



Best Life
Recovery Residences

Resident Handbook

Welcome to Best Life Recovery Residences

Best Life Recovery Residences is a community of recovery residences offering a safe and sober environment with peer support and guidance for women who seek the type of living experience that supports an avenue to successful recovery and long-term sobriety. Each residence is intended to be a family for those living in recovery... for women just like you who desire change and support in the recovery process and beyond. This is a sober home environment, not an institution.

This type of living is not for everyone. If you like to isolate and do things your own way, perhaps you might reconsider your interest in Best Life. In the next section, the expectations and rewards of living in a recovery residence are explained.

Best Life is proud to offer these residences knowing that each resident is here for her own reason, and we can provide a safe and sober environment that offers support to each and every resident. We willingly follow the standards set forth by the National Association of Recovery Residences (NARR).

What is a “Recovery Residence”?

A Recovery Residence is a broad term describing a sober, safe and healthy living environment that promotes recovery from alcohol and other drug use and associated problems. Thousands of recovery residences exist in the United States that vary in size, organization and targeted population. At a minimum, recovery residences offer peer-to-peer recovery support aimed at promoting abstinence-based long-term recovery.

Recovery residences are sober living environments, meaning that residents are expected to abstain from alcohol and illegal drug use, and from the misuse of medications (prescribed or over the counter) and other mind-altering substances of any sort. Some residences require abstinence from particular types of medications according to individual policy.

What is the primary purpose of a Recovery Residence?

The purpose of a recovery residence is to provide a safe and healthy living environment to initiate and sustain recovery (defined as abstinence from alcohol and other mind-altering substances), and improvement in one's physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being. Women residents will build a sober network of women while living in a recovery residence that will continue to support their recovery as they transition to living independently and productively in the community.

What services do Recovery Residences provide?

Recovery Residences are classified into four levels of support, based on the type as well as the intensity and duration of support offered. Best Life Recovery Residences are Level 2 recovery residences. Level 2 is a monitored level, meaning that there are specific policies and procedures in place. Residence hierarchy involves levels, including a peer specialist.

Level 2 requires that there will be house rules that provide structure. There will be peer-run groups. Drug and alcohol screenings will occur frequently. There are required weekly house meetings. Finally, there will be consistent involvement in 12 step programs to help each resident work towards achieving her lifelong recovery.

Expectations of the residents

- Willingness and the desire for sobriety and a healthy lifestyle
- Remain alcohol and drug free
- Minimum 90-day commitment
- Create and work toward your recovery plan
- Get a sponsor
- Locate and participate in a home group
- Abide by the rules of the residence
- Participate with your recovery family
- Be a leader and participate in your residence council and model recovery principles
- Be mindful of your family's needs and feelings
- Be willing to express your own needs and feelings in an adult discussion
- Respect for yourself and others
- Attend house meetings weekly
- Attend 6 or more community meetings weekly (AA, NA, CA, CR, etc.). See Meeting Schedule.
- Attend and participate in sober social events sponsored by Best Life or other sober recovery communities
- Find and maintain employment, attend school and/or volunteer outside the home

What you receive from Best Life

- A warm, clean, comfortable, fully-furnished home
- Accountability (drug and alcohol testing, daily housekeeping chores, weekly meetings)
- Laundry facility located in your home
- Wi-fi Internet access
- Dedicated peer-support staff
- Reports to probation officer or drug court representative, as needed

Are there stages/levels of participation in Recovery Residences?

Many Recovery Residences define levels of recovery progress within the resident community. At Best Life, your level generally corresponds with your time in the residence, your recovery progress as assessed by peers and/or staff, and the degree to which residential behavioral requirements have been met (see Attachment 1).

Residents in Best Life all begin with a blackout period; this period is the time for a new resident to break communication with the outside world or with their natural supports. This is done to allow the resident time to stabilize and focus on their recovery. Since Best Life is a “family” in itself and the other residents are there to offer support to you (and for you to offer support to them, as well), this is a time to begin to pull together as a “recovery family”.

During the blackout phase, your activities are restricted and limited. These restrictions may include that other than work and recovery/support related meetings, the residence will require you to always be accompanied by a more senior resident when outside the home, limits to contacts with family and/or friends, and expectations for a higher degree of involvement in recovery support activities.

What Best Life is all about

As a recovery residence, Best Life is a place of safety and support for women seeking time to establish a well-founded recovery plan. Best Life is driven, governed and supported by peers. The peer staff shares their own experiences with you and will support your individual road to recovery. The home is there to provide you with comfort and support. It is a family. Best Life can provide additional services as deemed appropriate to your individual needs. Overall wellness (mental, physical, spiritual) is what you’ll be striving for while a guest at Best Life.

What to expect as you enter the community

- Submit your application for residency
- Complete your screening and assessment
- Read Best Life Resident Handbook, and review it with the peer specialist
- Review the financial aspect of the program with the financial manager
- Read your resident rights
- Read the community and house rules and expectations
- Meet with your peers in the residence

Once a decision has been made that you are the right fit for the residence and you agree to the terms of the residence, you will then be assigned a room and a bed.

Welcome to Best Life, your new home!

You will be given an orientation to the home. This orientation follows a checklist that covers overall safety and other items related to the home and household appliances.

Within 5 business days, you will meet with your peer specialist to complete some additional recovery work and to determine what your path to recovery will be. You will complete your individual recovery plan. It's the peer specialist's job to assist you and to make sure you stay on your path. If there are setbacks, the peer specialist will work with you to arrange for you to receive any additional services you may request. You will be expected to meet with the peer specialist weekly, provide a weekly check-in form and participate in the weekly house meeting.

Other considerations for your participation in Best Life

- You are subject to random and scheduled drug screens and breathalizers as noted in the policy
- You and your community members are to keep your yard, home and personal area clean and well kept. Lawn and yard equipment are available for your use
- There is also a common-sense dress code for this community
- There are several items posted in the residence. These include resident rights, the grievance policy, and emergency contact information. Please do not remove or relocate any of the postings.
- If you become aware of a need for facility (repair) services, a form is provided for you to complete and hand in to staff so the facilities can make the repairs. Please report any type of maintenance problem immediately. If it is an emergency, such as a broken pipe or broken window, please call the emergency contact number.

Good Neighbors

Part of the responsibility for the recovery residence is to be a “Good Neighbor”. Best Life Recovery Residences are set in residential communities, and therefore, respect for your neighbor is important. The home exterior and yard must be kept up; lawn equipment is available for this purpose. If a neighbor has concerns about something, please refer them to the peer specialist; you may provide them with the on-call number. Greet and introduce yourself to your neighbors as appropriate. Some good neighbor considerations include no playing of loud music (especially after 9:00 pm), no parking cars on the lawn, no loitering or “hanging out” in groups, limiting excessive noise, no lawn mowing prior to 8:00 am, and not using lewd or offensive language. Take pride in your new life and in your home.

Medications

It is imperative that all residences remain safe at all times and medication use and storage of medications is very important. The following rules will help assure safety in regard to medication use and storage:

- All residents are responsible for their own medication management. The peer specialist will assist residents with any questions regarding their medications and will provide referrals to appropriate providers as needed.
- Medications are to be taken exactly as prescribed. If there is evidence of inappropriate medication use, the peer specialist will initiate corrective actions that could include amendment of the recovery plan or resident dismissal from the Recovery Residence.
- Residents are responsible for their own medications, including all refills. Peer specialist will provide referrals to medication assistance programs as needed.
- Pill counts will be conducted weekly and at random.

Emergency Information

For any **medical emergency**, please call 911. After 911 has been called and the 911 operator's instructions have been followed, notify the peer specialist or on-call staff to report the incident.

The peer specialist has a **NARCAN kit** for the recovery residence. Do not remove the kit! Training and instructions will be provided on how to use the NARCAN kit, should that become necessary.

For a **policy emergency**, please call 911.

For a **fire**, if the fire is small and no one is in danger, use the fire extinguisher as directed (PASS) in orientation. If the fire is large and is not able to be extinguished, promptly notify all residents to leave the building and call 911 immediately to report the fire. Contact your peer specialist or on-call staff. If you are in a duplex, please remember to notify the adjacent residents to also vacate the premises.

When vacating the building for **any emergency**, please move to the front yard center area. This will allow staff and the fire department to account for all residents.

For emergency water issues within the residence, please call the peer specialist or the on-call contact number located on the bulletin board. If it is a small leak, please report the problem immediately to the peer specialist.

If there are any other emergencies or maintenance issues, please report them promptly to the peer specialist.