

# Receipt for Community Residential Services Handbook

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Admission Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_

My signature and date below indicates that upon admission I have received a Community Residential Services handbook and my initial questions about rules answered. I have also been advised that any staff member will answer questions as they arise.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Once signed forward to the Administrative Clerk for scanning into resident's file.

# Section 5: Community Residential Services Handbook

Growth and change are vital to the health of both individuals and organizations. Review and revision of this handbook occurs regularly.

Complete Review for Compliance with new Chemical Dependence Residential Services Regulations January 2003

01/01/2008 Major Revisions	07/01/08 Tobacco-Free Rev.
09/14/2008 Regulation 815 compliance	02/03/11 Cell Phone Rev.
03/05/11 Sabotaging Behaviors Addressed	08/16/11 Revised Resident Bill of Rights
10/20/11 Adjustment Period added to Resident Handbook and some rule changes	02/07/12 Revised Discharge against Resident Wishes Section
04/08/12 Minor Revisions	
01/01/13 Significant changes to address security issues	08/12/13 Added HIPAA Rights
03/06/14 What Can and Can Not be brought revised	09/12/17 Significant changes Revised Discharge against Resident Wishes Section

North  
Country  
Freedom  
Homes Inc.

# Community Residential Services Handbook 2018

**If you are reading this handbook in preparation for an interview please write down any questions about anything in the handbook or about our program in general. We will start the interview by answering your questions.**

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

## Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
PREFACE.....	3
MISSION STATEMENT.....	3
VISION STATEMENT.....	3
FOREWORD.....	3
THIS HANDBOOK EDITION.....	4
QUICK OVERVIEW.....	4
PROTECTION OF RESIDENT MEDICAL RECORDS.....	4
<i>Your Rights under HIPAA</i> .....	4
RESIDENT BILL OF RIGHTS 815.5.....	6
<i>Each resident has the following rights:</i> .....	6
<i>What to do if you have concerns:</i> .....	7
VOLUNTARY ADMISSION.....	8
IS THIS THE RIGHT HALF WAY HOUSE FOR ME?.....	8
WHY OUR PROGRAM IS THE WAY THAT IT IS.....	8
DON'T BRING.....	9
<i>Any tobacco products</i> .....	9
<i>Any clothing or fabric item that can't be put in a dryer on high heat</i> .....	9
<i>Anything containing alcohol or any substance that may be abused</i> .....	9
<i>Any health food supplements, liquids or powders to promote muscle growth etc. are not allowed.</i> .....	9
<i>Valuable Personal Possessions</i> .....	9
<i>Miscellaneous</i> .....	10
<i>Over the Counter Medications and Supplements</i> .....	10
<i>Any energy drinks with high levels of caffeine or other stimulants are not allowed.</i> .....	10
<i>Adult Materials</i> .....	10
<i>Bigoted and/or Prejudicial Items by our Judgment</i> .....	10
THINGS YOU MAY BRING.....	10
<i>Personal Possessions</i> .....	10
CELL PHONES AND ALL OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.....	11
<i>Clothing</i> .....	12
<i>Personal Hygiene Items</i> .....	13
<i>Food and beverages</i> .....	13
<i>Admission Process</i> .....	13
<i>At admission</i> .....	13
SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR RESIDENTS AND STAFF.....	14
<i>Night Rounds</i> .....	14
CONTRABAND.....	14
<i>What is Contraband</i> .....	14
<i>Search for Contraband</i> .....	14
<i>Disposal of Contraband</i> .....	15
<i>OASAS Regulations Pertaining To Searching Individuals</i> .....	15
<i>What We Expect of a Resident</i> .....	16
<i>Situations arise that are not adequately covered in this handbook.</i> .....	17
LIVING IN A WAY THAT SUPPORTS RECOVERY.....	17
HOUSE RULES AND HOW THEY WORK.....	18
<i>Orientation:</i> .....	18
POINT SYSTEM.....	18
<i>Adjustment Period at Admission</i> .....	18
PROGRAM RULES.....	19
<i>30 Points Discharge for Failure to Follow Program Rules</i> .....	19
<i>10 or 30 Points Depending on Circumstances</i> .....	21
<i>3 Points</i> .....	21

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

SABOTAGING BEHAVIORS .....	23
RECOMMENDATIONS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS PROGRAM .....	24
STRUCTURED PROGRAM ELEMENTS .....	24
PROGRAM PRIORITIES.....	25
LENGTH OF STAY .....	25
PROGRAM LEVELS AND PRIVILEGES.....	26
<i>How Resident Attitude and Behavior Impact the Level Earned.....</i>	26
<i>Honesty and the Level System.....</i>	27
<i>Level Determination .....</i>	27
<i>Approval of the Residence Manager and Addictions Counselor .....</i>	27
<i>Responsibilities While on Level I.....</i>	27
<i>Privileges during Level I: .....</i>	27
<i>Earning and Keeping Level II Requires.....</i>	28
<i>Earning and Keeping Level III Requires Everything from Level I and II Plus.....</i>	29
<i>Earning and Keeping Level IV Requires Everything from Level I, II and III Plus .....</i>	30
<i>Loss of Level IV Status and Privileges.....</i>	31
RESIDENT USE OF RESIDENCE MANAGER’S PHONE.....	31
TRANSPORTATION .....	31
<i>Transportation Requests.....</i>	31
TOBACCO-FREE .....	32
PASSES .....	33
<i>Types of Passes.....</i>	33
<i>Time between Passes .....</i>	34
<i>How Passes Are To Be Requested .....</i>	35
<i>Resident’s Responsibilities Associated With Passes:.....</i>	35
<i>Resident Level At The Time a Pass Starts.....</i>	35
RELIGIOUS SERVICES .....	35
VISITATION .....	36
<i>Visitation by Former Residents.....</i>	36
DISCHARGE & RETENTION .....	36
<i>Zero Tolerance Policy .....</i>	36
<i>Discharge Intent .....</i>	37
<i>Resident Initiated Discharge .....</i>	37
<i>NCFH Initiated Discharge against Resident Wishes.....</i>	38
<i>Referral to Other Services .....</i>	39
READMISSION.....	39

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

## Preface

This Handbook sets forth expectations for both Residents and Staff.

Residents are expected to follow both specific rules and live by the principles behind those rules.

Staff is expected to treat Residents with courtesy and respect. Staff is also responsible to objectively ensure that the rules are being followed as well as instruct and guide Residents in following the principles of this Handbook.

Sometimes blindly following a specific rule will violate the more important principle of doing what is in the best interests of all concerned in a specific situation.

At other times an incident may occur that does not break a specific rule but requires consequences because a larger principle is being violated.

Staff of NCFH reserves the right to make decisions based upon the content of this Handbook, all other information available, our experience and judgment.

## Mission Statement

North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. offers a clean, inclusive, and safe living environment for individuals seeking to maintain abstinence from alcohol and/or other mood altering substances – men whose lives require therapeutic support to better establish sober personal, social, and vocational skills.

## Vision Statement

North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. seeks to affect, in a positive manner, the lives of the men in our care. Our home will be a safe haven for them as they and their families develop recovery skills and begin new lives.

## Foreword

NCFH, a not-for-profit corporation, provides whole person care to individuals seriously debilitated by chemical dependency.

We recognize chemical dependency as a chronic and primary disease. If left untreated, it is both progressive and predictable in its devastation. We believe that, with proper diagnosis, treatment and continual personal growth, chemical dependency can be permanently arrested.

Although not affiliated with Smart Recovery, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous or other 12-Step Programs, we encourage, though do not require, active participation. We believe that active participation in and the support offered by these programs is a vital part of the recovery process.

We will provide transportation for those wishing to attend 12-Step programs to the degree our transportation and financial resources allow. To assist us in planning for effective use of these resources we ask that residents that wish to voluntarily attend 12-Step-meetings sign up for and attend meetings that they have signed up for on a weekly basis.

Various components of our program address basic physiological needs, increase knowledge about alcohol and other substances, as well as teach the skills necessary to maintain an alcohol/drug free lifestyle.

Our overall goal is to provide a program and atmosphere that will help develop the insights, attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to continue growth in recovery regardless of the problem substance.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

## This Handbook Edition

If you were given this handbook to read as part of our pre-admission process and to prepare for an Admission Interview there may be a newer addition in effect at our residences. Some changes may have been made to daily operations. There may be rule variations. What there won't be are changes to our overall approach to recovery.

Any Handbook will give someone considering admission an accurate idea of both what can be expected of us and what we expect from our residents.

Every resident is given a current edition of the handbook on the day of admission.

## Quick Overview

Everyone that is admitted has agreed to complete our entire program. Any resident that chooses to leave before completing their program, as outlined in their individual Service Plan, will be discharged as positively as possible. If there is a verifiable personal emergency or medical need the discharge will reflect this.

The program begins with an Orientation and Assessment period (Level I). During this period an Initial Service Plan and Comprehensive Service Plan based upon individual needs are written. The individual will work on their individual goals while participating with all other residents in the general program.

Human behavior, to a large degree, is based upon beliefs about self, others and rules. All three of these vary from culture to culture and from individual to individual.

The chemically dependent person has a set of rules based upon the same factors as everyone else but are further complicated by the impact of their addiction. As a result, the beliefs a resident has about self, others and society in general are at best distorted and at worst completely wrong. These beliefs also support the addiction and are often in direct conflict with beliefs that nurture change and recovery.

Our program helps the individual identify these damaging, distorted or erroneous beliefs. Once identified the resident is expected to choose new beliefs and behaviors that support both recovery and their own individuality. Actual change from living by distorted beliefs to ones that support recovery must include behavior change. Behavior change to support new beliefs is a major focus of our program.

## Protection of Resident Medical Records

During the Admission Process, new residents will be asked to sign the following form. Review it now to be prepared to ask any questions you have at that time

## Your Rights under HIPAA

### *Prepared by the Legal Action Center*

This notice describes how medical and drug and alcohol related information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

### *General Information*

Information regarding your health care, including payment for health care, is protected by two federal laws: the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"), 42 U.S.C. § 1320d et seq., 45 C.F.R. Parts 160 & 164, and the Confidentiality Law, 42 U.S.C. § 290dd-2, 42 C.F.R. Part 2. Under these laws, NCFH (NCFH) may not say to a person outside NCFH that you attend the program, nor may NCFH disclose any information identifying you as an alcohol or drug abuser, or disclose any other protected information except as permitted by federal law.

NCFH must obtain your written consent before it can disclose information about you for payment purposes. For example, NCFH must obtain your written consent before it can disclose information to your health insurer in order to be paid for services. Generally, you must also sign a written consent before

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

NCFH can share information for treatment purposes or for health care operations. However, federal law permits NCFH to disclose information *without* your written permission:

1. Pursuant to an agreement with a business associate;
2. For research, audit or evaluations;
3. To report a crime committed on NCFH's premises or against NCFH personnel;
4. To medical personnel in a medical emergency;
5. To appropriate authorities to report suspected child abuse or neglect;
6. As allowed by a court order;

For example, NCFH can disclose information without your consent to obtain legal or financial services, or to another medical facility to provide health care to you, as long as there is a business associate agreement in place.

Before NCFH can use or disclose any information about your health in a manner, which is not described above, it must first obtain your specific written consent allowing it to make the disclosure. You may revoke any such written consent in writing.

### ***Your Rights***

Under HIPAA you have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. NCFH is not required to agree to any restrictions you request, but if it does agree then it is bound by that agreement and may not use or disclose any information which you have restricted except as necessary in a medical emergency. You have the right to request that we communicate with you by alternative means or at an alternative location. NCFH will accommodate such requests that are reasonable and will not request an explanation from you. Under HIPAA you also have the right to inspect and copy your own health information maintained by NCFH, except to the extent that the information contains psychotherapy notes or information compiled for use in a civil, criminal or administrative proceeding or in other limited circumstances. Under HIPAA you also have the right, with some exceptions, to amend health care information maintained in NCFH's records, and to request and receive an accounting of disclosures of your health-related information made by NCFH during the six years prior to your request. You also have the right to receive a paper copy of this notice.

### ***NCFH's Duties***

NCFH is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. NCFH is required by law to abide by the terms of this notice. NCFH reserves the right to change the terms of this notice and to make new notice provisions effective for all protected health information it maintains

Should the Notice of Information be revised, it will be delivered either in writing, electronically, or in person.

### ***Complaints and Reporting Violations***

You may complain to NCFH and the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated under HIPAA.

#### **Procedure**

Complaints must be made in writing, either on paper or electronically, within 180 days of the discovering the act or omission about which the complaint is being made to the NCFH privacy Official (Director of Services) and/or HHS (Health and Human Services). Complaints must include the name of the entity and describe the relevant act or omission

You will not be retaliated against for filing such a complaint.

Violation of the Confidentiality Law by a program is a crime. Suspected violations of the Confidentiality Law may be reported to the United States Attorney in the district where the violation occurs.



# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

## Resident Bill of Rights 815.5

*All employees shall act in accordance with the **Resident's Bill of Rights**.*

*The governing authority of NCFH, in compliance with New York State Mental Hygiene Law Part 815.5, supports and enforces as needed the following policies as the **Resident Bill of Rights**.*

### **Each resident has the following rights:**

1. to leave this program whenever you choose; you were admitted on a voluntary basis. If you leave without telling us (elope) regulations require we report your absence which will trigger further efforts to find you and make sure you are safe;
2. to receive services that are responsive to your needs in accord with your individualized treatment plan. This includes setting goals and measuring progress with your counselor;
3. to receive services without regard to race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or source of payment;
4. to receive confidential treatment. Except for a medical emergency, court order, child abuse or crimes committed on program premises, a program cannot release information about your treatment without your written consent;
5. to receive services from provider staff who are competent, respectful of resident dignity and personal integrity, and in sufficient numbers to deliver needed services consistent with regulatory requirements;
6. to receive services in a therapeutic environment that is safe, sanitary, and free from the presence of alcohol or other drugs of abuse;
7. To refuse treatment and be told what effect this could have on your health or status in the program;
8. to know the name, position, and function of any person providing treatment to you, and to communicate with the provider director, medical director, board of directors, other responsible staff or the Commissioner;
9. to receive information concerning your treatment, such as diagnosis, condition or prognosis in understandable terms, and to receive services requiring a medical order only after such order is executed by an appropriate medical professional;
10. to receive information about provider services available on site or through referral, and how to access such services;
11. to receive a prompt and reasonable response to requests for provider services, or a stated future time to receive such services in accordance with your Comprehensive Service Plan;
12. to know program rules and regulations that apply to your conduct, to receive timely warnings for conduct that could lead to discharge and to receive incremental interventions for non-compliance with your Comprehensive Service Plan;
13. to receive in writing the reasons of a recommendation of discharge and information of appeal procedures. And if needed receive help obtaining treatment at another program;
14. to voice a grievance, file a complaint, or recommend a change in procedure or service to provider staff and/or the Office, free from intimidation, reprisal or threat;
15. to examine, obtain a receipt, and receive an explanation of provider bills, charges, and payments, regardless of payment source;
16. to receive a copy of your records for a reasonable fee;
17. to be free from physical, verbal or mental abuse;

## **North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook**

18. to be treated by provider staff who are free from alcohol or drug abuse;
19. to be free from any staff or resident coercion, undue influence, intimate relationships, and personal financial transactions;
20. to be free from performing labor or personal services solely for provider or staff benefit, that are not consistent with treatment goals, and to receive compensation for any labor or employment service in accord with applicable state and federal law; and
21. the following rights apply to residents who reside in an inpatient/residential setting:
  - (i) to practice religion in a reasonable manner not inconsistent with your Comprehensive Service Plan or goals and/or have access to spiritual counseling if available;
  - (ii) to communicate with outside persons in accord with the individualized treatment plan;
  - (iii) to freely communicate with the Office (OASAS), public officials, clergy and attorneys;
  - (iv) to receive visitors at reasonable times in relative privacy in accord with the individualized treatment plan;
  - (v) to be free from restraint or seclusion;
  - (vi) to have a reasonable degree of privacy in living quarters and a reasonable amount of safe personal storage space;
  - (vii) to retain ownership of personal belongings, that are not contrary to treatment goals;
  - (viii) to have a balanced and nutritious diet;
22. Participants referred to a faith based provider have the right to be given a referral to a non-faith based provider.

### ***What to do if you have concerns:***

- Talk with the staff member – most problems can and should be resolved directly with the staff member.
- If you cannot resolve the situation with that person or are afraid to try, talk with his or her supervisor.
- If you still need help, talk with the Director of Services.
- If the matter is still not resolved, call the OASAS Patient Advocacy line, 1-800-553-5790 during normal business hours. Calls must be made from within New York State

**No punitive action can be taken against you while in residence for contacting the Patient Advocacy Office**

### ***If you believe your rights have been violated, you may communicate with:***

Director of Services – North Country Freedom Homes  
(315) 379-0139 Ext. 4

Office is located at the Canton House  
25 Dies St., Canton, NY 13676

No appointment is needed during normal working hours. In an emergency staff on duty will notify the Director of Services

Commissioner of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services  
Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez  
(518) 457-2061

1450 Western Ave., Albany, NY 12203-3526

Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

(855)-373-2122

## **Contact**

For further information, contact:

Director of Services / Privacy Official  
315-379-0139 ext. 4

## **Acknowledgment**

I hereby acknowledge being advised of the above and informed that I will receive this original once scanned into my records.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Voluntary Admission**

Individuals referred to our program have very different life histories and circumstances. Frequently there are legal difficulties that may include pending legal action, parole, probation, acceptance of treatment as an alternative to incarceration, etc. No matter what an individual's status is with the legal system, Department of Social Services or other governmental agency, admission is voluntary. NCFH Inc. admits individuals based upon their own free choice.

## **Is This the Right Half Way House for Me?**

This handbook contains detailed information about our program and should be read carefully, before deciding about joining us. Answering the following questions will tell you whether you should continue considering us.

1. Is there a serious desire to recover and not just be alcohol and/or drug free?
2. Are you willing to give up your drug using values and lifestyle?
3. Is there a desire to discover the real you?
4. Are you willing to lower your defenses and become vulnerable?
5. Are you willing to accept that your thoughts and behavior are your choice; not caused by someone or something else?
6. Are you willing to change behaviors, attitudes and values as suggested, sometimes before fully understanding why the change is necessary?
7. Growing in recovery requires hard work. Both your chemical dependency and previous life style will make it even more difficult. Are you willing to do the work to make necessary changes?

If the answer to any of these questions is No, this is not the Community Residential Service program for you. Be honest with yourself and whoever has referred you. Let your referral person know that this is not the program for you.

If you answered yes to all of the above please continue to read.

## **Why Our Program Is the Way That It Is.**

Our program is now about twenty-five years old. There have been many changes, each of them designed to make us a little bit better. Without exception, they started with the question, "How can we help this individual with this problem?" or, "How can we get this group unstuck?"

The hard part of our job is that individuals keep coming up with new problems and groups continue to get stuck. The rewarding part is that we keep finding answers. This process will continue as long as there

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

are people wanting to recover and others with the desire to help. For these reasons, our program today is not what it was in the past nor is it what it will be in the future.

Though change will continue to occur in our program, we have discovered that one thing must remain constant. That one thing is **safety**, safety for the body, the spirit and the soul. Anything that threatens safety must go. A significant portion of our program exists to create, maintain and protect this safety.

Over the years, the people we serve tend to be earlier in their addiction and as a result are still in denial about being addicted, it's impact upon them and their need to change. Those in denial tend to continue acting in ways consistent with active addiction. Behaviors consistent with active addiction can be of danger to all concerned. Because of these behaviors, we have implemented numerous security measures. See the Security section for details.

Another of our 'truths' is that individuals need five things before our program can be of value to them:

- Abstinence from all substances that can be used to change reality.
- An acceptance of their chemical dependency
- A desire and willingness to change their lifestyle
- Courageous honesty
- A willingness to discover their true selves. Since the majority of our new residents have a very powerful negative self-image, there is considerable resistance to this process of self-discovery. Much of our program is designed to give the residents an opportunity to work through this resistance, instill hope, find themselves and develop a more accurate image of self

We help residents develop a lifestyle consistent with recovery. Our rules reflect much of what is expected of anyone with a job that requires interaction with others. These rules provide a structured day and include time for personal hygiene, upkeep of living quarters, meaningful daytime activity, and evening socialization in a non-using setting and respectful treatment of others. All of these life skills are necessary for continued recovery, successful employment, or schooling.

In brief, we create an atmosphere of safety so that one can discover oneself and practice day-to-day living skills that are necessary for continued recovery.

The single best, and most important, reason that we do what we do, is that it works. There are many alumni continuing in recovery that keep in touch.

### **Don't Bring**

**Any tobacco products**

**Any clothing or fabric item that can't be put in a dryer on high heat**

**Anything containing alcohol or any substance that may be abused**

**Any health food supplements, liquids or powders to promote muscle growth etc. are not allowed.**

### **Valuable Personal Possessions**

NCFH will not be responsible for loss or damage to personal property. Don't bring anything that is of high financial, sentimental or emotional value to you.

If circumstances require possession of more than pocket money or items of high value to you, NCFH may accept money or other items and hold them in safe keeping. A written receipt will be given for anything we accept for safekeeping. What is accepted for safekeeping is at the sole discretion of North County Freedom Homes. Accepted items that you have receipts for are the only things we accept responsibility for.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

### Miscellaneous

Bedding, pillows, towels, wash cloths, fabrics etc. of any kind except those listed in the “You May Bring” section. We have bedding, towels and washcloths you may use while here.

- Stuffed toys, animals etc.
- Suitcases, other storage containers or items that can't be put through the dryer will be bagged and stored. Anything else that exceeds what you can bring will be bagged and stored. Access to stored items will be granted, on a day of our choosing, at the beginning of each of the 4 seasons. Because of limited space we would appreciate it if you wouldn't bring any of these unless you have no choice.

### Over the Counter Medications and Supplements

Residents of Community Residences may not possess any Over the Counter Medications (OTC's). NCFH cannot dispense any OTC's without either a written prescription or a standing order from a prescribing physician.

If you believe that you need to be able to access these types of medications talk with your Residence Manager. An appointment will be scheduled with an appropriate local care giver. Discuss your concerns and what kind of medication(s) you wish to access at that appointment. If you are given written permission, you **still cannot have any OTC's in your possession without the written approval of the Director of Services**. We will purchase and keep needed OTC's. With a Standing Order, we will give you access to those meds. If you have a prescription, we will need it on file. Then OTC's will be handled in the same manner as all other prescription Drugs.

Any supplements used as a diet additive or similar products.

Any energy drinks with high levels of caffeine or other stimulants are not allowed.

### Adult Materials

Pornographic tapes, discs etc. will be considered contraband and confiscated. How an item will be disposed of depends on what it is and what we believe is appropriate.

### Bigoted and/or Prejudicial Items by our Judgment

Anything that we determine is bigoted or prejudicial regardless of who or what is the target will be confiscated.

If you have question if something is any of the above (before staff knows of it being here) ask the Residence Manager not the cooks or RA's. If you have asked and are told the material is not acceptable we will allow a reasonable length of time to get it off our property. In the interval, they must be kept totally out of view. We will not store them. If you do not get something unacceptable off the property as agreed, it will be confiscated.

Anything confiscated will not be returned.

### Things You May Bring

The amount of clothing and some other personal items you can have is quite limited. The reason for this is explained at the beginning of the clothing section

### Personal Possessions

The amount of personal possessions you bring should be quite limited

If circumstances require possession of more than pocket money or items of high value to you, NCFH may accept money or other items and hold them in safe keeping. A written receipt will be given for anything we accept for safekeeping. What are accepted for safekeeping is at the sole discretion of North Country Freedom Homes and are the only things we accept responsibility for.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

## Cell Phones and All Other Electronic Devices

NCFH is not responsible for loss, damage or theft of any cell phone or electronic device at any time whether in our possession or not.

Having a cell phone or other allowable electronic device is at your own risk.

**Use means any use including texting**

No cell phone or other **allowable** electronic device is to be used after 10:00 pm Sunday – Saturday including all holidays. Residents use of cell phones or other electronic devices, whether talking, texting, playing games, or on the internet puts others at a distance. If these rules are not followed the privilege of having a cell phone or other allowable electronic devices may be permanently removed.

Allowable electronic devices include iPod, MP3 players

- Residents can have their personal cell phone/electronic devices between the hours of 12:15 pm – 10:00 pm Monday - Friday Level 4 – at 8:30am, must be on vibrate until 12:15, They must be turned off during groups and meals.
- Residents can have their personal cell phone/electronic devices between the hours of 8:30 am– 10:00 pm Saturday - Sunday and Holidays.
- Resident's may pick up their personal cell phone/electronic devices at the earliest time convenient to staff after 12:15 pm. There are no exceptions.
- Residents must turn in their personal cell phone/electronic devices to the Resident Manager or designee by 10:00 pm every day of the week. There are no exceptions to these rules.
- Other allowable electronic devices will be collected and will follow the same time schedule allowed for cell phones. If a resident is caught using an allowable electronic device during an unscheduled time he will lose those privileges for 7 days. If a resident violates this rule a second time he will lose those privileges for the duration of his stay. The electronic device will be kept by staff and returned when the resident goes on pass or is discharged.

No electronic devices are to be on your person during the time cell phones have been turned in.

### **Cell Phone Courtesy**

To respect others these rules are to be followed:

- No use of cell phones at meals
- Cell phones/electronic devices are not to be used in Lobby and/or Administrative Hallway
- Use the phone in private.
- Use the phone quietly. Do not yell.
- No use of cell phones/electronic devices while in the van.
- When attending 12 step program meetings and in similar situations turn the phone off. Do not get up and leave a meeting to answer or use the phone. Do not text during a meeting.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

### *Consequences for Breaking the Rules for Electronic Devices*

#### Individual

- If resident refuses to turn in his cell phone/electronic devices at the required time he will lose all cell phone privileges for (7) seven days. If a resident violates this rule a second time he will lose all cell phone privileges for the duration of his stay. The cell phone will be kept by staff and returned when the resident goes on pass or is discharged.
- Residents are only allowed to possess one cell phone/electronic devices. If a resident is caught with an additional cell phone/electronic devices he will lose all cell phone/electronic devices privileges for 30 days. If a resident violates this rule a second time he will lose all cell phone/electronic devices privileges for the duration of his stay. The cell phone/electronic devices will be kept by staff and returned when the resident goes on pass or is discharged.

#### House

- If enough residents are breaking these rules everyone in the house may lose their privileges.
- Again, possession of any electronic equipment including cell phones is at your risk and NCFH will not be responsible for loss or damage.

### **Clothing**

Because there is an epidemic of Bed Bugs in the United States, just read the papers or go online to find out how bad, we are taking steps to avoid them here.

Several important things to know about Bed Bugs are:

- Being unclean has nothing to do with getting Bed Bugs. The bugs are only looking for food. Unfortunately, human blood is that food.
- Bed Bugs are wonderful hitch hikers so they can be almost anywhere. One of our staff went to a large, highly respected, clean hospital, sat in their furniture for about 12 hours and came home with bed bugs.
- Bed Bugs avoid light and once a host is found stay where there is food unless a change in the environment forces them to do so. Therefore, we're not terribly concerned about residents going to meetings or outpatient etc. We are concerned about a resident returning from a pass. The length of time away from the house and where they may have gone necessitates our treating a return from pass much the same as at admission.
- With reasonable precautions chances of getting an infestation anywhere can be greatly reduced though never totally eliminated.
- Bed Bugs ***do not*** carry or transmit disease.
- Bed Bugs (if you react to their bite and not everyone does) may make you itch like nothing you have ever experienced.
- If Bed Bugs are introduced and found promptly they are relatively easy to eliminate so early identification and taking immediate action is important.
- If Bed Bugs get really established getting rid of them is a time consuming, complicated and costly process.

Because of all the above no resident will ever have any response when reporting a possible problem except Thank You. Please let us know if you have any reason to suspect their presence.

Our restrictions on what you can bring and how they must be processed are all based upon proven ways to reduce the chance of an insect infestation. It is inconvenient and you have our apologies but the rules

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

are to protect all of us and will be strictly enforced. If you come here, you must be willing to abide by all rules.

The amount of clothing and some other personal items you can have is quite limited.

- 10 pairs of pants – a pair of shorts would be counted as one of the 10.
- 10 shirts a suit coat is acceptable but would need to be dry cleaned at your expense before you would be able to access it. It would be counted as one of the 10 shirts.
- 10 undershirts
- 10 pair of boxers or briefs etc.
- 10 pair of socks
- 2 sets of sleepwear
- 3 pairs of street shoes and 1 pair of slippers and some kind of shower foot ware.
- 1 jacket or coat appropriate for the season
- 1 hat or head covering
- 1 set of gloves
- 1 tie
- 1 swimming suit

What you are wearing at admission counts toward the numbers above.

The answer to the question “If I have 8 pants can I have 12 shirts is no.” There will be no mix and match because it makes things too confusing.

### Personal Hygiene Items

This is your choice as long as:

- they do not contain alcohol or are known to be abused by inhaling
- can fit, without stacking on 2 8 ½ x 11 side by side sheets of paper

### Food and beverages

Candy (gum is included) may be kept and consumed in your room if all of it can fit in a single gallon zip lock baggie.

A maximum of six 12 oz. soda or similar beverages may be kept in your room. Any energy drinks with high levels of caffeine or other stimulants are not allowed. No beverage container may be opened or consumed in any bedroom. Failure to comply with these rules will result in losing the privilege.

### Admission Process

Upon arrival, all possessions, except those approved, by staff will be placed in plastic bags and stored until they can be checked and then washed and dried. Once completed items will be allowed in your room.

### At admission

Before coming please arrange to store anything beyond the list.

We do understand that sometimes a new resident must bring all they own. In this case, we will bag and store as much of your extra belongings that we can with our limited space.

When you arrive, we will be placing all of your belongings in plastic bags so we don't have to start washing and drying everything when you get here. Please keep a full set of clothing separate we will wash and dry that for you and as soon as done you will be asked to change into them. The ones you wore will be added to your other things and be taken care of as soon as it works for us. Staff will do all of



# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

this for you so there are no misunderstandings about how they are to be taken care of. After this is done all we need is that you wash your clothes and dry them on **high heat**.

### *When returning from an overnight pass*

As mentioned above when on pass your chance of exposure increases from the variety of places you go and the length of time that you are there. We require that you put all of the clothing in a plastic bag on return and go change. Add the clothes you have just removed to the others you brought back and wash and dry them. If it is late and it makes more sense to clean them in the morning give the bag to staff on duty. Wash and dry them immediately once you get them from staff.

### *Changing Seasons*

A couple of weeks before each season begins we will select a day that your items in storage may be exchanged for something appropriate for that season. Everything will have to be treated the same as at admission.

## Safety and Security for Residents and Staff

The safety and security of residents, staff and the community at large is of utmost importance to NCFH. At any given time, there are residents that are; serious about recovery, those that are simply avoiding consequences and some are on the fence. It would be easy for those that are serious about their recovery or would not do anything to put others at risk to be insulted by security measures intended to keep them safe. Our problem is that we don't "know" who may be a threat and who isn't.

We ask that those that are feeling insulted or that we don't trust you to keep these points in mind:

- We trust everyone that walks through our doors until they have proven themselves untrustworthy.
- All security measures are intended to keep you safe.
- If you don't break any rules there is will be nothing for you to be concerned about.

### Night Rounds

During the night staff, will make rounds of the facility at random intervals but no less than once an hour. Staff may choose at their discretion to verify you are in your room.

If someone is not in their room and cannot be quickly located the presence of all other residents will be verified in a manner appropriate to the situation. The Residence Manager will be advised immediately.

## Contraband

### What is Contraband

- Tobacco products of any kind. These will be kept and destroyed.
- Anything that will produce an open flame or actual use would require burning. For example, a lighter, candle or incense.
- Anything that is a weapon or anything that could be used as a weapon that there is no justification for having. Violation of this may result in immediate discharge.
- All Over the Counter medications unless you have written permission from the Residence Manager. This will be granted infrequently and for a specific period of time.
- Alcohol and any illicit substance. Violation of this may result in immediate discharge.
- Prescription drugs without a valid prescription and written permission from Director of Services.
- Tools of any kind.

### Search for Contraband

We reserve the right to search property owned or leased by NCFH including individual rooms and vehicles at any time.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

Individuals may be searched for contraband on demand. Any materials brought onto our property, this includes anything worn or carried by an individual may be searched. All individual searches will comply with the OASAS regulations quoted below.

The following actions are taken regularly.

- Staff will check the entire building including bedrooms daily.
- Each week at least one room will be searched on a random basis and in more depth than during the daily search. This will be documented and forwarded to the Director of Services on a weekly basis.
- Searches will occur whenever staff believes that there is justification for a search. The staff member that does the search, under these circumstances, will document the reason for the search and the results of that search. Their supervisor will sign off on the search and it will go to the Director of Services.

### **Disposal of Contraband**

Any time something is removed from a bedroom or taken from a resident a written receipt will be given. A decision regarding disposal of the contraband will be made and the resident given a copy of that information. If any of the items are to be returned to the resident a Contraband Receipt of Return will be completed and signed by the Resident at the time of the return.

### **OASAS Regulations Pertaining To Searching Individuals**

All individual searches will comply with OASAS regulations. These regulations are as follows:

#### **“Section 815.10 Patient Searches**

(a) The purpose of patient searches is to ensure a safe and therapeutic environment for all patients. However, patients shall be free from searches except those searches that are authorized pursuant to this section.

(b) Subject to the following requirements, a provider may choose to conduct searches of patients by establishing written policies and procedures which are provided to each patient at admission. Such policies may include the following:

- (1) Routine frisk or "pat down" searches of patients at admission or when returning to the service are permitted.
- (2) Searches of a patient's room or a patient's belongings may be conducted at any time with reasonable cause.
- (3) A provider may conduct a strip search of a patient only if:
  - (i) reasonable suspicion exists that the patient possesses contraband;
  - (ii) the provider's director authorizes the search;
  - (iii) a same-sex-as-the patient supervisor of the staff member requesting the search is present when the search is conducted; and
  - (iv) the patient consents to the search.

(c) Under extenuating circumstances and subject to the preceding requirements, a provider may elect to conduct a body cavity search of a patient. Such a search must be conducted only by a member of the provider's medical staff. If the provider does not employ medical staff, the provider must utilize a physician, nurse practitioner, registered physician's assistant, registered nurse, or licensed practical nurse to conduct the search.

(d) Any strip search or body-cavity search must be reported to the Office

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

(e) If a patient refuses to consent to a proper request to conduct a search he or she may be discharged in accordance with this Part.

(f) All contraband must be disposed of in accordance with the applicable law including but not limited to 10 NYCRR Part 80.51, and 21 CFR Part 1307.21.”

### What We Expect of a Resident

Read carefully.

*Failure to understand and live by this section will result in discharge.*

*We welcome residents that have:*

1. **A desire to change abstinence into growth in recovery.**
2. **The self-control to behave in a way that respects peers, staff and self.**
3. **A commitment to themselves, their peers and this program.**
4. **A determination to grow through hard and often emotionally painful work.**

**This handbook provides information and guidance without any attempt to cover all possibilities.** Each rule supports a value consistent with living in ways consistent with good recovery. These values, ideals, or ideas are much more important than the specific rule because they create and support the atmosphere required for recovery.

*Some of the most important of these ideas are:*

1. **Recovery requires abstinence in a drug and alcohol free environment.**
2. **Recovery requires serious self-examination.**
3. **Self-examination and growth require safety and an atmosphere of trust.**
4. **Trust cannot exist without respect for self and others.**
5. **Recovery requires effort, self-control and the change of many addictive values and the behaviors that support them.**
6. **Recovery requires a focus on self, but not to the extent that it hurts others.**
7. **No matter how difficult and damaging life has been in the past; a resident is responsible for both their attitudes and actions today.**
8. **Residents belong to a community and the health of the community is as important as the health of individual members.**

**We expect residents to look beyond the exact wording of the handbook and behave according to the values it represents.**

**In addition, the following are to be lived by. There are no specific consequences attached because each violation will be handled as appropriate by staff. This may mean that we use the situation as an opportunity to teach new skills, or decide that another response is appropriate.**

1. **All peers and all staff are to be treated with the same respect. This is to be at all times, in all situations and whether administrative staff is present or not.**
2. **Courtesy toward others is expected. Say “Please”, “Thank you” and “You are welcome” etc.**
3. **Yelling and/or swearing at others is not acceptable. “F\*\*\* you” shows extreme disrespect. A continued pattern of disrespect may be grounds for discharge. A specific incident of disrespect based upon race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation will very likely result in discharge.**
4. **Behavior is to reflect honesty. When a resident reports Twelve Step meeting attendance this means that they stayed in and at the meeting, not went in and then**

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

spent the meeting time sitting outside. When a pass is approved to go somewhere and do something, that is exactly where and what is done.

5. The time and effort necessary to do a job, homework assignment, etc. well, will be taken. Doing just enough to get by is ineffective and not acceptable.
6. Any behavior that would damage or destroy the trust placed in you by staff and your peers is unacceptable. The following are some examples of this unacceptable behavior.
  1. Talking about house issues anywhere other than in the house or at your Outpatient Treatment Provider.
  2. Any behavior or statement that threatens, frightens, or intimidates anyone, anywhere at any time.
  3. Relationships that are new or pre-existing whether sexual or not that interfere with an individual's ability to become a fully integrated group member or impacts the community negatively are not acceptable.
  4. Deliberate behavior or statements that result in misunderstandings, confusion or hurt feelings. We understand that this is part of early recovery and can happen occasionally. This type of situation is an opportunity for all involved to learn and grow. This is unacceptable only when it is part of a pattern clearly intended to defocus or damage.

We are interested in healing, not creating further damage. We want every person that enters our program to get as much as they can. Upon admission, the new resident is trusted and accepted as someone wanting to recover. We are ready and willing to help and guide in this process. Our experience is that anyone willing to work and make necessary changes will benefit from our program.

The staff observes all residents' behaviors and attitudes. If it is determined that an individual's behavior and attitude has reached an unacceptable level that resident will be discharged as positively as possible given the circumstances. The discharge may state that there was a failure to follow program rules or expectations.

If you do not successfully complete our program you may face additional consequences based upon your individual circumstances.

**Situations arise that are not adequately covered in this handbook.**

NCFH reserves the rights to make decisions that we believe are in the best interests of both the individual and their peers in unexpected or unusual situations.

## Living In A Way That Supports Recovery

Learning to live in a way that supports recovery involves many changes. Negative attitudes, behaviors, and destructive core beliefs need to be identified and then replaced by positive ones. Taking the 'easy way out' must change to 'doing it in a manner consistent with recovery'. 'Doing it in a manner consistent with recovery' requires practice and more practice. This helps develop increased self-control. This portion of our program provides a major part of the structure required for this process.

**Doing this** reflects real life issues and requires real work. Individuals are held accountable through appropriate consequences for unacceptable behavior. Consequences range from 3 points for violation of minor rules to discharge for a single behavior or the accumulation of a total of 30 points.

***Living in a way that supports Recovery:***

- Provides guidelines for behavior
- Involves every resident
- Promotes self-evaluation

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

- Acknowledges successes
- Identifies areas needing improvement
- Ensures residents consistent and equal responses from staff
- Gives Addictions Counselors information necessary for prompt and accurate feedback
- Alerts staff to signs of regression or potential relapse
- Helps create an atmosphere conducive to recovery
- Works around the clock, 7 days a week (24/7)
- Increases self esteem

## House Rules and How They Work

### Orientation:

During orientation, a resident receives a **Resident Handbook**, additional information about the program including the memo on **Relationships** and a **Point Form**.

A staff member will go over the rules and our expectations.

## Point System

### Adjustment Period at Admission

We are aware that new residents may have difficulty in adjusting to the CRS schedule and rules. Sometimes there are lingering effects of the drug and/or alcohol use. Sometimes it is obvious that a specific resident still isn't thinking clearly. Sometimes ADHD or ADD makes learning a challenge. There may be diagnosed or undiagnosed TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury). Other times a specific individual may just have difficulty remembering.

We will give time for the new resident to adjust and staff to evaluate different capabilities in each resident. Any points written for violation of three point rules during the first week will be forgiven at the end of the adjustment and settling in period.

If we determine a resident is incapable of understanding or following rules, continued residency is not in their best interest. We will consult with the resident to make appropriate discharge plans.

This is not a license to ignore rules but an opportunity. There are several conditions that go along with this privilege.

- Everyone starts with a one week adjustment period. If at the end of that week it is obvious someone is experiencing a real problem the Administrative Team may extend the adjustment period. If the problem is the person just needs more time to recover from the impact of use on their brain, then additional time is all that is needed. If there is a specific treatable issue the resident must cooperate in getting appropriate care.
- The adjustment period only applies to three point rules. Rules that are broken which result in 10 points or Discharge will be **fully** in effect. There are fewer of these rules and they are important enough that there must be immediate consequences for breaking them. Anyone earning 30 points for violation of 10 point rules may be discharged whether in the Adjustment Period or not.
- Every time staff is aware of any rule being broken it will be documented on a Point System form. The resident will be asked to sign each one so there is no question that we are directly communicating problems with their behaviors and there is an expectation of change. These will then be entered on the Point System Log.
- **All of the points** written during the adjustment period will be entered into the Points Log along with the number of points. At the end of the adjustment period the record of the three point rules

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

broken will remain but the three points changed to zero. Any ten points assigned will not be removed except by the normal reduction process. This will give the counselor information about past issues addressed should they reappear or that the issue at hand is a new one.

- Anyone being given extended adjustment time will remain on Level I regardless of their point total. If points are consistently low enough to move to Level II further time for adjustment is probably not needed, the adjustment period ended and if appropriate advancement to Level II on the next day that Levels are posted.
- Once the adjustment period has ended it will not be reinstated without the agreement of the Director of Services.

### **Assignment of Points:**

Staff members write **Point Sheets** whenever appropriate. Usually points are written within 24 hours of the rule violation. Points may be written after the 24 hrs. but require the approval of the Director of Services or designee. Staff reviews the completed sheet with the resident, who signs it. Upon request, a copy of the **Point Sheet** will be given to the resident.

### **Grievances:**

1. In case of disagreement, **do not argue with the Staff Member**. Use the grievance procedure
2. Submit grievances on a **Point Grievance Form** within 24 hours. The only acceptable proof that the grievance was submitted in a timely manner is the signature of the staff member that receives the grievance and notes the time and date that the grievance is accepted
3. Any grievance submitted after 24 hours will not be considered

### **Point Reduction:**

A maximum of five points will be deducted from a resident's point total for completing seven consecutive days without points. The point total can never be a minus.

## **Program Rules**

**The accumulation of 30 points no matter how earned is grounds for discharge.**

### **30 Points Discharge for Failure to Follow Program Rules**

1.	Use of any drug (including alcohol) or substance not prescribed or approved by a qualified medical practitioner. This includes mouthwash and anything lese that can be swallowed and contains alcohol.	30
2.	In possession of any prescription medication not prescribed to them. (Prescribed and over-the-counter medications are available only through staff.)	30
3.	Smoking or chewing on corporate property, in corporate vehicles or, buildings.	30
4.	Physical abuse of another person, regardless of provocation.	30
5.	Possession of a 'weapon', including but not limited to, any firearm, blackjack, Billy club, sap, stiletto, switchblade, gravity knife, butterfly knife, any knife with a blade longer than 3 1/2", brass knuckles, "throwing stars," or "chukka sticks etc."	30
6.	Refusal to submit to any test that screens for alcohol and/or substance usage or any search that conforms to OASAS regulations.	30
7.	Theft or willful destruction of individual or corporation property.	30
8.	Engaging in sexual activity with other residents, or any staff member. Staff will be dealt with in an appropriate manner as well.	30
9.	Behavior once brought to the resident's attention, which continues and interferes with their participation, as a fully integrated group member is reason for discharge. This includes failure to abide with any element of a written contract, which is part of the Service Plan.	30
10.	Unauthorized absence of more than 8 hours.	30

**North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.  
Community Residential Services Handbook**

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

## 10 or 30 Points Depending on Circumstances

The normal consequence for breaking a rule in this section is 10 points. In special circumstances any staff may recommend assignment of 30 points. The Director of Services must approve this assessment before the points become part of a resident's point total.

11.	Possession of tobacco products, which includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing or dipping tobacco. Possession of any tobacco paraphernalia including lighters, matches, pipes, rolling papers etc. All of these materials will be confiscated and destroyed.	
12.	Over the counter medications must be approved by a qualified medical practitioner. Once approved OTC must be stored in the medication cabinet and are available only through staff. Over the Counter and/or prescription medications which require daily use and/or application must have written approval from Resident Manager IE: foot cream, eye drops, inhalers etc.	10
13.	Failure to return from pass on time. It is the resident's responsibility to arrange for dependable transportation.	
14.	Failure to treat either peers or staff with respect and consideration. This includes verbal abuse and any behavior that would make continued residency unsafe for another.	10
15.	Failure to respect the property of peers, staff, or the Corporation.	10
16.	Failure to arrive on time, actively participate in and remain at: appointments, house sponsored activities in-house, or elsewhere or at other service providers. This includes failure to reschedule any appointment at least 24 hours in advance.	10
17.	Failure to comply with a staff member's direct request. In case of disagreement, comply with the request, and then submit a grievance within 24 hours. (A direct request includes asking you to sign a Point Sheet.)	10
18.	Entering anyone else's bedroom or personal possessions without permission.	10
19.	Residents will remain on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor from 11:00pm to 6:00am unless there is an emergency.	10
20.	Failing to comply with the curfew set by the Level System, unless other arrangements have been approved by the Residence Manager, Addictions Counselor, or Director of Services.	10
21.	Having a car available for personal use without the Director of Services written permission <b>or</b> using unauthorized transportation.	10
22.	Possession of, or viewing, X-rated films or videos is not allowed. (Some R-rated movies may also be judged inappropriate.)	10
23.	Failure to exit the building and meet in the designated location within 2 minutes of the alarm being sounded. The first time 10 points will be assigned. The second time the individual will be discharged.	10

## 3 Points

### *Household Operation and Maintenance*

24.	Failure to contribute to the appearance and daily operation of the facility by doing various assigned chores or by failing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Complete the work on time and as scheduled.</li> <li>b. Do the work well and as instructed.</li> <li>c. Arrange to have the work done during any absence.</li> <li>d. Help staff when asked. (There will be times that various projects are undertaken that would constitute normal maintenance of a home but beyond daily upkeep. We expect residents to help with these projects).</li> </ul>	3
-----	--	---



## North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

25.	Failure to have the bedroom clean and neat including making the bed as instructed before leaving the room. A thorough cleaning at least once a week is also required and covered by these points. <b>Please Note</b> -Our intent is to respect individual privacy as much as possible. We reserve the right to knock, enter and/or search at any time. Neat includes having all clothes either hung or folded neatly. Dirty clothes are to be in the container provided. If the container is full it is time to do the wash not throw the clothes elsewhere. Making the bed in a way that is acceptable requires: The bottom sheet is to be smooth and tucked in on all four sides. The top sheet is to be smooth and tucked in at the foot of the bed. The pillow must have a pillow case. The comforter is to cover the pillow, the rest of the bed and be smooth and wrinkle free.	3
26.	Failing to change and launder bed linens and towels at least once a week.	3
27.	Failure to remove laundry from machines keeping others from using them.	3
28.	Failure to bathe or shower daily or maintain acceptable personal hygiene including the use of deodorant products.	3
29.	Failing to be dressed in street clothes including shoes or slippers. Monday through Friday 8:00 am, Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am.	3
30.	Obstructing doors, hallways, stairwells or safety exits.	3
31.	Watching television during times other than those posted.	3
32.	Attaching anything to bedroom walls, ceilings, doors (both inside and out) or anywhere else other than the bulletin board.	3
33.	Using a cell phone or any other electronic device during a time that it is not allowed	3
34.	Failure to comply with the 11:00 pm lights out.	3
35.	Failure to take medication as prescribed. (To stop taking a prescribed medication, complete the appropriate form and return it to staff before the next dosage is scheduled.)	3
36.	When there is a medication that indicates, it is to be taken once a day, the resident will be given the opportunity to pick one specific time that meds are available and then take the medication at that time. Failure to take it when agreed upon breaks this rule.	3
37.	No sleeping or lying down from the time breakfast is scheduled until 8:00 pm Monday through Friday. This does not apply to bedrooms after 5:00 pm	3
38.	No one is to be in bedrooms or on the second floor Monday through Friday without the prior permission of staff.	3
39.	Playing a radio, or similar equipment, so loud that it can be heard outside the room, or outside loud enough that it may be disturbing to the neighborhood.	3
40.	Wearing a hat, head covering or sunglasses inside is not allowed. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for religious or hygienic reasons	3
41.	Wearing or using any device that emits sound is not allowed inside the house or in any corporate vehicle. Wearing includes placed on the head but not the ears, around the neck, or in any other way that allows the device to be heard.	3

### ***Coming and Going***

42.	Failing to personally sign out and in giving accurate information. If it is determined that failure to sign in or out was an attempt to avoid 10 points for failing to stay within the time limits set by the Level System a minimum of ten (10) points will be assigned.	3
43.	Leaving the facility before 10:00 am is not allowed. Exceptions are: scheduled appointments previously approved and noted, church and activities documented in the individual's Service Plan, assigned chores are to be completed unless an extension is granted before leaving.	3
44.	Failure to submit a written Transportation Request, as soon as you know about it, but no less than 24 hours in advance. Requests for transportation on Monday are to be given to the Residence Manager as early as possible but no later than 2:00 pm Friday.	3

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

## *Eating and Food Preparation*

45.	Failure to limit eating to the dining room. The consumption of candy in the bedroom is an exception. Each staff member will decide what is appropriate for their space.	3
46.	Failure to limit drinking to allowed areas. The allowed areas are living room, group room, and basement and staff offices with the staff member's approval.	3
47.	Failure to be on time for meals	3
48.	Failure to wear either a hair net or gloves while preparing food either for self or others. Hats, cloth or other coverings are not acceptable replacements for a hair net. Gloves do not have to be worn while actively cooking on the stove or putting things in or removing them from a heated oven.	3
49.	Failure to pick up after cooking, eating, snacking etc. Rinse and place in the dishwasher any silver, glassware, china, etc. used. Pots and pans must also be washed and put away.	3
50.	Failure to remain seated for at least 15 minutes at main meals.	3

## Sabotaging Behaviors

Many individuals admit themselves to a Community Residence when it is seen as the lesser of two evils. It's better than jail, prison, or some other negative consequence. Better does not necessarily mean good or desired in their eyes. As a result, the person when admitted has a number of different feelings. Frequently there is resentment, anger, resistance and distrust.

It is much easier for someone to access, acknowledge and direct the anger based emotions at someone or something else rather than inward where they really belong. Occasionally these feelings are expressed through relapse or simply leaving the program. Others break enough rules to be discharged for non-compliance. Still others express their anger in less direct ways. These individuals do not relapse, walk out or break enough rules to be discharged. What they do is behave in an underhanded or sabotaging way.

Everyone has the right to make decisions about how they will live life. All those decisions have consequences. As long as the decision has consequences that affect only the person making the decision we will not intervene. We will respond to them as appropriate.

When a resident makes a decision that impacts others negatively it is not their right. We will intervene and it is these behaviors that this section addresses.

These behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Failure to participate in group(s) or act in such a way that it interferes with others opportunity to recover.
- Avoiding communicating directly with someone else by going through a third person.
- Engaging in gossip or the rumor mill.
- Intimidation whether physical, verbal or emotional at any time.
- Humiliating or shaming anyone.
- Joining with one or more residents forming a group that splits the residents.
- Engaging in any activity that is generally seen by society as inappropriate. Deliberately passing gas or belching loudly are two examples of this.

When staff identifies, a resident engaging in sabotaging behavior a decision will be made. If the behavior is serious enough to warrant immediate discharge, then the person will be discharged. If it is decided that, though damaging, immediate discharge is not called for the resident will be given one opportunity to change the behavior.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

A contract effective for the time specified will be written with the resident. It will identify a behavior or behaviors that are problematic. Specific changes will be listed and a time limit will be given to make those changes. Immediate change is expected. The time period is to give enough time to practice the change so it can be kept. If there is no effort to make change discharge may occur prior to the end of the time limit.

When that time expires a decision will be made regarding continued residency. If there has been enough positive change the resident may continue the program. It is expected that the behavior will not resume. If it does there will be no second chance.

If discharge happens because the contract for change failed it will be part of the discharge documentation.

### Recommendations to Get the Most Out of This Program

Over time we have seen many behaviors or choices that end up with the resident being discharged. If you want to do everything you can to further your recovery, we recommend that you follow these recommendations.

- Stay out of any new relationship. A relationship starts long before any physical contact. More residents have left this program without completing due to relationships than for any other reason
- Avoid spending excessive time anywhere away from the house. This could be the library, on campus, downtown or elsewhere
- Make your peers your primary support system and others including Twelve Step members your secondary support system
- We ask that you do not refer to yourself as sober. Sobriety requires years to achieve. The danger in referring to yourself as sober is that you may begin to believe you have reached the goal of the recovery process when in fact you have just begun. Feel free to refer to yourself as clean, abstinent, or in recovery. These statements can be totally accurate at this time
- We ask that you do not swear. Swearing does not serve a single positive element to the recovery process. If an ongoing problem, you may be contracted to stop.
- Think of everything you do here as a beginning of something to be continued for life. That includes what you learn in this program. You may be discharged as Completed Treatment. Never believe your recovery is complete
- We ask that you do not loan money or anything else to other residents. If you do and it is lost NCFH will not repay you for what you have lost

If you chose not to follow the above and this choice negatively impacts your or others recovery it will become a treatment issue. We will advise you of the changes we believe you need to make. Choosing not to make these changes will result in discharge.

### Structured Program Elements

There is a Structured Program that all residents participate in. This Program consists of a combination of Groups, Classes and Exercises that are presented or supervised by personnel of NCFH. The exact content of these structured elements changes over time, as the needs of the residents change.

Areas that have been part of the program from the beginning to date include:

Community Group		Provides an opportunity to enhance interpersonal relationships and communication skills on a feeling level.
Individual Counseling		Provides supportive counseling, formulation of an Individual Service Plan with ongoing revision

## North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

Destructive Core Beliefs		Teach residents to identify the inaccurate and destructive beliefs that they have accepted about themselves that in turn keep them sick. Once recognized the task is to change them.
Relapse Prevention		Introduces basic concepts of relapse/recovery dynamics. To help residents identify relapse indicators and develop individualized strategies to deal with them.
Peer Council		Provides a forum for discussion and to make group decisions that are communicated to Staff through their spokesperson the Senior Peer. Appropriate staff will meet with the entire residency upon request.

### Program Priorities

Scheduling conflicts do occur. Those activities listed in Number 1 have the highest priority; those listed in Number 2 have the second highest priority, etc.

1. All Structured Program Elements. This includes appointments, groups, etc. with Outpatient Services
2. Health Services including medical, dental, etc. appointments may conflict with #1. In those cases these services take priority. This is allowed only with staff approval in advance
3. Voluntary attendance at 12-Step Meetings
4. Recreational and Social Activities

Residents are to schedule their activities accordingly. Resolve potential conflicts, in sufficient time to avoid problems, by talking with the appropriate staff.

Mornings, Monday through Friday are reserved for groups and classes held within the Community Residence. Afternoons, Monday through Friday are reserved for treatment at a local Outpatient Treatment Provider. Currently this is the St. Lawrence County Chemical Dependency Services. It is expected that residents work on assignments or attend 12-Step meetings in the evenings. During the weekends residents may go on pass (if approved by clinical staff for therapeutic reasons), participate in planned leisure activities and attend worship services.

### Length of Stay

To be discharged, as Program Complete requires the completion of numerous exercises designed to help you:

- Identify the steps in your relapse process and assist you in designing an effective relapse prevention plan
- Identify your Destructive Core Beliefs, identify attitudes and behaviors that support them and change them

There are minimum lengths of time between these exercises. No one can do an exercise before the minimum length of time specified.

The date that an individual will do the exercise will most likely be later than the earliest date that it can be presented. This depends on numerous factors. These include, but are not limited to: resident readiness including level earned, seniority, staff availability impacted by vacations, holidays, required attendance at trainings, sickness, and other unexpected or unavoidable circumstances.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

The final exercise triggers regression in everyone that does them. We require that residents commit to at least 30 days of residency after completing this exercise. This allows time to identify, halt and grow beyond the regression.

Any resident that chooses not to do any exercise will not be discharged as Program Complete.

Any resident that fails to stay at least 30 days after the completion of their final exercise will not be discharged as Program Complete unless an earlier discharge date has been approved by the administrative team. For an approval, there must be circumstances, beyond the control of the resident, that make an early discharge in their best interests.

**Because of these factors we cannot provide an expected length of stay.**

## Program Levels and Privileges

### How Resident Attitude and Behavior Impact the Level Earned

A resident's attitude and behavior over time determines levels and privileges.

Advancement depends upon a combination of things. Some of these are clearly measurable. For example, a resident's point total is either zero or a specific number. Other indicators, not so easily measured can be even more important to recovery than the easily measured ones.

For example, one peer may not directly threaten another peer but still be threatening. Telling stories that center on the violence done to others by one peer can be threatening to other peers indirectly. The tone of voice, body posture, or the way someone looks at someone else can also be threatening.

Though not a direct threat, this behavior is damaging to everyone involved. The person that makes the implied threat avoids or stops honest feedback and builds a defensive wall that interferes with recovery. Those being indirectly threatened are denied the safety in which their recovery can progress.

If we limited our conditions for advancement to objective or measurable items and ignored subjective or not easily measurable items we would not be doing our job. It would make it possible for a resident to complete this program and advance through the levels by keeping a low profile, following all the rules, and doing just enough to get by. Just getting by is not what recovery is all about.

To avoid this kind of situation from occurring, advancement to and retention of levels requires work that is measured both objectively and subjectively.

Every resident begins on Level I. All requirements for advancement in Level must be met prior to advancement. Once a level is earned continued effort is required to keep it.

Each week a resident's progress will be assessed and the Level Earned will be posted. A resident on Level IV could drop to Level I. Length of time in the program has no impact on how low the level may drop.

Once a level is reached it is kept by continued work. This means that anyone on Level III must continue to meet all the requirements of Level I, Level II and Level III to stay on Level III. If advancement in a level creates a privilege the rule for the highest level will be the one followed.

Unless enough work is done to advance to Level II the individual may remain on Level I until discharge. No one will be discharged as Completed Treatment: All treatment Goals Met while on Level I.

Anyone going on a **Pass** must be on the Level necessary for that pass **at the time the pass starts**.

A pass may be approved based upon a resident's actual or anticipated Level status. If the Level changes so that the resident no longer qualifies for the pass or the anticipated Level is not reached, **the pass is cancelled**.

This does not apply to **Emergency, Medical, or Legal Passes**

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

### Honesty and the Level System

Every new resident is trusted to comply with the rules for their level. We have better things to do with our time than look for situations where residents are abusing this trust.

We've also learned that someone who is abusing this trust will continue to do so until it can't be missed.

Abuse of this trust or honor system will result in consequences. The consequences may range from a decrease in the Level to discharge, and/or advisement of the appropriate legal authorities (Parole, Probation, Police etc.) depending on the situation.

### Level Determination

A resident's level is determined by comparing what the resident has accomplished to the requirements for each level. The resident is then placed on the highest level that all conditions have been met.

There are two sets of conditions.

The first set is objective. This includes anything that is concrete and does not require staff making a judgment to determine. This set includes:

- Length of time in residence. This is determined by counting the number of full days since admission. The actual day of admission does not count toward time in residence
- Total Number of Points
- Has all required documentation been completed (this includes appropriate discharge planning)
- Has the resident been admitted to and continuing satisfactorily with an Outpatient Treatment Provider
- Have all required Clinical Exercises and or Assignments as indicated on the **Requirements for Discharge as Program Complete** been satisfactorily completed
- Is there satisfactory progress in meeting the goals specified in the Comprehensive Service Plan

The second area examined depends on staff judgment. The primary staff members responsible for this area are the Residence Managers and Addictions Counselors. Any staff member may provide additional input. Other sources of information about resident behavior and attitudes may used in the determination of the Level earned.

The set of behaviors and or attitudes that are examined are listed for each Level under "**Earning and Keeping Levels**".

A resident will be placed on the highest level that they have met all requirements, both objective and subjective.

### Approval of the Residence Manager and Addictions Counselor

Advancement in Level requires the approval of both of the above staff. The type behaviors and attitudes each person looks for are similar while somewhat different based upon their areas of responsibility.

### Responsibilities While on Level I

All residents are expected to be actively working toward earning Level IV status. Any resident not working toward individual growth will be discharged.

### Privileges during Level I:

May come and go for up to **two (2) hours** once a day from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Friday with another peer above a Level I. On Saturday, Sunday and Holidays may come and go for up to

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

**two (2) hours** twice a day. Church attendance must be within the two hours. 12-Step meeting attendance or activities that are approved by either the Residence Manager or Addictions Counselor and documented in the Shift Report does not use two hours for that day. Signing in and out with an accurate destination is required. Attendance at meals and all other responsibilities must still be met. House sponsored and/or staff (Director of Services, Administrative Assistant, Addictions Counselor, Residence Managers only) activities are the only exceptions to the 7:00 pm Curfew.

### Earning and Keeping Level II Requires

#### ***Measurable Requirements***

- More than 28 days in residence
- A Point Total of 19 or less
- All NCFH Admission Paperwork and both the Initial and Comprehensive Service Plans Completed
- Admitted to an approved Outpatient Treatment Provider
- All Level I tasks as indicated on the **Requirements for Discharge as Program Complete** must be completed

#### ***Observable by Resident Manager***

- Is honest at all times
- Treats both Peers and Staff with Courtesy and Respect
- Minimal or no isolation
- Works well with at least five peers
- No use of intimidation or threat either direct or implied
- No relationship is interfering with resident progress

#### ***Observable by Addictions Counselor***

- Is honest at all times
- Engaged in Classes and Groups
- Meaningful Self-Disclosure
- Defenses are not a total block to progress
- All Assignments reflect effort not compliance
- No relationship is interfering with resident progress

#### ***Privileges During Level II:***

1. May come and go for up to **five (5)** hours from 10:00 am to 9:00 pm. Signing in and out with an accurate destination is required. Attendance at meals and all other responsibilities must still be met. Planned, staff approved, house sponsored activities are the only exceptions to the 9:00 pm Curfew
2. When requested 24 hours in advance and with the approval of the Addictions Counselor may attend one 12-step meeting per week (every 7 days) with their sponsor
3. May apply for and if approved have a one-day pass once every 28 days\*
4. May apply for and if approved have one weekend pass every 28 days\*

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

Approval of Passes is not automatic and will be approved only if it appears that it is in the best interest of the individual.

\*Once every 28 days means that there will be 28 days between the beginning of one pass and the next. Day passes and weekend passes are separate, and the 28-day rule is applied separately to each.

### **Earning and Keeping Level III Requires Everything from Level I and II Plus**

#### ***Measurable Requirements***

- All Level 2 tasks as indicated on the **Requirements for Discharge as Program Complete** must be completed
- More than 123 days in residence
- A Point Total of 14 or less
- Outpatient Treatment is Continuing unless Discharged as Program Complete

#### ***Observable by Resident Manager***

- No isolation
- Works well with all peers. (If there is a peer on Level I that has not become part of the community and is obviously not yet willing to work with other peers it will not be held against a more senior peer. This does not excuse the more senior peer from continuing to be available to the peer on Level I)
- Is a Role Model most of the time in all places? Any more than 1 indication that the resident is not living up to this standard of behavior will result in this advancement indicator being disallowed. Several examples of unacceptable behaviors are:
  1. Fighting over who gets what seat in the van
  2. Fighting about the radio station or cranking up the volume in the van
  3. Acting inappropriately at functions in the community
  4. Making others wait, beyond the agreed 15 minutes after the meeting ends, because they have to speak with someone
- Accepts feedback and makes positive changes in response

#### ***Observable by Addictions Counselor***

- Growth since admission is obvious. Obvious means that specific changes in attitudes and behaviors can be identified.
- Acts as a Role Model in all Clinical settings
- Defenses do not block progress
- Accepts feedback and makes positive changes in response
- Focus is on self and individual change needed to continue personal growth
- Understands need for and is supportive to others. Focus on self and growth in recovery now includes an understanding, with appropriate supporting behaviors, that it is only through being there for and giving to others that recovery can continue

#### ***Privileges during Level III:***

1. May come and go for up to **five (5)** hours from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm. Signing in and out with an accurate destination is required. Attendance at meals and all other responsibilities must



## **North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook**

still be met. Planned, staff approved, house sponsored activities are the only exceptions to the 10:00 pm curfew.

2. May submit and take\* a one-day pass once every 14 days\*\*
3. May submit and take\* a weekend pass every 14 days\*\*
4. May be absent from one main meal per week by notifying the Residence Manager at least 24 hours in advance
5. With 24-hour advance notification of the Addictions Counselor, the resident may travel, on a voluntary basis, to one 12-Step Meeting per week with their sponsor

\*Passes for Level III residents are usually approved. Passes must be submitted in a timely manner. Staff may discuss the wisdom of a questionable pass with a resident. The decision to go or stay on that pass remains with the resident. When in our judgment the pass is clearly not in the resident's best interest we reserve the right to disapprove the pass. Disapproval will require that the Director of Services be in agreement with the Addictions Counselor that the pass is ill advised.

\*\* Once every 14 days means that there will be 14 days between the beginning of one pass and the beginning of the next. Day passes and weekend passes are separate and the 14-day rule is applied separately to each.

### **Earning and Keeping Level IV Requires Everything from Level I, II and III Plus**

#### ***Measurable Requirements***

- All Level 3 tasks as indicated on the **Requirements for Discharge as Program Complete** must be completed
- More than 159 days in residence
- A Point Total of 9 or less
- Outpatient Treatment is Continuing unless Discharged as Program Complete

#### ***Observable by Both the Residence Manager and Addictions Counselor***

- Shows continued growth
- Fully Engaged in Program
- Is a Role Model everywhere all of the time
- Outside activities further recovery without detracting from Program Responsibilities

#### ***Privileges of Level IV:***

1. May come and go from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm. Signing in and out with an accurate destination is still required but there is no specific time limit. Planned, staff approved, house sponsored activities are the only exceptions to the 10:00 pm curfew. Attending meals and all other responsibilities must still be met
2. May submit and take\* Day Passes as desired
3. May submit and take\* Weekend Passes that may start at 7:00am on Saturday and end at 10:00 pm on Sunday, as desired. If a resident on Level IV wants to leave before 7:00am on Saturday morning a pass must be submitted to and approved by the Addictions Counselor
4. Make any arrangements desired for transportation to outside appointments, meetings and functions. If you have already requested transportation from NCFH or agreed to go to an event these obligations must be met

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

5. Policy: Residents on Level 4 may have a motor vehicle for their use with the permission of the Director of Services.

Procedure for Requesting Permission to have a personal motor vehicle

1. A resident who has achieved Level 4 may request, in writing, permission from the Director of Services to have a motor vehicle for their use. The approval or disapproval to have a motor vehicle will be in writing from the Director of Services.
2. **If a resident loses Level 4 status, permission to have a vehicle is automatically revoked immediately and permanently.**
3. When a person loses the privilege of having a vehicle, the keys must be turned into the staff person on duty, and the vehicle parked on NCFH property as directed by staff.

Notes:

- The driver is responsible for knowing whether or not a passenger is allowed to ride in the vehicle.
- The vehicle may be used while on pass.

\*When in our judgment any pass is clearly not in the resident's best interest we reserve the right to disapprove the pass. Disapproval will require that the Director of Services be in agreement with the Addictions Counselor that the pass is ill advised

### Loss of Level IV Status and Privileges

Any staff member may speak with the Director of Services about a specific behavior or incident that is believed to be a serious breach of our expectations for those on Level IV. The Director of Services may decide to remove Level IV status including privileges at that time. The Director of Services will also decide what the resident's new Level will be based upon the circumstances. This reduction will remain in effect for a minimum of seven days. On the first Wednesday following the minimum seven days the normal Level determination will resume.

### Resident Use of Residence Manager's Phone

There should be no need to use any phone but the one designated for resident use. There are no long-distance charges on it.

Residents may not use the Residence Manager's telephone without the prior approval of the Addictions Counselor or Residence Manager as documented in the "Special Instructions" section of the **Shift Report**. If a resident uses the phone for an EMERGENCY, the emergency situation is to be documented in the Shift Report by the person granting permission.

### Transportation

Transportation is a challenge for both residents and staff. Our primary concern is that each resident acquires the tools necessary to continue abstinence and the recovery process. This primary focus combined with limited funding for transportation, attempting to meet the different interests of 24 residents, a small staff, and the provision of necessary transportation results in our having to say no to transportation requests for a variety of reasons.

Despite these limitations, we believe that we meet all resident needs for transportation while acknowledging that desires are not always fulfilled.

### Transportation Requests

All transportation of residents by corporate, private or public transportation must be pre-approved in writing on an **Individual or Group Transportation Request** with the following exceptions:

## North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook

- Residents may make any arrangements desired for private or public transportation while on an approved Pass (this does not include normal sign out)
- Residents on Level IV may make any private or public transportation arrangements as desired

### ***Individual and Group Transportation Requests:***

- Are available from the Residence Manager
- Individual requests are to be submitted as soon as possible but no later than one business day in advance for the following:
  - Medical and Dental Care
  - Counseling Appointments
  - All other Professional Appointments

Requests for transportation on Monday are to be given to the Residence Manager as early as possible but no later than 2:00 pm Friday.

- Outpatient Groups
- Group requests, by at least half of the residents not on pass, for activities such as going to the gym, shopping etc. may be submitted to the Residence Manager at any time but at least 24 hours before the proposed event. The Residence Aides have no ability to approve such requests and they will not contact their supervisor for special permission. **Plan ahead!**
- The Residence Manager is to be notified of cancellations and/or changes.
- Consultation with Staff to make the most effective use of the van is expected

Appointments must be rescheduled when transportation is unavailable.

If approval has been granted for an ongoing activity a **Transportation Request** must still be submitted each time the resident is transported.

## **Tobacco-free**

NCFH fully supports the OASAS regulations regarding tobacco-free treatment. From financial, health, recovery and relapse prevention perspectives the individual that stops using tobacco wins. Few people that will honestly examine their tobacco usage would argue that they are further ahead by continuing to use. The difficulty is in the details. Withdrawal from nicotine is hard. Our goal is to make this as painless as possible and provide support.

Almost everyone admitted has had a period of significantly reduced use or abstinence from the use of tobacco. Some withdrawal symptoms as well as psychological ones continue. Still the worst is over. Don't give in.

There is a safety net for anyone trying not to use a substance. The trick is to not have the substance readily available. If someone decides to use after a period of abstinence and the substance is at hand the odds of not using are very poor. If on the other hand, it requires a series of behaviors to obtain that substance each action required is an opportunity to re-think the decision to use. In essence this is much of what the OASAS regulations provide.

We know that we can't stop anyone from using tobacco if they are determined. We can offer support by not allowing tobacco products or paraphernalia to be easily accessed. We can also offer support in other ways.

- Staff is always available to talk and offer support.
- Nicotine patches, gum and throat lozenges are available from specified staff in each residence.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

- We will refer to other programs or medical providers as available.

There are consequences, in the form of points, for failure to comply with program rules. Tobacco products and paraphernalia will be viewed as contraband the same as alcohol or other drugs. NCFH will confiscate these when found. Nothing will be returned.

A room search for contraband will be done at staff discretion. In addition, any resident may be asked to empty their pockets at any time. Failure to do so will be treated in the same way that failure to submit to an alcohol or drug screen is.

Our primary objective is to help residents stop and stay stopped. If an individual's behavior indicates that there is little or no effort to remain tobacco-free discharge **may** result.

Frequently the response to becoming tobacco-free is "No one is going to tell me how to live my life or that I can't use tobacco." Our hope is that the resident with that attitude will carefully and honestly consider what is really going on. Is the real issue "being forced" or is this a way to avoid dealing with one more addiction?

### Passes

A pass is an approved absence from the facility. A pass request is to be submitted whenever it is likely that a resident will need to be away from the residence more than eight (8) consecutive hours. If in doubt submit the pass request.

A pass is not a vacation from working on recovery.

There are no other passes than the ones listed below.

### Types of Passes

- **Day Pass**

A **Day Pass** starts at the time approved by the Addictions Counselor for **Saturday or Sunday only** and ends at midnight of that day.

- **Emergency Pass**

An **Emergency Pass** depends on individual situations and is granted by the Addictions Counselor, Residence Manager, or Director of Services.

- **Legal Pass**

A **Legal Pass** starts and ends as approved by the Addictions Counselor. Before any **Legal Pass** is approved we must be able to verify from the Legal Agency involved or the resident's attorney that a personal appearance is required.

- **Medical Pass**

A **Medical Pass** must be submitted for any medical procedure that **may** require an absence from the residence of more than 8 hours. Starts and ends as approved by the Addictions Counselor.

Before any **Medical Pass** is approved two conditions must be met. They are:

We must be able to verify directly from the Medical Provider that the procedure is scheduled.

We must determine that the procedure makes sense both from a medical and recovery point of view. We will not interfere in the provision of any medical care. Certain choices by a resident however may indicate that this program is inappropriate for them and that a referral elsewhere is in everyone's best interests.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

- **Special Pass**

A special pass may be submitted for situations that would not be covered by any other type of pass. There must be a good reason for the pass to have it approved.

- **Weekend Pass**

A **Weekend Pass** starts on **Friday** and ends on Sunday at the times approved by the Addictions Counselor.

**For residents on Level IV a Weekend Pass** that only requires submission\* starts at 7:00 am on Saturday Morning and ends at 10:00 pm on Sunday. If a resident on Level IV wants to leave before 7:00 am on Saturday morning a pass must be submitted to and approved by the Addictions Counselor.

\*When in our judgment, the pass is clearly not in the resident's best interest we reserve the right to disapprove the pass. Disapproval will require that the Director of Services be in agreement with the counselor that the pass is ill advised.

### **Extension of time for Weekend Passes**

All passes are intended to allow the resident time to work on specific recovery issues. Resident's from St. Lawrence County are in effect given longer time "at home" than resident's that have to travel long distances to get home. Residents that live outside of St. Lawrence County may be allowed additional travel time on Friday only.

The following conditions must be met before a **Weekend Pass** starting on Friday will be considered:

1. All other conditions for the pass must be met.
2. The resident must be going to a location outside of St. Lawrence County.
3. All appointments at other service providers, including Outpatient Treatment must be kept. The failure to keep any appointment will result in 10 Points being assigned. If there is any misunderstanding about whether, you were supposed to attend an appointment we will accept what a staff member of that agency says. If you are concerned about this, request a written excuse or appointment card that indicates a change in appointment from the agency providing you with services. This will be the only acceptable proof in any grievance.

There will be serious consequences if it appears that missing any appointment was deliberate.

If the above conditions are met the pass will start on Friday at the time approved by the Addictions Counselor and end as indicated.

### **Time between Passes**

How often a pass can be taken depends upon the level. If a pass is permitted every 28 days, then 28 days must be between passes\*. An individual may not take a pass one weekend for the previous 28 days and then take a pass the following week for the next 28 days.

To determine when the next pass may be submitted, the first day of the previous pass is counted as day one. If the pass began on a Friday that would-be day one, day 14 or 28 would fall on a Thursday. The next pass could begin on Friday.

Each type of pass is considered separately. It would be possible to take a Weekend Pass this weekend and then a Day Pass the following week.

\*Exception: If a previous weekend pass was approved to start on Saturday technically the next weekend pass could not start until Saturday. To allow weekend passes starting on Friday 13 or 27 days between passes will be accepted.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

### How Passes Are To Be Requested

To apply for a **Day Pass** or **Weekend Pass**, complete a request form and give it to the Addictions Counselor or Residence Manager no later than 5:00 pm on the Wednesday before the pass is to begin. The Addictions Counselor decides if the pass should be approved.

All **Medical Passes** or **Legal Passes** are to be submitted as soon as the resident can after becoming aware of the need for a pass.

**Emergency Passes** are submitted as needed.

**Special Passes** are submitted as needed.

### Resident's Responsibilities Associated With Passes:

- Plan for your pass and have enough money for the pass. **NCFH will not advance money for a pass.**
- Return from pass on time. The only staff members that may approve the extension of a pass are the Residence Managers, the Addictions Counselors, or Director of Services
- Notify staff on duty of a decision not to use an approved pass
- Arrange for transportation. NCFH will provide transportation to and from the Canton or Potsdam Bus Stations only. Anyone using transportation other than the bus will have to make arrangements for transportation from the residence and to the residence
- Get required medications from the staff
- Make written arrangements to have chores done and give this to the Residence Manager
- Notify staff immediately upon return

Returning to the residence **ENDS** the pass.

### Resident Level At The Time a Pass Starts

Anyone going on a **Day Pass**, or **Weekend Pass** must be on the Level necessary for that pass **at the time the pass starts.**

A pass may be approved based upon a resident's actual or anticipated Level status. If the Level changes so that the resident no longer qualifies for the pass or the anticipated Level is not reached, **the pass is cancelled.** (Emergency, Medical or Legal passes are not cancelled.)

Approval of a **Special Pass** is not linked to a resident's level.

### Religious Services

Spiritual growth is an important part of recovery and we strongly support this without requiring any particular path. If you wish to attend formal religious services, you may but there are certain conditions and limitations as follow:

A formal religious service is one that is open to the public, is in a structure other than a private dwelling, is scheduled in advance, has both starting and ending times and is reasonably expected to have more than a handful of attendees. We are not prohibiting any type of religious activity only defining what a formal religious service is for this handbook.

Resident's may attend services within walking distance whenever they wish as long as they have sufficient time to attend and return within times allowed by their current level and attendance does not conflict with other program obligations. All that is required is to sign in and out with an accurate destination.

# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

A resident may attend services at a location beyond reasonable walking distance once per week. Transportation both to and from is the resident's responsibility. The person providing transportation should be someone that will be attending services as well.

When special times or arrangements are necessary to attend services the Residence Manager is to be consulted during their normal working hours. This is to be done at least one day in advance of the event for services held Tuesday thru Friday. For services held Saturday, Sunday or Monday consult with the Residence Manager no later than 2:00pm Friday. Plan ahead.

The Residence Manager will make the final decision and if approved will be documented in the Shift Report.

### Visitation

**The following are expected whenever a resident has a visitor:**

The resident may have visitors during these hours

Monday through Friday                      1:00 pm. to 9:00 pm

Saturday, Sunday and Holidays 10:00 am to 9:00 pm

The resident is to advise their visitor(s) that this is a tobacco-free program prior to the visitation if possible. The resident is also asked to tell their visitor(s) that the basement, second floor, bedrooms and staff areas are off limits unless accompanied by staff.

Visitors are not to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Visitors are not to bring tobacco products or paraphernalia onto corporate property. We will advise them of this at the time they sign in.

Visitors are expected not to swear.

There will be no inappropriate physical contact with a visitor.

Visitations will not excuse residents from regular program activities or responsibilities.

If the resident would like to have a visitor as a guest at a meal the Residence Manager should be advised in advance. The resident will be responsible for the \$2.00 per guest meal charge.

Any visitor that chooses not to comply with these expectations will be asked to leave. Repeated violations will result in that person no longer being allowed on corporate property.

Residents from another house and Supportive Living Residents are not considered visitors but have restrictions. The second floor or any bedroom that is not theirs is off limits.

### Visitation by Former Residents

Former residents may return for visitation during normal visiting hours with the following exceptions:

1. In possession of or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
2. Since discharge has behaved inappropriately while on corporate property or with current residents, and has been advised by staff that they are no longer welcome.

## Discharge & Retention

### Zero Tolerance Policy

Over the years, we have tried numerous responses to residents that have relapsed while in our program. Immediate Discharge was one. Allowing the resident to continue the program after relapse if certain conditions were met was another.

Each time we have allowed continued residency after relapse three things have occurred:

Operations Manual Revised 09/08      Resident Handbook      Revised 12/07/17      Page 36

This document is proprietary and may not be copied or distributed without the written authority of North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## **North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook**

- A very limited number of those getting a second chance actually completed the program. Of those that did complete even fewer had any meaningful abstinence after completing.
- Some of the residents viewed this second chance as a “Get out of jail free” opportunity and began using knowing they could do so until caught and then would be allowed to stay in the program.
- The number of residents that relapsed would increase every time we began to give second chances.

The second chance was not of benefit to the individual and it had negative impact on the entire community including staff. There are no longer second chances.

**If you are in possession\* of or use Over the Counter Medication, Prescribed Medication, or Substances that are not illicit per se but can be used to produce a high your discharge is automatic. It will still be your right to appeal the discharge but the possession or use will be considered a threat to the community and you may not continue in residence while the appeal is being considered.**

\* All Over the counter and prescription medications will be kept securely by NCFH. The only time a resident may keep medications on their person or in their room with written permission which is to be kept with the medication at all times.

### **Discharge Intent**

Our goal is to discharge each person admitted as Program Complete All Goals Met. Whenever we see that someone is unlikely to achieve that goal every effort will be made to retain them. With the resident’s cooperation, we attempt to identify the problem, its cause(s) and develop a plan to address the issue(s). These efforts and their results will be documented in the weekly Progress Notes.

Every discharge is intended to be in the best *long-term* interest of the resident. Sometimes this is a straightforward and simple decision; often it is a complex one. Each discharge is based upon the individual resident’s circumstances.

It is our policy to discharge residents under the most positive circumstance consistent with behavior and circumstances.

The actual wording for the type of discharge used in the Discharge Summary will be consistent with that used by NYS OASAS at the time of discharge.

### **Resident Initiated Discharge**

We will not keep any resident against their will. Any resident is free to leave at any time. The Discharge Type will reflect the circumstances of discharge.

An individual leaving “voluntarily” in an attempt to avoid another type of discharge will not work. For example, a resident with 27 points that is about to get an additional 3 points says that they are leaving will not receive a more favorable discharge.

Any resident that chooses to leave prior to advising staff or without staff knowledge will be reported to the authorities at the end of twenty-four hours. This will trigger a search involving as many agencies needed to ascertain the former resident’s location. To avoid this just advise staff and provide contact information.



# North Country Freedom Homes, Inc.

## Community Residential Services Handbook

The type of discharge will depend on circumstances and meet NCFH and OASAS conditions for the specific discharge.

### NCFH Initiated Discharge against Resident Wishes

#### ***Discharge Appeals Procedure***

(a) The Director of Services shall be responsible for any recommendation to discharge a patient against the patient's wishes. The Director of Services or his or her designee shall implement such recommendations only after he or she:

1. reviews the recommendation to discharge to ensure that the reason(s) is fair, not arbitrary or capricious, and is serious enough to warrant discharge;
2. reviews and evaluates the patient's total response to treatment, in light of the recommendation to discharge;
3. confers with appropriate staff to discuss the patient's response to treatment and the recommendation to discharge;
4. confirms that, within reasonable clinical judgment, all incremental interventions have been tried and failed, including consideration of transfer to another provider;
5. provides a written notice to the patient that indicates the reason(s) for the recommended discharge as well as required information on how to appeal;
6. if the patient appeals, the Director of Services meets with the patient to review the appeal no sooner than 24 hours after provision of the notice, to allow the patient time to seek the advice of others, if desired, and discusses with the patient the reasons to implement or rescind the recommendation to discharge;
7. informs the patient in writing of the appeal decision no later than 72 hours after the appeal is made;
  - (i) if discharge is decided after the appeal, assures that the patient receives information about treatment and referral options;
  - (ii) if rescission of the discharge is decided after the appeal, assure the patient full opportunity to continue treatment anew.

(b) For inpatient and residential providers, no patient shall be forced to leave the service until after completion of the aforesaid process. No patient shall be forced to leave the service between 6 P.M. and 8:00 A.M. unless appropriate arrangements have been made. Safe and appropriate transportation, travel arrangements, and travel costs shall be provided or arranged as needed.

(c) *None of the foregoing shall apply to an emergency discharge where the individual is reasonably determined to be a danger to others. A provider may make an emergency discharge immediately upon making such a determination, subject to the patient's right to appeal after the patient is discharged.*

(d) *A discharge pursuant to a patient's refusal to consent to a proper request to search in accordance with Section 815.10 of this Part may be made immediately upon the refusal, subject to the patient's right to appeal after the patient is discharged.*

(e) All of the foregoing must be documented in the patient's record. Said documentation shall consist of all resident records to date and scanned copies of the **Notice of Discharge for Cause** and **Findings of Discharge for Cause Appeal**

#### ***Discharge under Emergency Circumstances***

Any resident that:

- Is a threat to self or other's.
- Has tested positive for the use of alcohol or other substances and leaves corporate property.

## **North Country Freedom Homes, Inc. Community Residential Services Handbook**

- Consistently behaves in a way that creates an atmosphere for Residents or Staff that is disruptive to the overall program.

will be discharged immediately under Emergency Circumstances. This includes safe housing to the extent the resident's behavior allows. The appeals process may be started and or continued even though the individual is not residing in the residence. This process is explained in the written notice given to or mailed to the resident.

### ***Discharge not under Emergency Circumstances***

Generally, the resident may continue in residence until the Appeals Process has completed. During this period the resident must abide by all program rules and behave in a way that is non-disruptive. Doing either consistently will constitute choosing not to use the Discharge Appeals Procedure and ends the right to appeal.

### **Referral to Other Services**

At the individual's request NCFH will attempt to assist the resident in making appropriate referrals including further addiction treatment. The primary responsibility for obtaining continued or additional services is that of the resident. The Addictions Counselor or other staff will provide support and guidance by allowing fax and phone usage and written documentation requested. Proper releases of information must be signed. In those situations, where the resident is incapable of doing the necessary work staff will assume the lead role.

When it is obvious that services needed by the resident are unavailable locally, referral to other services will be discussed with the resident. The results of that discussion will guide additional planning.

We will not make referrals to other services when it is apparent that the request for a transfer is to avoid the consequences of disruptive behavior. At the resident's request and with signed releases we will provide information to whomever the resident requests. That information will be accurate from our perspective. The resident will be advised of the content and given the opportunity to revoke the release of information except in the case of a release that is non-revocable.

### **Readmission**

A former resident may request readmission through the normal admission process. All admission criteria must be met. The Director of Services will make the determination regarding appropriateness for readmission.

Readmission will be at the discretion of NCFH Inc.