

10 Insights For The New Member

1. Oxford House is a missing link in the recovery process. It provides the time and support each of us needs to develop comfortable sobriety.
2. It works only if the Oxford House system of democratic operations is followed and the system of financial self-support is strictly followed. Learn the Oxford House Manual and the Nine Oxford House Traditions.
3. House meetings take place once every week. Attend every weekly meeting. The reason for weekly house meeting is to make the house run smoothly. The weekly meeting is the place to resolve disputes among the “family” and a place to work together to keep recovery at the heart of all house operations.
4. Pay your weekly share of expenses on time. Put first things first. Old behavior put our rent last. New behavior puts it first; otherwise each of us feels lousy and the house can fail.
5. Pride that is earned is worthwhile but false pride causes conflict. A house where all the residents work with each other to gain comfortable sobriety is one that generates worthwhile pride.
6. Open finances of the house helps to overcome the suspicion we all have early in recovery. The house finances should be discussed at each meeting and posted openly for everyone to see.
7. Do household chores on time. You may be the coordinator someday and others will do onto you what you did to them.
8. Don’t isolate. Loneliness and self-pity lead many of us back to drinking or using drugs.
9. Go to a lot of 12-step meetings. AA and NA attendance is a good habit to develop to make behavior change comfortable and to gain comfortable sobriety – forever.
10. Blow the whistle on any fellow resident who relapses. The house can lose its charter if the resident who uses alcohol or drugs – in or out of the house – is not expelled immediately.

Getting Into An Oxford House Questions and Answers

Q. How can I get into an Oxford House?

A. The first step is to find an Oxford House that has a vacancy or is anticipating a vacancy. Second, the applicant must fill out a standard application and be interviewed by members of the house. Third, the members of the house vote on whether to accept the applicant. It takes an 80% affirmative vote to get into an Oxford House.

Q. How much does it cost to apply to an Oxford House?

A. There is no application fee, but if you are accepted for membership in the house the group will require a moving in expense and advance payment of the equal share of expenses.

Q. What is the “equal share of expenses?”

A. The equal share of expenses is the household costs divided among the number of recovery beds occupied in the house. The national average equal share of expenses in 2007 was \$95 a week. The exact equal share of expenses varies depending on the costs the group incurs for renting and running the house.

Q. How much is the “moving in expense?”

A. The moving in expense is a share of the security deposit the group initially paid to rent the house. It is usually equal to a month or two weeks of the equal share expense.

Q. Is the “moving in expense” refundable?

A. Yes, when an individual moves out of an Oxford House (after phone or individual cable TV charges and the cost for all or part of the time that the individual’s bed stays vacant is subtracted). Usually the amount to be refunded is known within a month – after the phone and cable bills come in and a new resident occupies the vacant bed.



Oxford House™

Guidelines For The New Resident

Oxford House – Time for Recovery *World Convention New Orleans 2008*

*Going back to where you came from after treatment
for alcoholism and drug addiction almost always
spells failure – a return to old behavior.*

Mark Spence, May 5, 1991
CBS Program “60 Minutes”

Oxford House, Inc. is the 501(c)(3) non-profit umbrella organization of the national network of individual Oxford Houses.

The primary purpose of Oxford House, Inc. is to establish enough self-run, self-supported recovery houses to provide an opportunity for every recovering individual to learn a clean and sober way of life – forever.

Contributions and grants are used to expand the network of Oxford Houses by providing trained outreach workers to establish new houses and to provide central service support to existing houses.

This pamphlet “Guidelines For The New Resident” provides tips for the newly recovering individual to get into an Oxford House and become a successful resident.

Internet: www.oxfordhouse.org

Recovering From Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

Alcoholism and drug addiction are chronic and progressive problems. The alcoholic and drug addict become “hooked” on their drug of choice and physically all cells in their bodies call out for a steady supply of the drug. This physical compulsion causes the mind to trigger any kind of behavior needed to get the next drink of alcohol or other drug “fix.” Once addicted the only “cure” is total abstinence – stopping the use of the alcohol and drugs – forever.

Stopping the use of drugs and alcohol use is difficult, but not impossible. Most addicts go through a number of periods where they stop use because they have run out of alcohol or their drug of choice. When an addict stops, he or she feels sick because of withdrawal; i.e., every cell in the body is calling out for the drug and the body shakes, sweats and produces great anxiety. The addict really “feels” he or she is going to die unless the drug of choice is obtained quickly. This is called detoxification and it usually ends within minutes after the addict has ingested his or her drug of choice. However, for a fortunate few – who can go three to seven days without taking their drug of choice – detoxification is the beginning of a whole new life.

Short-term custody – in a hospital setting or a supervised detoxification facility or a jail cell – is the usual way to stop an addict’s compulsive use of alcohol and drugs. Staying stopped is the more difficult challenge, but Oxford Houses can help.

The main purpose of an Oxford House is recovery. Nationally, the average number of AA or NA meetings Oxford House residents attend is over 5 a week. Going to 12-step meetings and working on getting comfortable living without drugs and booze is what Oxford Houses are all about.

Pride, self-esteem and comfortableness in sobriety happen when everyone works together to make their Oxford House work to achieve enjoyable recovery.



Staying Stopped

Oxford House grew out of the need for many of us to begin a new life without fear of backsliding because of loneliness or renewed dependency on former addicted companions. Throughout its existence, Oxford House has combined the concepts of self-support and responsibility with a fellowship having the common purpose of continued and comfortable sobriety.

From Tradition One Oxford House Manual ©

Behavior change is never easy and it is especially difficult for the individual who is recovering from addiction. While the physical craving for drugs ends within a few days, the mind tries to trick an individual into returning to alcohol or drug use. When you think about it, the mind is doing what comes naturally – forgetting pain and remembering pleasure.

Professionals speak often of “denial” when dealing with recovering addicts. The addict really does not believe that alcohol and drug use produces harm. The addict “remembers” the good feeling that came from the alcohol or drugs and wants to recapture it. At the same time, he or she forgets the violence, irrational behavior (fights, loss of job and family), and physical withdrawal that make one feel sick (hang-overs).

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are twelve step programs that have helped millions of recovering addicts to change their behavior to adopt lifelong abstinence. Unfortunately, many recovering individuals need more support than AA and NA alone. Oxford Houses provide the additional support and the time to learn new behavior.

Over 80% of those who live in an Oxford House stay clean and sober. The Oxford House concept, which emphasizes that together we can democratically run a clean and sober house, is key to gaining the time and strength we all need to stay clean and sober forever. We can also stay in an Oxford House for as long as necessary to get comfortable in sobriety without relapse.



How Oxford Houses Work

Oxford Houses are family houses that groups of recovering individuals rent to live together in an environment supportive of recovery from addiction. Each house is self-run and self-supported following a standardized system of democratic operation. Each group obtains a charter from Oxford House, Inc., the umbrella organization formed by the national network of individual Oxford Houses.

An Oxford House charter has three basic requirements for the group:

- it must be democratically self-run,
- it must be financially self-supported, and
- it must expel any resident who returns to using alcohol or drugs.

The standardized system of operations has evolved from the 31-year history of Oxford House and permits replication of Oxford Houses throughout the country. All Oxford Houses are tied together to assure mutual support and quality control.

The availability of start-up loans makes it possible to start new houses. The machinery is in place to loan groups of six or more recovering individuals with the money to rent a house to start a new Oxford House.

Whether starting a new house or moving into an existing house, these guidelines for success make sense. Become involved. Make democracy work. Accept responsibility for Oxford House to work. Share the strength, experience and pride of your Oxford House with other Oxford Houses in the local, state and national movement. By helping others we help ourselves.

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