coach or sponsor.
- Recovering Person secures a legal means of employment within no more than 30 days of the start of the contract. This does not have to be a job in the profession for which Recovering Person is trained. Any legal form of employment suffices.
- Recovering Person starts contributing weekly or monthly rent (depending on his or her payment schedule) for Room and Board to the household, beginning the first day s/he receives a paycheck, or within no more than 30 days, whichever comes first.
- Rent is a minimum of 50% of Recovering Person’s total weekly or monthly income.
- Recovering Person will not take any property/money from the household that is not their property unless there has been an explicit conversation ahead of time and an agreement made, with the owner of that property/money. If this happens, the owner will immediately call the police and prosecute to the fullest extent the law permits. This means there will not just be a “Report” filed. The owner of the property/money understands that if property or money is taken without permission, this is a violation of the law and that must be handled by the proper authorities.
- At least in the early stages of recovery, the Recovering Person is not at the house without at least one other adult family member at home at any time or for any reason. In many cases, this means that the Recovering Person is not issued a key to the house, but rather, the Recovering Person only enters the home after at least one adult family member has returned home for the day and granted Recovering Person entry. Most importantly, the Recovering Person is not allowed to be at home during the weekday while adult family members are away from the home, at work or otherwise engaged.