



Ohio Recovery Housing

Best Practices for Recovery Housing Operators During COVID-19

VISITORS

Introduction

The global coronavirus pandemic has raised unique questions from recovery housing operators. Recovery homes come in different sizes, operate in numerous types of buildings, and provide varying levels of support to residents. The purpose of this document is to provide information that can help operators determine the most appropriate strategy for their individual operation. We are in unprecedented times.

The situation changes rapidly, and it is possible that new recommendations and resources may become available.

This document is not intended to replace the advice of state or local health departments or legal counsel. This document is intended to be reviewed in coordination with other quality standards and best practice recommendations that have been made by the National Alliance of Recovery Residences and Ohio Recovery Housing, the Ohio state affiliate of NARR. The exact implementation of guidance and recommendations will vary based on Level of Support available in the recovery home. It is important to keep track of any public health orders that may be issued by the state or your local government. It is important that you become aware of these orders and help explain what these orders mean to your residents.

The following are strategies and practices that can be used to help reduce the risk of spread of coronavirus as homes seek to allow residents to have visitors in the recovery home.

Encourage Residents to visit with others virtually

Reducing in-person visits is an effective strategy for reducing COVID19. Recovery homes can reduce spread by making it simple and easy for residents to choose to have visits with friends, families, and others virtually. Recovery homes can encourage this by

- Discussing risks of spread of disease with residents and how reducing in person visits can reduce this risk
- Reminding residents that having visitors not only increases the risk of individuals participating in the visit, but everyone in the household
- Allowing residents with limited minutes or data on their phones the ability to use an organization computer or phone to connect with others
- Providing a private space for residents to engage in virtual visits within the recovery home

Engage residents in telehealth and virtual recovery supports whenever possible

If a resident needs health care or recovery support services, many providers are offering these services virtually. Have residents contact their health care, mental health or addiction services treatment provider and arrange telehealth visits. Residents can also connect with virtual recovery support meetings and other services.

Develop Clear, Written Visitor Policies

Your recovery home should already have a visitor policy in place that helps keep residents safe and helps the home maintain an environment that is free from alcohol and illicit drug use. The following are suggestions for you to incorporate into your written visitor policy during this time

- Have residents discuss with staff (or each other if a Level I, peer run recovery home) prior to having a visitor at the home
- Have staff or residents discuss with potential visitors the house's policies prior to their visit
- Require that all visitors
 - Be screened prior to entering the home for symptoms of COVID19
 - Be screened prior to entering the home about recent potential exposure to COVID19
 - Do not allow visitors in the home who are experiencing symptoms or have known exposure to COVID19
 - Appropriately wash their hands upon arriving and prior to leaving the home
 - Always wear a cloth mask or face covering during the visit. Visitors who arrive without a face covering should be provided one by the recovery home
 - Always maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet during the visit

- Stay in the room that is reserved for visitors and not go into other spaces in the home
- Require that residents
 - wash their hands prior to the visitor's arrival and immediately after the visitor's departure
 - Wear a cloth face covering throughout the visit
 - Always maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet during the visit
 - Remove any trash that may have accumulated during the visit immediately after visit
 - Clean the room, prior to and immediately after the visit, paying close attention to high touch surfaces
- Require that visits
 - Take place outdoors, whenever possible
 - If not possible to have the visit outdoors, visits should take place in a designated space in the home
- Only allow the resident and their visitor(s) in the space during the visit.
- Considerations on physical distancing and masks may be made for parents or guardians who are visiting with their children, or for residents or visitors with disabilities, as appropriate. These accommodations should be discussed in advanced and based on the age of the children, or the need for accommodation for people with disabilities.

Creating a space for visitors

Recovery homes can help reduce the risk of spread of disease by creating a space appropriate for visitors. Strategies include

- Conducting as many visits outside as possible
- When visits cannot be outside choosing a space
 - That has doors to the rest of the house that close
 - That can have a window open whenever possible
 - That is not going to be needed by other residents when visitors are present
 - That supplies for handwashing or hand sanitizing are in the room and are restocked frequently
 - That face coverings are in the room and are restocked frequently
 - That cleaning supplies are in the room and are restocked frequently. Check that the cleaning supplies are on the [EPA List N for use against SARS-CoV-2: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19)
 - Where chairs or other furniture are arranged as to allow for appropriate physical distancing
- Posting the visitor policy in an obvious location

Other visitors

Sometimes, recovery homes need to have visitors that are not related to specific residents. For example, if a repair needs to be made and an appropriate technician needs to come into the home to perform the repairs. It is important that these types of essential visits continue so you can maintain a safe and comfortable environment in the home. Some strategies for reducing the risk of spread of disease during these types of visits include

- Informing residents when the visit will take place and ask them to plan appropriately to either be outside or in their rooms during the visit
- If the visitor is with a specific company, ask in advance about what precautions their employees are expected to take during visits to homes. Ensure that these protocols are followed.
- Requesting that the visitor maintain appropriate physical distance during the visit
- Requesting that the visitor wear an appropriate face covering during their visit, unless it is a health or safety risk for them to do so
- Having any discussions about repairs or agreements outside of the home or over the phone instead of in-person at the residence

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