

Notes on the Housing Service Committee

Each Chapter establishes a Housing Service Committee. The roots of the Housing Service Committee is both ideological and practical.

On an ideological basis, the Housing Service Committee is based on the twin values of gratitude and service that are part of the important 12-Step self-"help programs that are so important to those recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction. "We are able to help ourselves by helping others" is not only a basic golden rule but is an important value that helps those of us in recovery to enforce the belief that our own lives will be better if we *learn* how to develop comfortable sobriety. Within the Oxford House context we all realize that by living in a well functioning Oxford House we are able to buy the time and support we need to develop long-term sobriety without relapse. Knowing this, we realize that helping other Oxford Houses function well helps other individuals and helps keep the World Network of Oxford Houses to grow and stay strong.

On a practical basis, the Housing Service Committee includes individuals who have had experience in the operation of an Oxford House. By sharing their experience and practical know how, the members of the Committee are able to provide good advice and support to Oxford Houses having problems. In addition to practical knowledge, a Housing Service Committee brings moral support to a problem. Moral support makes it clear to the residents of a troubled house that they are part of the Oxford House family and do not have to face difficult challenges alone.

Knowing the roots of the Housing Service Committee helps keep the Committee from getting off track. As teachers, friends and family, the members of the Committee are able to avoid becoming big shot bosses. Instead, they carry out their work in a firm but caring manner.

Notes on Chapter Outreach

Chapter outreach consists of two parts: (1) outreach to Oxford Houses, and (2) outreach to the recovery community. The outreach to Oxford Houses is to help Oxford House as a whole family to function well. The outreach to the recovery community is to let members of 12-Step programs, treatment providers and the community at large know how Oxford Houses work and how they provide the "missing link" in the recovery process. Presentations, quiet conversations and the maintenance of a vacancy list are a few of the ways that Chapters can let the community at large learn about whom we are and what we do.

Many Chapters have extended outreach to the prison community. Many incarcerated individuals begin recovery in prison. By having a clean and sober place to live upon release they will have a better chance of staying clean and sober without relapse. Often Chapters or individual houses can make arrangements to interview an inmate before release and are able to have a house vote on admission before the actual release date. This enables the inmate to go directly into an Oxford House upon release and improves the odds of staying clean and sober without relapse.

After a Chapter has been organized for a few months, it is a good idea to have a workshop to teach all residents of Oxford Houses about Oxford House and how to provide good information about Oxford House to those in the recovery community and the community at large. Call the World Services Office to learn how to organize a good workshop.