



Atwater
Community
Residence
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Resident
Handbook

Resident Handbook

Welcome!

Atwater Home Community Residence is operated by Genesee/Orleans Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse (GCASA). Its mission is to offer individuals who are actively engaged in a pathway of recovery from addiction, a safe and stable residence. The length of stay at Atwater averages three months and is determined by a variety of factors, unique to each resident's needs in support of their personal recovery plan.

The entire staff of GCASA is committed to maintaining healthy and safe resources for individuals seeking recovery in their life. Each staff member is committed to assisting you as you seek to improve your wellness and establish a recovery lifestyle.

Upon admission to Atwater you will be assigned a Recovery Coach (RC). Together you will set a consistent time to meet each week. Your RC is the resource to assist in your efforts at development and progress in support of your personal recovery plan and a general orientation towards wellness. While your RC works directly with you on the specific parts of your personal recovery plan, each staff member of Atwater has a role in supporting your efforts. It is with great enthusiasm and hope we welcome you.

Residence at Atwater is voluntary and reciprocal. At any time if the program, resource or supports offered you do not meet your needs then you are free to depart. Likewise, at any time if you are not utilizing the program, resource or supports to advance your recovery then we can ask you to leave. In both scenarios Atwater has a Community Participation Review Process (CPRP) that will guide our disengagement.

The Atwater Community Residence is a valuable resource for the individual who is serious about growing into a recovery lifestyle and developing an orientation of wellness. It is also a finite resource which demands strong stewardship from both GCASA and each resident. In support of your current efforts and of those who will follow, we have created the following handbook. In it you will find a list of guidelines and scenarios that will govern most situations while you live at Atwater. By no means is this handbook complete. As we encounter situations we will work to include as well as clarify existing guidelines.

It is the hope of every staff member at GCASA that your stay at Atwater will help you move into the life of recovery you seek. If that happens for you, then your experience and positive contribution to the Atwater community will be a wonderful act of service that others will draw upon for many years.

Again, welcome.

Rights and Responsibilities of Atwater Residents

"It makes no sense to talk about rights without also talking about responsibilities."

The Last Lecture - Randy Pausch

As the spirit of the quote above attempts to present, there is a balance between "getting" and "giving". The resource provided by Atwater to its residents is offered with the understanding that it is an opportunity for learning and transition. So it benefits all parties involved in the educational process to establish and maintain very clear expectations and boundaries.

As you consider making Atwater a part of your recovery pathway and personal recovery plan the GCASA leadership team, Atwater staff and current residents offer the following list of rights, guidelines, expectations and responsibilities for your consideration.

When you review the content of this document with a GCASA RC- ask questions, consider how your role and participation at Atwater will support your transition into long-term, sustainable recovery and wellness. Now

is the time to ask questions and ensure a clear understanding of what's being asked of you and what you can expect, in support of your personal recovery plan.

Resident Rights

- Considerate and respectful care
- Provision of a personal service plan supportive of your personal recovery plan
- To be informed of all rules/regulations which apply to your residency
- Appropriate services provided by professional staff
- Given appropriate outside referral(s), when necessary
- Refuse any referral. In this case, a verbal recommendation to support wellness and safety will be given if the resident is not ACA/AMA
- To be treated in a manner that acknowledges and respects your cultural identity
- Safe and clean accommodations
- Healthy and adequate nutrition provided in a consistent manner
- Be provided an atmosphere free of sexual harassment from any source
- Provided privacy that is consistently balanced with community goals and support of individual resident RP(s). This includes, but is not limited to privacy of person, personal belongings and communications
- Afforded the unimpeded opportunity to contact OASAS if the GCASA CPRP is initiated and more information is required
- Opportunity to examine and receive an explanation of your bill regardless of the source of payment
- Raise objections as to the conditions of the Atwater facility and be afforded timely responses from the appropriate GCASA staff
- Obtain information from GCASA about how to file a complaint with OASAS concerning GCASA
- Be informed of any continuing healthcare need identified by your health care team while a resident and prior to discharge
- Prior to any discharge or transfer from Atwater be afforded a clear explanation of such actions

Resident Government

The resident community of Atwater has a vibrant representative government. It is the forum for any resident to bring forth concerns regarding house operation and community interaction. It also is used to foster a discussion of ideas for fundraising, outreach and other recovery support development.

Elections to leadership of the government body are held monthly. Offices consist of: President, Vice-President and Secretary. All residents are eligible to vote. Only residents who have resided at Atwater for one month will be eligible for an office position.

The government body is responsible for maintaining the by-laws and is the conduit for communication of GCASA directives to the resident community of Atwater.

Community Participation Review Process (CPRP)

Atwater is a community not insulated from the wider world. Situations occur and as a result it becomes clear that some residents are not presently prepared for the commitments and obligations it requires. To afford those residents who are utilizing the Atwater resource within their personal recovery plan, Atwater uses a CPRP to consider individual breaches of conduct. This process is outlined in a separate document reviewed and acknowledged by each prospective resident prior to admission. Outcomes from the review range from privilege loss to expulsion, yet the emphasis is always on the improvement of the Atwater community for all residents

About Confidentiality

Atwater abides by all the rules and regulations of the NYS OASAS. All records are secured and staff are trained on the importance of professional confidentiality.

If you wish for information to be released on your behalf, you must sign an official "Authorization to Release Information" form. This form is valid for one year from the date of signature but can be revoked by you at any time.

Atwater is part of GCASA programming and information is shared with GCASA staff. Professional "case conferencing" does take place within the agency among the clinic counseling staff. We do not require a release for this activity.

As you are afforded the respect of both professional and personal confidentiality as outlined, it is expected that you too will act in a manner of respect similar to that which has been afforded you. This is a core tenant of community living. Thus we would expect you respect the confidentiality of your fellow residents. Examples of this confidence are, and not limited to;

- Not taking photographs within the residence nor of your fellow residents
- Not revealing the names of your fellow residents to another person outside of the Atwater community
- Community discussions and interactions

Breaches of confidentiality are serious concerns to the wellbeing of the community and also offer the opportunity to negatively impact the successful achievement of every resident personal recovery plan. Thus each breach will be subject to a CPRP.

Medication

Individual wellness and ongoing medical treatments often require the use of over-the-counter (OTC) and/or prescribed medicine. The successful integration of each individual into the Atwater community depends on the staff being aware of any medicine being used by the individual, along with the individual fully understanding the rules associated with medicine while a resident of Atwater. For this reason, the welcoming process for each individual specifically addresses the current use of any medicine.

The following points are provided to establish an awareness and acknowledgement between the resident and staff as to the parameters surrounding the use of any medicine while living at Atwater. Details of the use and handling of both OTC and prescribed medicines will be addressed in detail with each resident by both staff and a counselor. It is the hope that each resident can use this specific set of guidelines as a base for positive, responsible and transparent behavior reinforcement in support of their personal recovery plan.

- If any new medications are prescribed or changes made to existing regimens you must inform the Atwater staff immediately
- Only prescription medications prescribed by your physician and OTC medications purchased by Atwater will be permitted for use
- Signed Authorizations of Release of Information must be on file for each of your prescribing entities
- No medicine (OTC or prescribed) are allowed in any resident living area.
- All medicine (OTC or prescribed) will be held and dispersed by Atwater staff.
- Medications will be taken in the staff office and consumption will be observed by a staff.
- Medications must be initialed for by both the resident and staff upon disbursement to resident
- All prescription refills and purchases of any OTC medicines must be done in coordination with Atwater staff.

Daily medication distribution is as follows;

- 6am – 725am
- 11am – 1230pm
- 530pm – 630pm
- 9pm – 1030pm

Allowing medications to be taken while a resident is at the sole discretion of GCASA and Atwater Staff. Not all medications and treatments align with the goal and guidelines of a long-term residential community. It is the responsibility of both staff and potential resident to ensure complete understanding of the mission of Atwater. If there is a question or concern regarding this understanding and potential conflict of some types of medicine, then Atwater may not be the correct resource for the individual at this time and an appropriate referral will be offered.

Toxicology Testing

Atwater is a resource for the individual who has made a conscious decision to pursue a pathway of recovery and increasing personal wellness. We recognize that transition from addictive behaviors to a sustainable pathway of recovery takes time, energy and support. Your acceptance into the Atwater community begins with your commitment to a pathway of abstinence as demonstrated by being substance free for at least (10) days and preferably having completed an in-patient, (28) day program.

Prior to admission, each resident is administered a toxicology test. Any positive results, for other than a prescribed medicine, will delay your acceptance until a future time.

In support of a community that focuses on recovery and transparency, random toxicology and breathalyzer tests are utilized at Atwater. All toxicology tests are supervised by staff. In the event that a same sex counselor is not working, an unsupervised test will be collected. A supervised test will be collected once a same sex staff is available. If you are asked to take a test you will have between (30-60) minutes to complete. You are to be in direct supervision of staff until the request is completed. Non-compliance with a test request or a failed test will initiate a CPRP.

Counseling/Recovery Coaching

Upon acceptance to Atwater you will be assigned a Primary Counselor and a Recovery Coach. Individual sessions with each will be coordinated for the duration of your residence. Your Counselor and RC will each have a unique role in the support of your personal recovery plan and focus upon wellness. Those roles will be clarified as you begin your interaction with them.

Outpatient Program Participation

Atwater residents are to be enrolled in an outpatient treatment program. Full compliance with the program and individualized treatment plan is expected. Successful participation and completion in these treatment services is a foundation upon which many successful personal recovery plans rest.

Mutual Aid & Self-Help Groups

The proven effectiveness of participation in these groups in support of long-term, personal recovery is without question. Building social supports, opportunities for service as well as finding resources and answers to questions assist the motivated individual to broaden their recovery lifestyle and establish new, constructive and creative behaviors.

Atwater strongly encourages each resident to participate in groups and meeting types that support their unique individuality, culture and personal goals. From AA, NA, SMART to Celebrate Recovery meetings (and others) to participation in cultural, civic, secular and religious support groups the opportunity is only limited by our imagination, ambition and motivation – the more invested, the more returned.

Staff at Atwater will assist in transport to meetings when able. Sign-up is required and limited to available space and vehicle availability. Facilitating your own ride is allowed and must be done within each individual's restrictive period guidelines. We also require a copy of the driver's license of anyone transporting a resident.

Initial Integration (Restriction) Period

For the first (14) days at Atwater each resident is afforded an intimate and supervised coordination of their schedule by the staff of Atwater. This helps the new resident understand the residence guidelines, ask questions and successfully integrate into the Atwater community.

Every resident is expected to sign-in/sign-out and state their destination, in the main book located in the staff office. This ensures, in the case of outside contact or the need to locate in the case of emergency, staff has an accurate understanding of the whereabouts of all residents.

Atwater is a structured environment. It is a resource that supports resident's efforts towards completion of their personal recovery plan. There should be minimal "free time" and as such Atwater guidelines describe how "free time" is structured into each day over the term of each person's stay. During the first two weeks' residents are allowed (1) hour each day of "free time". This is an opportunity to engage in an activity of your choosing at a particular destination, such as the "Y" or library. After two weeks', free time is increased to (2) hours each day.

In all instances a sign-in/sign-out is required and being escorted by a staff, to any off-site location, is also required during the first (14) days of integration

Visitation

Interaction with old and new acquaintances in support of your personal recovery plan, wellness and aspirations is an important part of your time at Atwater. To help with this component of individual need along with balancing the broader needs of a residential community we offer the following basic guidelines;

- (24) hour notice of any visit is required to be given to staff
- Visitors are subject all Atwater guidelines during their visit
- You are responsible to have your visitor(s) read & sign the confidentiality agreement

Passes

Passes are extended free time and occur on the weekends. They can also be used to accommodate personal emergencies during the week. Upon completion of thirty days at Atwater a resident is eligible for an (8) hr. pass. Upon successful use of an (8) hr. pass residents are eligible for a (24) hr. pass and upon completion of a (24) hr. pass the resident is eligible for a (48) hr. pass. In between the (24) hr. pass and (48) hr. pass you are required to take an (8) hr. pass.

- All passes are subject to staff verification of destination and eligibility of the resident is contingent upon no infraction or ongoing CPRP
- All completed pass request forms need to be submitted to your primary counselor by the Wednesday prior to the requested weekend
- Passes can be taken from Friday beginning at noon, concluding no later than Sunday at 8pm
- All passes are subject to revocation if a CPRP is commenced prior to the starting time
- Upon return all residents are subject to a breathalyzer and/or toxicology test

A pass is a wonderful example of earning a right based upon assuming increased responsibility. It is the hope of everyone at Atwater and GCASA that your use of passes becomes a valuable tool that helps you to successfully transition beyond Atwater and into the wider community.

Daily Schedule

All daily obligations, service commitments and responsibilities to the community must be completed prior to departing the residence. If you are departing for a pass, please confirm that your obligations, service commitments and responsibilities to the community are covered during your absence.

Weekdays

- All residents are expected to rise between 6am -7am.
- Breakfast is at 8am and is mandatory
- Meditation begins daily at 830am and is mandatory
- Residents are expected to be out of their rooms by 930am and until 4pm
- Lunch is at 1pm and is optional
- Napping is allowed only with counselor approval
- Dinner is at 5pm and is mandatory
- Kitchen is closed between 7pm and 6am daily
- In the house by 10pm
- Bedtime is midnight

Weekends/Holidays

- All residents are expected to rise by 10am
- In the house by 11pm
- Bedtime is 2am

These schedule bullets provide an outline of the Atwater community flow. Each resident will have appointments and requirements that must be coordinated (or dovetailed) among these core expectations. The coordination of schedule and commitments is a key skills development opportunity for each resident. Your Counselor, Recovery Coach and the Staff of Atwater are resources available to you as you begin to develop these abilities and skills.

Expenses

Budgeting is another skill set that Atwater offers residents the opportunity to develop. This skill begins with prioritizing individual necessities. Your Recovery Coach will be your greatest resource as you begin to plan for your needs.

Atwater provides room and laundry facilities. Residents are responsible for their own;

- Medical and health services
- Personal articles

Additionally, Atwater provides board for each resident as outlined in the schedule. If you receive food assistance, it is required you pass any assistance received along to the kitchen manager upon receipt.

House Activities/Events

All Atwater house activities/events are posted in advance and all residents are expected to participate. Events include movies, fairs, bowling and ball games. We invite your ideas for community building.

Community & Recreational Services

Resources in this category include religious, educational, informational, entertainment and similar. Your Recovery Coach will be able to assist you in discovering the rich resources in and around our community.

Smoking

The GCASA campus, of which Atwater is a part of, is a smoke free campus. Tobacco use is governed by the Tobacco Free guidelines and contract you signed upon acceptance to the community.

Service

Atwater is committed to the concept and efficacy of community service. This is demonstrated by each resident having a personal log to track the time they accumulate volunteering at local organizations. Each resident is expected to contribute (40) hours each month to local organizations, of which (5) may be at Atwater.

Your Recovery Coach will be a valuable resource in helping you meet this service commitment.

House and Grounds Upkeep & Maintenance

Care of the residence is an integral part of the Atwater community. It demonstrates our knowledge that others cared for this building, allowing it to be here for us when we needed it. Thus we do the same for future residents.

General housekeeping is expected from each resident. Examples are as follows;

- Closets and drawers are used for personal items
- Beds are made daily upon rising
- Rooms are left neat and clean
- Kitchen facilities are kept clean and organized
- Dining room chairs are pushed in
- Housekeeping (vacuuming, mopping, dusting) is done by each resident without request

Two times each week all residents will participate in what has become known as “SuperClean”. On Mondays extra time will be given for household cleaning. On Fridays extra time will be afforded for cleaning of bedrooms.

Caring for the grounds is also an expectation of each resident. Tasks include mowing, gardening, snow removal and trash pick-up/disposal. By no means is this a full listing and Atwater staff, maintenance as well as your Recovery Coach will assist in helping you coordinate your consistent contribution to these vital tasks. There is much opportunity in these tasks for each resident to try new things, assume leadership and develop their pro-active energies as well as develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills. All these are opportunities to develop the skills and talents that contribute to a lifestyle of recovery.

Personal Articles

Atwater, nor GCASA, are responsible for any personal items.

Telephones/Telephone Calls (@ 5/18/16)

Upon acceptance into the Atwater community each resident is afforded the opportunity to integrate into their new surroundings. “Being Present” is a significant contributor to that integration. For this reason, cell phones are not permitted for residents while living at Atwater.

Office phones can be used for local calls only as the discretion of the staff.

Atwater does not accept any collect calls.

(5/3/16 – This policy is effective for all new residents as of 5/18/16. For residents accepted prior to 5/18/16 cell phone use will not be permitted on the GCASA campus and their possession will be governed by the CPRP until the grandfathered resident departs the Atwater community)

Radio/TV/Computers

Electronics (ex. laptop computers, TV's and video players) are allowed in public spaces only.

Use of electronics is allowed from 520pm until 12am daily (2am on Friday and Saturday nights).

Radios are allowed in your bedroom. The volume should be considerate as should the tone, nature and imagery of all music played.

Weapons

No guns, knives or similar weapons are allowed on the GCASA campus.

Untoward (inappropriate/unwanted) Incidents

All untoward incidences are subject to an immediate CPRP. Examples of such behavior;

- Verbal abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual activity between staff and/or residents
- Threats to other residents and staff
- Commission of a crime or criminal act
- Physical abuse and/or violent acts towards self or another

This list is not complete and is offered as example only. Determination of acts that are subject to a CPRP (immediate or otherwise) and are the sole judgement of Atwater and/or GCASA staff. The guiding principle is always the concern for the health and safety of the staff and residents of Atwater as well as the wider GCASA community.

Wrap-Up

This handbook is a general list of items and guidelines for consideration and awareness. They are by no means a complete listing of available resources, rules or expectations for residency at Atwater. The mission of Atwater specifically, is to be a resource for motivated individuals seeking a transition from addiction to recovery, along with a general elevation and establishment of wellness, throughout their life. Often (if not always) a motivated individual will be a pro-active member of the community, seeking ways to better themselves and the place they call home. As the greater part of Atwater governance is self-governance, if a resident has the need to engage in a CPRP, it will quickly come into consideration whether the resource of a safe and stable residential setting may be better utilized by another person with personal goals more aligned with the mission of Atwater.

The Atwater community can be described as a place where individuals ask questions, receive answers and are consistently working towards a lifestyle of personal recovery and wellness. That is a lifestyle that facilitates self-support first and service to the wider community, closely thereafter. These are the foundations of long-term, sustainable recovery as we have seen demonstrated by those living a recovery lifestyle.

If you seek a place to aid in your efforts at establishing a lifestyle of recovery, you are in the right place.

We welcome you and your constructive participation in the Atwater Community.