

Grace House Resident Handbook

Grace For Addictions • 1311 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50314 Office: 515-220-8771 •
Warmline: 515-310-DIAL (3425) • gracehouse@graceforaddictions.org

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Welcome to Grace House

To every woman who walks through this door:

You are not defined by what you have been through. You are not the worst thing that has ever happened to you. You are not your struggles, your history, or your hardest seasons.

You are someone who chose to take a step — and that step matters. It is courageous, even when it doesn't feel that way.

Grace House exists because we believe every person in recovery deserves more than survival. You deserve a home — a real one. A place where you are known by name, not by case number. A place where you are seen, not surveilled. A place where you belong.

This is a peer community. Everyone here — including the people who help facilitate it — has walked a road that includes struggle and healing. There is no hierarchy of worthiness here. There is only a shared commitment to show up for ourselves and for one another.

This handbook is your guide to life at Grace House. It explains how our community works, what you can expect from us, and what we ask of you in return. Please read it carefully, ask questions when something is unclear, and refer back to it whenever you need to.

Most of all, know this: you belong here. We are glad you are here. And we are committed to walking this season of life with you.

With hope and respect,

The Grace House Community

Operated by Grace For Addictions Office: 515-220-8771 • Warmline: 515-310-DIAL (3425) •
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Program Philosophy

Our Foundation

Grace House is built on a simple but powerful belief: people in recovery are capable, whole, and worthy of dignity at every stage of the journey. We do not treat recovery as a problem to be managed. We treat it as a life to be lived — fully, freely, and with community support.

Multiple Pathways, One Community

We honor the reality that recovery looks different for every person. There is no single right way to heal. At Grace House, all evidence-based recovery pathways are welcomed and respected, including:

- 12-Step programs (Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Celebrate Recovery, and others)
- SMART Recovery and other secular, science-based approaches
- Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) — including methadone, buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone), and naltrexone — prescribed and monitored by licensed medical providers
- Faith-based recovery frameworks
- Trauma-informed therapy and counseling
- Wellness practices including mindfulness, exercise, nutrition, and creative expression
- Harm reduction-informed approaches

You will never be required to identify with any particular recovery identity or program. What you will be asked to do is engage — with your own growth, with this community, and with the commitments you make here.

Who Grace House Serves (Eligibility)

Grace House serves adult women who are building a life in recovery. There are two pathways to eligibility:

- **Recovery pathway:** a personal history of substance use or mental-health-related trauma and a commitment to living substance-free.
- **Family pathway:** a parent, partner, or child with a history of substance use disorder or mental-health-related trauma, where stable, structured, recovery housing could support the individual or family.

Both pathways carry the same expectations, the same dignity, and the same community membership. Admission decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, national

origin, disability, or any other protected status, and in full compliance with the Fair Housing Act.

Removal from the Program

When a program-rule violation or conduct that threatens another resident's life, safety, or recovery results in immediate termination of program participation, Grace House will explain the decision verbally and give the resident two hours from that notice to leave the property, subject to any longer notice or other process required by applicable law. Staff will document the reason and notice time and provide written confirmation. During an active emergency, staff may take lawful protective action immediately. Grace House will make reasonable efforts to assist with next steps. Belongings that cannot accompany the resident will be documented, securely stored and made available for later retrieval under the belongings policy. Any required legal process will be followed. Removal decisions remain reviewable through the grievance process and are carried out with dignity.

Change Course Leaders (Partner Program)

Change Course is an **independent, outside program** — it is not a Grace House or GFA program. Change Course has **Leaders only** — there are no Change Course “participants.”

- **Qualification and acceptance as a Change Course Leader is determined solely by Change Course.** Grace House plays no role in selecting, qualifying, or approving Change Course Leaders.
- Change Course Leaders take part in **extensive Change Course programming Monday through Thursday**. Because of this substantial structured engagement, Grace House requires Change Course Leaders to add only **two (2) additional supportive activities per week** — in place of the standard phase-based recovery activity requirement.
- Change Course Leaders are expected to remain in full compliance with **all Change Course program requirements**, which are set and administered by Change Course, not by Grace House.
- All other Grace House expectations (house meeting, curfew, coaching and daily check-ins, fees, community standards) apply to Change Course Leaders exactly as they do to every participant.

Trauma-Informed Care

Grace House operates within a trauma-informed framework, which means we understand that many of the behaviors, struggles, and patterns we see in ourselves and each other are often rooted in experiences of pain, loss, and trauma — not in moral failure or personal weakness.

Our five core trauma-informed principles guide everything we do:

Five Core Principles

SAFETY — You have the right to feel physically and emotionally safe at Grace House. We create and maintain that safety together.

TRUST — We are transparent in how decisions are made, and we do what we say we will do.

CHOICE — You retain agency over your own life and recovery decisions whenever possible.

COLLABORATION — Decisions that affect residents are made with resident input, not just for residents.

EMPOWERMENT — Our goal is to build your capacity, not your dependence. Every policy is designed to help you grow stronger, not keep you compliant.

Grace-Based Accountability

We believe that accountability without compassion produces shame, and shame is one of the greatest barriers to sustained recovery. At Grace House, accountability is not punitive — it is restorative.

When someone falls short of a commitment, our first question is not 'what is the consequence?' but 'what happened, and how do we move forward together?' This does not mean there are no expectations or no consequences — it means that consequences are always proportionate, transparent, and aimed at restoration rather than punishment.

Peer-Led Community Model

Grace House is a peer-led recovery residence. This means the culture, care, and community of this home is built by the people who live in it. Experienced residents mentor newer ones. Everyone shares household responsibilities. Leadership within the house is earned through character and consistency, not assigned by credential.

This model is intentional. Research consistently shows that peer support is one of the most powerful catalysts for sustained recovery. You are not just receiving help here — you are also giving it, and that matters deeply.

Resident Rights

As a resident of Grace House, you have the following rights. These rights are non-negotiable and may not be waived, modified, or removed as a condition of residency.

Rights Regarding Dignity and Person

- You have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion at all times.
- You have the right to be addressed by your preferred name and pronouns.

- You have the right to privacy in your personal communications, including phone calls, letters, and electronic messaging.
- You have the right to manage your own finances, employment, and personal affairs without interference.
- You have the right to keep and access your own identification documents (ID, Social Security card, birth certificate, etc.) at all times.
- You have the right to receive and send personal mail without interception or inspection.

Rights Regarding Recovery

- You have the right to pursue the recovery pathway of your choice, including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), without discrimination or penalty.
- You have the right to choose your own healthcare providers, counselors, and support services in the community.
- You have the right to be free from pressure to affiliate with any specific religious, spiritual, or recovery ideology.
- You have the right to receive medication prescribed by a licensed provider, subject to the house medication policy.

Rights Regarding Residence

- You have the right to a clean, safe, and habitable living environment.
- You have the right to understand all house policies before agreeing to them.
- You have the right to notice and any other process required by applicable law. The Unified Removal and Discharge Process explains verbal notice, written confirmation, the departure period, and lawful protective action during an active emergency. Nothing in that process waives your legal rights.
- You have the right to a fair and transparent grievance process if you believe your rights have been violated or a policy has been applied unfairly.
- You have the right to be free from unlawful searches of your personal belongings.
- You have the right to reasonable accommodations for disability-related needs.

Rights Regarding Confidentiality

- You have the right to confidentiality of your participation in Grace House, subject only to mandatory reporting obligations under Iowa law.
- You have the right to know what information about you is shared, with whom, and why.

- You have the right to provide or withhold consent for release of your information to outside parties.

Rights Regarding Fair Treatment

- You have the right to be free from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or any other protected characteristic.
- You have the right to be free from harassment, intimidation, or retaliation from staff or other residents.
- You have the right to access community resources, legal counsel, or outside advocacy without interference.

If You Believe Your Rights Have Been Violated

You may file a grievance using the Grace House Grievance Procedure (see the Grievance Procedure section).

You may contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission: 1-800-457-4416

You may contact the Disability Rights Iowa: 1-800-779-2502

You may contact the U.S. HUD Office of Fair Housing: 1-800-669-9777

No retaliation will be taken against any resident for asserting their rights or filing a complaint.

Resident Responsibilities

Living in community means contributing to it. The following responsibilities are what we ask of every resident — not to control you, but because a healthy household requires everyone to show up.

Financial Responsibilities

- Pay your weekly program fee on time. If you are experiencing financial difficulty, speak with the House Manager before your payment is due — not after.
- Maintain your own financial accounts. Grace House does not control, hold, or manage residents' money.
- Contribute to shared household expenses as outlined in your Participant Agreement.

Household Responsibilities

- Complete your weekly chore assignment thoroughly and on time.
- Keep your personal space (bedroom, bathroom area) clean and organized.

- Clean up after yourself in all shared spaces, including the kitchen, living room, and laundry area.
- Respect all common areas as shared space — not personal space.
- Report maintenance issues or safety concerns to the House Manager promptly.

Community Responsibilities

- Treat every resident, guest, and community member with respect and dignity.
- Maintain a substance-free environment. Do not bring alcohol, illegal substances, or non-prescribed medications into the house or onto the property.
- Do not engage in physical, verbal, or emotional intimidation, harassment, or violence of any kind.
- Honor the privacy of other residents. Do not share personal information about another resident outside the house.
- Honor quiet hours to support everyone's sleep and wellbeing.

Recovery Responsibilities

- Engage in your personal recovery plan. This does not prescribe a specific program, but it does require active engagement with your own growth.
- Attend required house meetings and community gatherings.
- Comply with drug testing requirements as outlined in the Participant Agreement.
- Notify the House Manager if you are struggling or feel at risk. You will not be punished for being honest.

Behavioral Responsibilities

- Honor your curfew unless prior approval has been granted.
- Follow the visitors policy.
- Comply with the medication policy.
- Do not engage in illegal activity inside or outside the home.
- Do not remove other residents' belongings without permission.

House Expectations

These expectations exist to make Grace House a safe, functional, and healing environment for everyone. They are not designed to restrict your freedom — they are designed to protect the community we are building together.

Substance-Free Environment

Grace House is an alcohol- and drug-free home. This commitment protects every person in this community.

- No alcohol, illegal drugs, or non-prescribed medications may be brought onto the property at any time.
- Residents may not use substances while living at Grace House, whether on or off the property.
- Residents on Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) are fully supported and may continue their prescribed medications under the house medication policy.
- Random drug screens may be requested at any time. Refusal to test is treated the same as a positive result.
- If you are struggling with cravings or feel at risk, please talk to someone. This is not a violation — this is using your recovery community exactly as it was designed.

Quiet Hours and Community Rhythm

Consistent sleep and shared routines support recovery. We ask all residents to honor the following schedule:

Time	Expectation
10:00 PM – 7:00 AM (Sun–Thu)	Quiet hours. Keep voices, music, and devices at low volume. Phone calls in private spaces.
11:00 PM – 7:00 AM (Fri–Sat)	Quiet hours on weekends.
7:00 AM daily	Common areas are open. Morning routines begin.
12:00 PM daily	Bedrooms should be tidied. Daytime activities and obligations underway.

Common Areas

- Common areas are for everyone. Clean up after every use.
- Kitchen: wash your dishes within 2 hours of using them. Do not leave food on counters.
- Living room: return furniture to its original position after use. No shoes on furniture.
- Laundry: complete your laundry in one session. Do not leave laundry in machines for more than 30 minutes after it is finished.
- Bathrooms: wipe down surfaces after use. Dispose of personal hygiene products properly.

Personal Space

- Your bedroom is your private space. Treat it with care.
- Residents may decorate their rooms in personal ways that do not damage walls or fixtures.
- Bedrooms may not be locked while other residents are home during nighttime hours, in order to maintain the open household environment.
- You are responsible for keeping your bedroom clean. Rooms are subject to wellness checks with 24-hour notice (except in emergencies).

Electronics and Technology

- Personal phones and devices are allowed. Please honor quiet hours and common-area courtesy.
- Social media use that compromises the privacy or reputation of other residents is a serious violation of community trust.
- House WiFi is provided for resident use. Illegal activity conducted via the house network is prohibited.

Pets

- Pets are not permitted at Grace House unless approved in advance by the House Manager as a disability-related accommodation.
- Approved emotional support animals must have current vaccination records on file.

Smoking

- Smoking and vaping are permitted only in designated outdoor areas.
- Do not smoke within 20 feet of any entrance or window.
- Please dispose of cigarette waste responsibly.

Recovery Participation Expectations

Grace House is a recovery-focused community. Living here means actively engaging in your own recovery journey — not performing recovery for someone else, but genuinely investing in your own healing and growth.

What Active Recovery Engagement Looks Like

Policy ID GH-RECOVERY-001 v2.0 — phase-based requirement; supersedes the flat two-per-week standard.

Recovery Activity Requirements by Phase

Phase	Recovery activities per week
Phase 1 (Days 1–30)	4
Phase 2 (Days 31–90)	3
Phase 3 (Days 91+)	2

What counts as a recovery activity: 12-step meetings (AA/NA), SMART Recovery, Celebrate Recovery, individual therapy or counseling, sessions with your life coach or recovery coach, church or worship services, Bible study, the Tuesday GFA Recovery Community (GFARC) gathering, and other structured community-based recovery activities.

What does not count: the weekly Grace House community meeting. House meeting attendance is a separate, mandatory expectation and may not be counted toward your weekly recovery activity total.

Life Coach / Recovery Coach (required for all participants):

- Every participant selects a life coach or recovery coach at intake.
- Daily check-ins through the VRCC app are required in **every** phase.
- Coaching sessions: **weekly** in Phase 1, **biweekly** in Phase 2, **monthly** in Phase 3. Coaching sessions count toward your weekly recovery activity total.
- Completing community service, employment, job training, education, or caregiving obligations.
- Engaging in your individual recovery plan with honesty and intention.

House Meetings

Grace House holds a mandatory community meeting once per week. This meeting is the heartbeat of the household. It is where we share, resolve conflicts, make decisions together, celebrate milestones, and maintain our sense of shared life.

- All residents are expected to attend unless prior approval has been granted.
- Meetings are facilitated by rotation among residents.
- All voices are welcome. All perspectives are respected.
- What is shared in house meeting stays in house meeting.

Individual Recovery Planning

Within 72 hours of intake, each resident will complete an Individual Recovery Plan with support from the House Manager or a peer mentor. This plan identifies:

- Your personal recovery goals

- Your chosen recovery pathway and support structure
- Your employment, education, or community service commitments
- Identified strengths, supports, and areas of growth
- Short-term milestones and how success will be measured

Recovery plans are reviewed and updated monthly. They belong to you — not to the house — and are written in your voice.

No Coerced Affiliation

You will never be required to attend a specific recovery program, claim a particular recovery identity, pray in a specific way, or align with any ideology as a condition of living at Grace House. Multiple recovery pathways are honored equally here.

Curfew and Daily Structure

Curfew

Curfew is a structure designed to protect your sleep, your safety, and the community's sense of stability — not to restrict your life.

Policy ID GH-CURFEW-001 v3.0 — supersedes all prior curfew tables.

Phase	Weeknight (Sun–Thu)	Weekend (Fri–Sat)
Phase 1 (Days 1–30)	9:00 PM	10:00 PM
Phase 2 (Days 31–90)	10:00 PM	11:00 PM
Phase 3 (Days 91+)	11:00 PM	Midnight

Hard ceiling: No curfew at Grace House extends past midnight in any phase, for any reason other than verified current employment.

The only curfew exception is current employment. A participant whose verified work schedule conflicts with curfew may be granted an employment-based adjustment covering scheduled shifts plus reasonable travel time. A copy of the work schedule must be on file with the House Manager. No other exceptions (social, family, recreational, or recovery-activity) extend curfew.

Curfew Extensions and Overnight Passes

- Curfew adjustments are granted **only for verified current employment**. Submit your work schedule to the House Manager; the adjustment covers scheduled shifts plus reasonable travel time.
- Overnight passes may be granted after 60 days of residency to residents in good standing.

- Overnight passes require a written request submitted 48 hours in advance, including the location and host name.
- More than three curfew violations in a 30-day period will result in a community accountability conversation and potential curfew reset.

Morning Routine

A consistent morning routine is one of the most powerful recovery tools available. Residents are encouraged to establish a morning routine that includes:

- Rising at a consistent time (no later than 10:00 AM on days without obligations)
- Personal hygiene and room tidying
- Breakfast and/or connection with housemates
- Engagement with daily obligations (work, school, appointments, volunteer activities)

Daytime Expectations

Grace House is not a daytime respite program. Residents are expected to be actively engaged in employment, education, job training, volunteering, or scheduled appointments during weekday daytime hours (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM). Exceptions require prior approval from the House Manager.

Medication and Appointments

Residents are responsible for scheduling and attending all medical, counseling, and recovery-related appointments. The house schedule and curfew framework are designed to accommodate these commitments. If a conflict exists, bring it to the House Manager immediately.

Visitors Policy

Grace House is a private home. Our visitors policy protects the safety, comfort, and recovery environment of every resident.

General Visitor Guidelines

- Visitors are welcome in common areas only. Guests may not enter any resident's bedroom.
- All visitors must be introduced to and acknowledged by the House Manager or on-call peer leader.
- Residents are responsible for the behavior of their guests.
- Visitors who behave inappropriately, appear intoxicated, or make other residents uncomfortable may be asked to leave immediately.

- Visitors may not stay overnight unless prior approval has been granted through the extended guest process.

Visitor Hours

Day	Visitor Hours
Monday – Thursday	10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
Friday – Saturday	10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
Sunday	12:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Prohibited Visitors

- No visitors who are currently using substances or appear intoxicated.
- No visitors who pose a documented safety concern to any current resident.
- No male visitors in bedroom areas. Male visitors are welcome in common areas during visitor hours.
- No visitors under the age of 12 without specific approval (to protect all residents' privacy and comfort).

Overnight Guests

Overnight guests are a privilege extended to residents in Phase 2 and Phase 3 who are in good standing.

- A written overnight guest request must be submitted to the House Manager 48 hours in advance.
- Approved guests must sleep in common area (living room) only — never in bedrooms.
- A maximum of one overnight guest per resident is permitted.
- Overnight guests may not remain in the home during daytime obligation hours (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM weekdays).

Medication Policy

Grace House is fully supportive of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and all prescription medications. We recognize that medication is healthcare — not a compromise of recovery.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Residents taking MAT medications — including methadone, buprenorphine (Suboxone), naltrexone (Vivitrol), or any other FDA-approved medication for opioid or alcohol use disorder — are fully welcome at Grace House. Their use of prescribed medication is private health information and will never be used to stigmatize, limit, or dismiss their recovery.

Medication Storage and Administration

- All prescription medications must be disclosed to the House Manager upon intake.
- Medications must be stored in a secure, designated personal lockbox.
- Controlled substances (including MAT medications) must be stored in a house-provided locked medication safe if a personal lockbox is not available.
- Medications may not be shared with any other resident under any circumstances.
- Residents are responsible for taking their own medications independently. Grace House staff do not administer medications.

New Prescriptions

- Any new prescription obtained while living at Grace House must be reported to the House Manager within 24 hours.
- Residents must provide written documentation from their prescribing provider for any controlled substance.
- Over-the-counter medications with potential for misuse (certain cough syrups, antihistamines, etc.) should be disclosed and stored appropriately.

Medical Privacy

Your medical information — including what medications you take — is private. Grace House staff will not disclose your medication information to other residents, family members, or outside parties without your written consent, except as required by law.

MAT-Affirming Statement

Grace House explicitly affirms that Medication-Assisted Treatment is an evidence-based, medically appropriate approach to recovery.

No resident will be asked to discontinue MAT as a condition of residency.

No resident will face stigma, reduced privileges, or negative consequences for taking prescribed MAT medications.

Residents taking MAT are full and equal members of this recovery community.

Confidentiality Policy

What happens at Grace House stays at Grace House. Confidentiality is one of the foundations of our community trust.

What We Protect

- The identity of anyone participating in Grace House.
- Personal information shared in house meetings, peer conversations, or with staff.
- Your recovery history, medical information, and legal history.
- Your current address and contact information.
- Any information that could identify you as a person in recovery.

What You Must Protect

Every resident has the same confidentiality obligations to their housemates. This means:

- Do not share another resident's personal information outside the house.
- Do not post photos, videos, or identifying information about other residents on social media.
- Do not disclose who lives here to people who don't need to know.
- Honor the trust placed in you when other residents share in meetings or conversations.

Required Disclosures

There are limited situations in which Grace House is required by law to disclose information, even without your consent. These include:

- Imminent risk of harm to yourself or another specific person (duty to warn under Iowa law).
- Suspected abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult (mandatory reporting under Iowa Code Chapter 232).
- Court order requiring disclosure.

In all other cases, your information will not be disclosed without your written, signed consent.

HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2

Substance use disorder treatment information is protected by federal law under 42 CFR Part 2, which provides stronger protections than standard HIPAA. While Grace House is a peer-led residence (not a clinical treatment provider), we align our confidentiality practices with the highest standard of protection.

Grievance Procedure

If you believe you have been treated unfairly, your rights have been violated, or a policy has been applied inconsistently, you have the right to file a grievance. This process is taken seriously, and no retaliation will occur for using it.

Grievance Process — Step by Step

Step 1 — Informal Resolution (Within 3 Days)

If you are comfortable doing so, speak directly with the person involved.

Be specific about what occurred, how it affected you, and what resolution you are seeking.

If the concern involves a housemate, a peer mediator can be requested.

Many concerns can be resolved quickly through honest conversation.

Step 2 — Formal Written Grievance (Within 10 Days of Incident)

Complete a Grace House Grievance Form (available from the House Manager or in the resident binder).

Submit the completed form to the House Manager.

You will receive a written acknowledgment within 24 hours confirming receipt.

Your grievance will be reviewed within 5 business days.

Step 3 — House Manager Response (Within 5 Business Days)

The House Manager will investigate the grievance by reviewing the facts and speaking with relevant parties.

A written response will be provided to you within 5 business days of receiving your form.

The response will include findings, any action taken, and the reasoning behind the decision.

Step 4 — Appeal (Within 5 Days of House Manager Response)

If you are not satisfied with the House Manager's response, you may appeal to Grace For Addictions leadership.

Submit a written appeal to thomas@graceforaddictions.org with a copy of your original grievance and the response received.

A final decision will be provided within 10 business days.

Step 5 — External Resources

At any point in this process, you may also contact external agencies.

Iowa Civil Rights Commission: 1-800-457-4416

Disability Rights Iowa: 1-800-779-2502

HUD Fair Housing: 1-800-669-9777

Iowa HHS — child or dependent-adult abuse reporting: 1-800-362-2178

Anti-Retaliation

No resident will face any negative consequences — including threats, changes in privileges, or pressure toward discharge — for filing a grievance in good faith. Retaliation is itself a serious violation and will be addressed through the same process.

Safety Expectations

Safety is not just a rule — it is a value. Every person in this home deserves to feel safe: physically, emotionally, and relationally. These expectations exist to protect that safety.

Physical Safety

- Violence of any kind — physical assault, threats of violence, destruction of property — will result in immediate lawful safety intervention and may result in termination of program participation under the Unified Removal and Discharge Process, including its notice, departure period, and applicable-law safeguards.
- Weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited on the property.
- Emergency contact numbers are posted in the kitchen, bathroom, and entryway.
- In an emergency, always call 911 first.
- Grace House has a safety plan and fire escape route posted in each common area and near each exit.

- Tampering with smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, or safety equipment is strictly prohibited.

Emotional and Relational Safety

- Verbal aggression, intimidation, threatening language, or emotional manipulation are not tolerated.
- Bullying, gossip campaigns, exclusion, and other forms of social aggression are violations of community standards.
- Each resident has a right to their emotional experience without being dismissed, mocked, or pressured.
- Romantic or sexual relationships between residents are strongly discouraged during early recovery and may be addressed in accountability conversations if they become disruptive to the community.

Crisis Safety Protocol

If you or another resident is in crisis:

1. Call 911 if there is immediate danger to life.
2. Contact the House Manager or on-call peer leader immediately.
3. Call Iowa Substance Use Crisis Line: 1-844-775-5837 (24/7)
4. Call National Crisis Lifeline: 988 (call or text, 24/7)
5. Do not leave a person in crisis alone.
6. Document the situation and notify Grace House leadership as soon as possible.

Mandatory Reporting

Grace House staff and peer leaders are required by Iowa law to report suspected child abuse or neglect, and suspected abuse or neglect of a dependent adult, to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. This is not optional. If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult in your life, please speak with the House Manager confidentially.

Discharge Policies

Leaving Grace House — whether planned or unplanned — is handled with dignity and care. Our goal is always to support successful transitions, not punitive exits.

Planned (Voluntary) Discharge

When a resident is ready to move to the next chapter — independent housing, transitional housing, reconnection with family — we celebrate that step.

- Please provide at least 14 days' written notice to the House Manager.

- Your final day and departure plan will be documented.
- A transition planning meeting will be offered to help you connect to ongoing recovery support, housing resources, and community services.
- You are always welcome to return to Grace House events and community as an alum.

Administrative Discharge

Situations may arise that require the house to initiate a discharge. These decisions are made with care and are never taken lightly.

Grounds for Administrative Discharge

- Non-payment of program fees (after documented attempts at payment planning).
- Sustained, documented refusal to engage in recovery participation requirements.
- Behaviors that pose a documented, ongoing safety risk to other residents.
- Court-ordered removal from the residence.

Unified Removal and Discharge Process

When a program-rule violation or conduct that threatens another resident's life, safety, or recovery results in immediate termination of program participation, Grace House will explain the decision verbally and give the resident two hours from that notice to leave the property, subject to any longer notice or other process required by applicable law. Staff will document the reason and notice time and provide written confirmation. During an active emergency, staff may take lawful protective action immediately. Grace House will make reasonable efforts to assist with next steps. Belongings that cannot accompany the resident will be documented, securely stored and made available for later retrieval under the belongings policy. Any required legal process will be followed.

7. The House Manager will document the specific concern with dates, descriptions, and prior interventions.
8. A conversation will be held with the resident before a discharge decision is made, whenever safety permits.

The resident will receive written documentation of the reason, a referral to emergency housing resources, and information about the grievance process.

Immediate Safety Response

Immediate safety concerns include physical violence or credible threats of violence; illegal substances introduced into the home in a way that poses immediate risk to others; or an immediate, documented safety emergency that cannot otherwise be managed. Lawful protective action may be taken immediately during an active emergency. The unified removal and discharge process above governs the notice and departure period; any longer notice or other process required by applicable law will be followed.

Discharge Resource Support

Regardless of the type of discharge, every departing resident will receive:

- Written referral list for housing resources in the Des Moines area
- Contact information for Iowa 211 (housing, crisis, and basic needs navigation)
- Recovery support referrals
- Written documentation of their stay at Grace House for use in housing applications

Return-to-Use Response Framework

We reject the word 'relapse' as a moral verdict. A return to use is a medical and behavioral event — not a character failure, not an identity statement, and not the end of someone's recovery story.

Grace House's response to return-to-use events is grounded in science, compassion, and a genuine commitment to the person's recovery — not compliance theater.

Guiding Principles

What We Believe About Return-to-Use

Return to use is a common, documented part of the recovery process for many people — not a sign of failure.

The response to return-to-use shapes whether a person survives and stays engaged with recovery, or disengages out of shame.

Our goal is always to keep the person connected to support, even if circumstances require a temporary change in housing.

Disclosure of a return-to-use event, or help-seeking behavior, is never punished — it is encouraged and supported.

We apply harm reduction principles at all times to reduce the risk of overdose and serious harm.

Immediate Response Protocol

When a return-to-use event is identified:

12. Ensure immediate safety. If the resident is in medical distress, call 911 immediately. Naloxone (Narcan) is available in the house medicine cabinet.
13. Contact the House Manager or on-call peer leader.
14. Reduce judgment and increase connection. Meet the resident where they are with compassion.

15. Conduct a substance-free verification before the resident re-enters shared spaces.
16. Schedule a care conversation within 24 hours to assess needs, risks, and next steps.

Care Conversation Framework

Within 24–48 hours of a confirmed return-to-use event, the House Manager or senior peer mentor will conduct a care conversation with the resident. This conversation is not a disciplinary hearing — it is a recovery conversation.

The conversation will explore:

- What happened, and what circumstances surrounded it?
- Is the resident safe? Are there immediate medical concerns?
- What does the resident need right now to get stable?
- What do they want their next step to be?
- What changes to the resident's recovery plan might help?
- Is a higher level of care (detox, residential treatment) needed?

Housing Determination

A return-to-use event does not automatically result in discharge. The following framework guides the decision:

Situation	Likely Response
First event, resident discloses voluntarily, no safety risk, seeking help	Remain in house. Intensified recovery support. Possible clinical referral.
First event, discovered rather than disclosed, resident engaged and remorseful	Remain in house with enhanced accountability plan and weekly check-ins.
Event involves substances brought into house (risk to others)	Temporary housing pause while safety plan is developed. Return possible with agreement.
Repeated events with escalating risk, limited engagement	Care referral for higher level of care. Support transition to appropriate setting. Door remains open.

Overdose or medical emergency	Immediate medical response. 72-hour stabilization support. Care conference to determine next steps.
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Return After Treatment

Any resident who departs for a higher level of care (detox, residential treatment, stabilization center) is welcome to return to Grace House upon completing that level of care, subject to bed availability. Prior residency at Grace House is considered a strong positive factor in any return application.

Naloxone (Narcan) Policy

Naloxone is available in the Grace House medication cabinet and near the front door.

All residents will receive naloxone training within 7 days of intake.

Call 911 immediately for a suspected overdose. Iowa law provides limited protections for qualifying people who seek medical help for a drug-related overdose; it does not guarantee immunity from all legal consequences.

Administering naloxone to someone in need is never a violation of house policy.
