



Residential Handbook

Mission

To bring a Women's Christ centered temporary transitional living to the Osage County area. While a warm bed and a hot meal are the most immediate needs we satisfy, they are not the most important. The love of God ministered throughout our caring staff, committee and board is heartwarming. We are willing to listen and prepared to point people to resources for employment, counseling, recovery and housing, offering the possibility of a more lasting change. Even more important, however, is the opportunity to receive the life changing power of Jesus Christ.

The Mercy House is a Christ Centerd Transitional Living Program

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Mercy House Residential Handbook

PURPOSE: These guidelines implement and establish the basic criteria for the residential care provided at the Mercy House. In addition, these guidelines provide the criteria which will be used in enforcing the processes necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents and to assure respect for their rights, dignity and comfort are in place.

Address: 544 Mathews Ave Pawhuska, OK 74056

Occupancy: House parent(s) and 10 Residents (not including child(ren))

INTAKE PROCESS:

The Director and the Administrative Assistant will guide the process for admission applications. This would include an application, personal interview, drug screen and an OSBI background check. Upon receipt, the house parent(s) will be consulted for space and assignment to the Mercy House. The Mercy House residents come with the ultimate goal of finding long term housing of their own. Residents may only stay up to 6 to 12 months after their acceptance date.

Community Expectation:

We have been blessed with the opportunity to open our doors and serve those in desperate need of housing. Our goal is to be well respected in the community and to maintain a home that is peaceful, loving and well run. Therefore, yelling, fighting, honking, loud music, intoxication or anything that would disturb the peace of the neighborhood will not be tolerated. Police may be contacted at the staff discretion. Disciplinary action may be taken at the time of any occurrence.

Residence Alcohol, Drug, and Vaping, Statement:

The Mercy House is an alcohol, vaping, and drug free residence. No alcohol, vaping, or illegal drugs will be permitted in or on the Mercy House property at any time. Smoking is only allowed in the designated area. Smoking may not be done in the rooms or inside any area of the building. Alcohol and drug abuse are the primary cause of homelessness and incarceration. The Mercy House is a non-narcotic residence and residents will not be accepted if they are on Methadone or Suboxone. Residents who have a medical marijuana card are not permitted to use marijuana while living at the Mercy House.

Periodic random drug tests and or searches will be performed. These tests and searches would be mandatory and refusal would result in immediate dismissal. Positive drug test results without notifying the Director for treatment options, will result in immediate dismissal from the Mercy House at the expense of the client.

Medication Guidelines:

The Mercy House is a non-narcotic and medical marijuana free residence. The Mercy House will not house residents who have prescriptions containing Narcotics, Methadone, Suboxone, or medical marijuana. If possible future residents have such medications they will be asked to contact their medical health provider. In nearly all cases the provider can prescribe an alternative medication. All medications must be recorded on your application. Failure to take medication as prescribed will result in immediate dismissal. If residents give their prescribed medication to another resident it will result in immediate dismissal.

HOUSE HOURS AND VISITATION

Quiet hours are maintained to provide an atmosphere conducive to health and a normal family-like environment. Quiet hours are in effect from 9:00 pm to 7:00 am. During quiet hours residents are not permitted out of their rooms, unless prior permission by the Director is given. Extended hours will be allowed for work, weekly Celebrate Recovery meetings, and/or church centered activities. Celebrate Recovery and/or church attendance will be recorded and signed off on by the lead ministers.

Music:

You may play music as long as it is Christian based. It must be turned down or off upon request. Headphones are preferred.

Curfew:

(Unless prior permission is approved by the Director).

Sunday – Thursday	9:00 pm
Friday & Saturday	9:00 pm

- Lights must be out and TVs in the rooms off at 11:00 pm each night.

If you are late for curfew without notice you will be terminated from residency. If you are placed on house restriction for whatever reason, you are not allowed to leave the house without permission from the Director. You will be informed how long the restriction will last by the Director.

Length of stay:

At the Mercy House the residents' stay shall be no longer than a six to twelve month period. The Mercy House is a temporary not a permanent living facility, no exceptions. After two days our Director will meet with new residents to formulate a plan of action covering job applications, goals, rehabilitation plan, financial plan, legal aspects, etc. Each resident's tenure will be evaluated on a case to case basis to help develop and implement the best plan for the resident. Residents' plans will be re-evaluated weekly if goals have not been met the resident will be dismissed.

Parking:

Parking for residents and visitors is permitted in designated areas only. A parking lot is located directly west of the property. Parking along the street, in reserved spaces or on the grass is not permitted. Residents and visitors will be responsible for any fines or citations given while visiting the Mercy House.

Outings:

Mandatory sign out is on the office door, filling out all information requested is required. The only time you would need permission to leave is if it is outside the scope of work, meeting(s), church, scheduled appointments, etc. No residents are allowed to leave or go outside after curfew unless there is an emergency and the Director has been notified.

Transportation will be provided to certain group activities, weekly Celebrate Recovery meetings and church services and functions. All other arrangements for transportation must be arranged 48 hours in advance. If weather is permitting and within walking distance, walking is encouraged and should be utilized.

Overnight Stays:

No resident is allowed to spend the night elsewhere without approval by the Director. Overnight stays will not be granted or extended over the phone, no exceptions. Overnight stays will be given on a limited basis only and there must be a legitimate reason. No overnight stay with a member of the opposite sex is allowed at any time. On overnight stays the Mercy House must have the name of the contact person, relationship, address and phone number where you will be. While on overnight stays the Mercy House guidelines still apply. Residents are restricted from going to bars, casinos, Marijuana shops, etc. Upon returning from approved overnight stays the residents will be given a drug screening. If a resident fails drug screening, the resident will be immediately dismissed.

Visitors/Guests:

Visitors need an appointment at a designated time. This is for the safety and protection of the Mercy House residents and their child(ren). All visitors must come to the main office and sign in, no exceptions. All visitors must remain in the main office area. Visitors are permitted during the times of 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and are limited to one hour. Official visits from DHS, Mental Health professionals, lawyers, counselors, or Law Enforcement may be conducted in residents' rooms with the Directors permission. Residents or residents child(ren) are not allowed in the other resident's room at any time. No guest is allowed in the main rooms unless prior permission is given. No guest is permitted to baby-sit on site.

While in The Mercy House program residents are expected to focus on themselves and their own personal growth. Not those of the opposite sex.

THE MERCY HOUSE LIFE:

The following items are prohibited in the residence:

- Candles (lit or unlit) or any other appliances that make on open flame or have exposed heating elements are prohibited in all residential facilities. Wax/oil warmers that do not have an open flame or element and tarts (without wicks) are allowed.
- Space heaters
- Firearms, including BB & paintball guns, bows/arrows, blow guns, tasers, and martial arts weapons, etc. are strictly prohibited and may lead to immediate eviction from housing.
- Knives and other weapons.
- Highly flammable items such as fireworks, turpentine, incendiary devices, or other dangerous explosives/liquids.
- Electronic cigarettes, vaporizing devices, or items designed or altered for the use of illegal drugs.
- Halogen lights (including neon lights and black lights) and lava lamps.
- Hookah • Incense
- PETS: State environmental health and safety regulations, prohibit the possession of animals, including but not limited to, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, hamsters, birds (alive or dead).

Room Entry and Search:

Residents have the right to privacy. However, the Mercy House reserves the right for staff members and duly authorized volunteers to enter individual rooms in performance of their duties, including, but not limited to, maintenance issues, health and safety inspections and drug search at any time. The Mercy House is a place provided by donors and volunteers to help our clients carry on their personal lives in ways that do not put other members of the Mercy House in jeopardy, do not violate policies and guidelines outlined in the residential handbook, and do not break laws.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Infant Safety:

For safety, your baby must sleep in his or her own crib or bassinet. We do not allow co-sleeping for safety reasons. Breastfeeding needs to occur in a chair. No infant should be left unattended for any period of time. Infants in their rooms or being bathed must be in the immediate presence of their parent(s). No other resident should be responsible for a child(ren) in their room or the bathing of the child(ren).

Abuse:

Child abuse is defined as:

Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment and includes, ***but is not limited to:*** hitting, slapping, spanking, yelling, sexual acts, prostitution, starvation or dehydration (lack of fluids) or any kind of neglect.

Child abuse is an automatic DHS referral and call to the police.

The Mercy House expressly prohibits the abuse or neglect of the individuals it serves. If any individual becomes aware of abuse or neglect of a client they shall report the matter immediately to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and comply with other reporting requirements by law. The Chair of the Committee should be notified any time the matter is reported, and immediately act to rectify the problem and shall report the incident and any correction to DHS.

PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

After dark, you should walk in well-lit areas. In case of an emergency, someone in the house should dial 911.

If a resident is out on the road and should run out of gas, have a dead battery, or flat tire, they may call the Director or staff for assistance if they are available.

Electronic Safety:

To ensure that electronic devices (including hairdryers, flat irons, and appliances) are protected, residents should appropriately utilize Approved surge protectors and extension cords. Piggybacking of power strips or extension cords is not allowed as it is considered unsafe.

PROTECTION OF PEOPLE AND PROPERTY

You can assist in personal safety and protection of property by observing good safety practices.

- Lock the door behind you as you leave the unit room.
- Never leave doors propped open for any reason.
- Always identify visitors before you open the door by looking out the window.
- Keep all items of value, such as money, wallets, purses and jewelry, in a secure, out of sight location.
- Label valuable items with your name. Keep a record of all valuables, their description and serial numbers.
- Never loan keys or ID to anyone.
- Do not leave keys unattended.
- If your key is lost or stolen, report it to the house parent immediately.
- Report all thefts immediately to the house parent(s).
- Report to the house parent all doors, locks or windows needing repair.
- Be suspicious of unknown persons hanging around the outside of the home area.

Restricted Areas:

All Mercy House residents are restricted from going to the bars, casinos and Marijuana shops. If residents go to the restricted areas it will result in immediate dismissal.

Mail: Mail is delivered Monday-Saturday (unless a Federal Holiday) and will be distributed by the Director. Residents may use the Mercy House physical address while staying there.

CARE AND HOUSE RELATIONSHIPS

House Meeting:

Each week a house meeting will be called with all residents. This is a regular time to check in on scheduled activities, assign a detailed list of duties, complete menu planning and plan any weekly events that need to take place. **Attendance is required.** This will also be used as a productive and positive time to discuss needs and address issues. Healthy communication is expected. If you are not attending the meeting you must provide the Director your scheduled appointments, any requests, and supplies needed. You will also be responsible to get your assigned duties.

Weekly Church/Celebrate Recovery Meetings

All residents are required to attend church (Wednesdays and Sundays) and Celebrate Recovery meetings weekly, unless there is a schedule conflict due to work. There will be a mandatory sign off sheet for each resident. Those approved for attendance sheet sign offs are the leading minister(s). Celebrate Recovery is a 12 step Christ Centered recovery program for all hurt, habits and hang-ups. Celebrate Recovery is every Tuesday, transportation will be provided. There are absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS for these mandatory requirements unless a work schedule conflicts, or illness.

Infant/Child(ren) Care:

Infants are the mother's sole responsibility. This includes preparation of bottles, meals, bathing, changing diapers, getting up with them at night, giving medications, making Dr. appointments, laundry and or making appropriate babysitting arrangements. The Mercy House is not fully equipped to effectively care for children but we do accept children with that limitation. Children are the responsibility of the parent(s) at all times. It is not staff or another resident's responsibility. Children are to be in their rooms by 7:00 pm. Do not give candy, food and gifts to other residents' children or allow your children to accept those items from anyone. Parent(s) of school-aged children will be required to enroll their child(ren) in school the next business day of being accepted into the Mercy House, no exceptions.

House Details:

Detail lists are established by the Director and assigned weekly during the house meeting. All details must be completed as part of the program. Details should be completed prior to leaving for activities, unless prior arrangements are made. Consistent incomplete details may result in disciplinary action.

Room Cleaning:

Residents are responsible for maintaining a reasonably neat and clean room at all times. Good housekeeping practices are expected of each resident. Residents are required to maintain their unit to the following minimum standards:

- All furniture, floors, and walls are to be maintained in a clean condition at all times.
- Clothes, towels, linens, etc. should be in dressers, closets, and/or in hampers. NOT on the floor.
- Food should be properly stored in the kitchen areas and/or in tubs. No food is allowed throughout the rooms. All areas in your living quarters must be maintained in a reasonably clean and sanitary condition.
- Diapers should be placed immediately in containers and trash should be emptied regularly. Daily disposal of trash in the common trash receptacles or exterior dumpsters will help maintain health and safety standards and a desirable environment in your living unit.
- Bathrooms must be kept sanitary and cleaned as scheduled.

Property Expectations:

(a) The interior and exterior of the rooms shall be kept safe, clean and sanitary. (b) Specific detail lists shall be utilized to keep the rooms free from offensive odors, accumulation of dirt, rubbish, dust, and safety hazards. (c) Floors and floor coverings shall be clean and in good condition. (d) Walls and ceilings shall be in good condition and shall be cleaned regularly. (e) Deodorizers shall not be used to cover up odors caused by unsanitary conditions or poor housekeeping practices. (f) Rooms shall be kept free from refuse, discarded furniture, and clutter.

Use of Common Areas:

- Residents are responsible for keeping these areas clean. The Mercy House is not responsible for any items damaged or missing that are left or stored in common areas.
- Dishes and utensils are the Mercy House property and are NOT to be kept in individual rooms.
- Furnishings outside and public common areas are for the collective use of all residents living in the area and should be treated with care.
- Furnishings, decorations, technology, and blinds are to remain in their proper location and may not be moved to resident rooms or to any other area.

Personal Items:

The Sister's Closet (upstairs on site) maintains a limited supply of clothes for the residents. The Mercy House is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please limit the amount of items you accumulate while you stay, due to limited storage space. When you leave the Mercy House, take all your personal belongings with you. After 48 hours of leaving, the former resident's belongings will be discarded.

Dress Code:

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- No belly showing tops of any kind.
 - No low cut tops showing the breast.
 - No tops that show off the side of the body.
 - Shorts, skirts, or dresses are to be fingertip length.
 - Ladies, bras must be worn when outside of your rooms.
 - Clothing with drugs, profanity, violence or any reference to those things are not permitted.
 - No pajamas/night time clothing are to be worn outside of rooms at any time.
 - Hard sole shoes required outside of the room.

Borrowing/Loaning Items or Property:

Borrowing/loaning between residents is discouraged. It will be allowed only with permission of the owner. No resident should use, borrow or take items that do not belong to them. Loaning something to someone should only be done when you can afford to lose it; only borrow something if you are willing to risk your friendship if it gets misused or disappears. *No property or supplies (diapers, clothing, wipes) of the Mercy House should be removed from the residence. Any resident selling property of the Mercy House will be subject to disciplinary action.

Laundry:

The laundry room area hours are 7:00am to 7:00pm. If residents leave the property ALL laundry must be out of ALL machines. The Mercy House will not be responsible for anything left in the washers or dryers. All residents will be responsible for the washing of their own linens. All linens are to be washed on a weekly basis, no exceptions. Please see the laundry room door for laundry room rules and sign up sheet.

Showering:

You are required to bathe daily. Proper hygiene is a MUST while at the Mercy House.

Sign in/Sign out sheets: Sheets are placed at the front doors of the common area you must sign in and out upon leaving. This is a requirement of the Fire Marshal and personal safety.

Sleeping:

All day sleeping is prohibited. Unless work schedule conflict and/or prior permission all residents are to be out of bed with it made by 9:00 am every day. Not following this will end in disciplinary action and/or dismissal of the Mercy House.

Lice or Bed Bugs:

Periodically these things may show up. Symptoms may include itching or a small rash. If you suspect anything, you should notify the house parents and have your hair or room inspected as soon as possible. If a case is confirmed, all residents and staff will be inspected to determine the extent of the infestation and take appropriate action.

Cell Phone Use:

Courtesy is the rule. For your protection and the protection of other residents. Fighting and foul language on the phone is not tolerated. You may use the phone any time before quiet time begins. Only emergency calls are allowed once quiet time begins. Sexting is not allowed and may be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

Television, Tablet, and Computer Use:

No foul language, murder, or violent viewing is allowed. Absolutely no pornography or vulgar websites and/or inappropriate video watching on the TV, or tablet, computer or internet is allowed.

Thermostats:

Thermostats are to be set no lower than 68 F and no higher than 76 F.

Transportation:

Transportation will be provided for doctor appointments, court appearances, job interviews and work. (If weather permitting and within walking distances, walking should be utilized). Of course all residents with their own personal transportation now should utilize it. SoonerCare provides out of town transportation to doctor's appointments, WIC, DHS appointments, and some classes.

The Directors and staff vehicle's are available for emergency and approved basis, such as grocery shopping, group outings, and emergency hospital visits. All trips (except emergencies) must be approved 48 hours in advance; no side trips will be able to be accommodated. Transportation is always provided for Church nights and Celebrate Recovery meetings.

KITCHEN AND FOOD:

Food Handling:

Always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with antibacterial soap (scrubbing under fingernails) and hot water before handling food. Also, wash hands before handling any baby formula, baby food containers, opening refrigerators and cooking.

Sanitation is mandatory. All cooked food left out for more than two hours must be thrown away. You must refrigerate or freeze any leftovers immediately after cooking and eating. Food must never be stored with any household products or on the floor.

Grocery Shopping:

You will be able to use your food stamps. The Mercy House will provide a weekly grocery store trip. Any other trips will have to be on the resident's time and by resident's transportation. All other grocery trips for dinners will be done with and/or by the Director or staff.

Food Preparation:

Each resident is required to supply and cook meals. Dinner is prepared by the assigned detail cook for everyone that will be eating. Residents will prepare and be responsible for their own breakfast, lunch, and snacks as desired. Food (breakfast, lunch, and light snacks) are available for residents with limited or no food stamps. Community lunch is available at the Catholic Church Tues-Fri & Sat from 1:00 pm-2:00 pm (Transportation can be provided upon a 24 hour request). Clean up after yourself as you go. Formula must be provided by the resident. Prep and clean bottles are expected. NO bottles should be left out and unclean.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Disciplinary Process:

If a resident is involved in a conduct case in any capacity, they may be led through a disciplinary process. Potential outcomes from this process include but are not limited to: 1. Formal Warning: A warning is a written notification resulting from major violations of the Mercy House Code or any handbook guidelines. Residents are only allowed a total of three formal warnings. 2. Probation: House residents placed on probation are further warned that any violation of the conditions of the probation or any further acts of misconduct may result in additional disciplinary action, including immediate removal from the program and residence. After three formal warnings residents are automatically put on probation. 3. Restitution - charge for repair and/or replacement and associated costs of damaged property. The Director and staff are authorized to impose additional assignments, which may include, but are not limited to, attendance at educational experiences, restitution, orders of no contact and/or no trespass. Note some violations of the Mercy House Code or handbook guidelines can and are not limited to automatic dismissal of residents or removal by law enforcement.

Grievances:

Curfew violations will also result in immediate write-up or dismissal. Use of illegal drugs and /or alcohol may result in immediate dismissal from the Mercy House. You are always encouraged to work out any problems yourself. Should you disagree with a consequence or have any problems or concerns (with staff and/or residents) you should first talk things through with the person you take issue with. If an agreement is not reached, you may request to discuss your grievance with the Director of the Mercy House. The Director will investigate the situation with both yourself and the staff. Conflict resolution: Conflict issues between residents will be worked out. We will coach and instruct on how to resolve conflict in a healthy manner. Ultimately the Director's decision is final and binding.

Intimidation or Verbal Abuse:

Threats toward others are strictly unacceptable. The Mercy House is intended to provide a safe and peaceful environment for all residents, and staff as well as for all who come here. Cursing, foul language and body gestures are NOT tolerated. Those who work against this philosophy may be asked to leave. Police may be contacted at the staff's discretion.

Physical Harm to Another:

Physical harm to another may result in your ***immediate dismissal from the Mercy House and police will be contacted.***

Discipline:

Physical discipline (hitting, spanking, slapping, kicking, etc.) is not allowed.

Law Enforcement:

The Mercy House cooperates with law enforcement, probation, parole, DHS, Drug Court, Mental Health professionals, and other agencies. Information will be shared upon request.

WORK AND MONEY MANAGEMENT**Work:**

Every resident is expected to seek employment after 30 days of residency. This period is used for the reassurance of resident commitment to the program and our community. If residents have no place of employment after 45 days of acceptance at the Mercy House it will result in immediate dismissal. Monies from employment will be used wisely to pay off fines, court costs, bills and ultimately save for the future housing of the residents.

ALL residents are required to pay 15% of their incomes regardless of source and must show pay stubs and/or checks to verify wages.

If a resident does not pay their 15% they will be dismissed from the Mercy House.

Money Management:

You must agree to the following policy in order to maintain residency at the Mercy House.

Any funds earned or received may be co-managed by the Mercy House Director to help learn good budgeting and good savings practice during your residency. It may only be spent within the plan set forth for absolute necessities such as deposits, rent, utilities and other needs when you move out. We want you to learn good money management, or it will be difficult for you to maintain your own place of living, when you leave. Your money will be deposited into a savings account in your name and a budget mentor will help you.

RESIDENT DOCUMENTATION

All current documents which relate to the residents are to be kept in the Mercy House main office, but will be made available upon request or subpoena. Every resident record shall be written in ink and may include the following information: (1) Resident's name. (2) Date of Birth. (3) Person to contact in case of emergency. (4) Written authorization for emergency medical/dental services signed by the resident or responsible party. (5) The name, address, and telephone numbers of the resident's physician and dentist. (6) A record of the resident's illnesses, accidents, and unusual occurrence while a resident of the home. (7) Legal documents necessary. (c) All persons having access to the records shall strictly adhere to the confidentiality of records. (d) Resident records shall be maintained in a lockable container or a specific

lockable area. (e) Only individuals authorized by the Mercy House shall have access to resident records unless a subpoena is sent and required.

Liability:

The Mercy House assumes no responsibility for the accident, injury, loss, or damage to persons, nor any theft, loss, or damage of personal belongings in or on the property. This policy extends to resident rooms, resident common areas, yard and parking areas, as well as all other living unit areas. Residents should obtain insurance to cover personal property.



House Rules exist for the safety and well-being of all residents. Following these rules will help ensure that the Mercy House is a secure and comfortable residence for all.

I understand all the information included in these rules and guidelines. I agree to abide by them and agree to appropriate consequences should I disregard them.

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mercy House Staff: _____ Date: _____