

Nurstead Mental Health & Consulting Services

Transitional Living Client Handbook



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Welcome to Transitional Living

Our transitional living program is for adults experiencing homelessness and in need of life skills and therapeutic services to help with transitioning to independent living. It is our vision that each and every person be empowered to learn the skills and receive the assistance needed to help with transitioning to successful independent living. Our mission is to empower holistic wellness and help create hope for those in our program to see a future that is brighter than the darkness they may be facing. Our program is built on the foundation of transitional housing, supportive care, advocacy, and recovery-focused skill development in the following areas:

- ✦ Daily living and life skills
- ✦ Pre-vocational/Vocational skills
- ✦ Socialization
- ✦ Recreation
- ✦ Sustained Recovery
- ✦ Community Living
- ✦ Living Independently

Our Transitional Living Program functions as a place to provide clients with the skills necessary to transition back into the community. The program is one of personal responsibility- meaning, you will get out of the program what you put into it. Our rules, policies, and procedures are in place to ensure every client's safety, health, and overall well-being.

This handbook is designed to provide you with a better understanding of the program's rules and processes, and to help you with making an informed decision before entering the program and assist with success throughout the program.

You can email us at info@nurstead.com if you have additional questions, or to find out more details and/or check availability in our program.

Nurstead Transitional Living Program

Nurstead Mental Health & Consulting Services' transitional living program is 4-8 months long, with most graduating the program within 6 months and extensions possible, offered to adult participants exiting incarceration, on parole/probation, or seeking a stable living environment as they work on life goals. The program serves to increase skills across various domains of well-being. This includes skills for finding stable employment, budgeting, applying for housing, and other areas of growth. Participants will also be involved in therapy and counseling services throughout the program for mental health and recovery. The transitional living program aims to prepare and help participants reach the next stage of their lives.

Participants are expected to be able to participate in all services of the program. Medicaid recipients will have preference due to limitations of services offered without insurance, but non-insured recipients will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Participants who wish to pay with cash only will also be considered on a case by case basis.

Participants will need to begin transitional living already free from all substances including alcohol. Medical marijuana will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but participants will not be allowed to consume their marijuana anywhere on the Nurstead campus, nor can they have marijuana odor on their person when returning to the campus. Weekly UA testing will be performed with all participants as part of programming. Participants who test positive or disclose active use will be referred for immediate treatment including IOP, detox, or rehab. Due to the potential of risk to the recovery for others, actively using participants may need to find an alternative place to live if they continue to test positive for substances after established timeline for the specific substance (i.e. more than 4 days for cocaine, more than 24 hours for alcohol, etc.). Participants who bring substances into the transitional living will be removed from the program, their referring PO will be notified, and they will be barred from participating in the transitional living program for a minimum of 6 months.

Participants will complete a mental health evaluation with clinical staff and a functional domain assessment with paraprofessional staff to determine level of care needs for each individual and create an individualized plan for success. Participants have the right to refuse treatment, but they may be disqualified from utilizing the transitional living program, as the program believes in a holistic approach and encompasses all areas of well-being, including mental health. Participants who experience symptoms severe enough that they distract from actively participating or that may disrupt services of other individuals using the transitional living may be referred to another program. Therapy and counseling services include meeting with a therapist once every 1-2 weeks and therapy groups 1-2 times a week. Program participants will also work with a CSW or CPSW throughout the week on recovery skills, job preparation, independent living skills, educational needs, socialization, and other skills need to transition to a stable independent living situation.

Participants may know each other from previous interactions in the community. Conflict between participants may occur and participants are encouraged to identify resolutions with staff or learn the skills to address them among themselves. Physical altercations will not be tolerated and will result in immediate removal from the program. Participants who feel unsafe with another participant are encouraged to speak with staff to figure out possible solutions.

Client Responsibilities

Belonging to a transitional living program requires that each member do their part in the upkeep of the environment.

1. You are responsible for keeping your own room clean, washing your own laundry and bed linens, and completing your assigned job responsibilities in the house and in the Drop-in center. Being a member of the community also requires that you keep in mind both your needs and the needs of others.
2. You are responsible for treating peers and staff members with respect. This includes helping peers whenever possible.
3. You are responsible for being at all meetings, appointments, and other events for which you are scheduled on time and ready to participate.
4. Participating in the creation
5. You are responsible for getting what you need by:
 - a. Asking for help when you need it.
 - b. Sharing your feelings with staff and peers.
 - c. Staying away from initiating, engaging in, encouraging, and/or supporting the unhealthy behavior of others.
 - d. Abstaining from use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and other mind-altering substances not prescribed for your health and wellbeing.
 - e. Achieving your Transition Plan goals through participation in your own treatment and skills building based on your mutually agreed upon Transition Plan.
 - f. Helping others achieve their goals if possible.

If you have any information that another client plans to do something to harm themselves or others, has broken one of these rules, or is acting in another way which is harmful to you or others' progress, please report this immediately to a staff member. It is important that you understand that this should not be viewed as "snitching", but instead protects program clients and represents an act of responsible care and concern for others on your part.

Confidentiality

The staff of Nurstead Mental Health & Consulting Services in all programs, including our transitional living program, will respect the privacy of all clients and hold information confidential as outlined in our consent for services confidentiality section.

There are times when confidentiality may be broken without a client's consent, such as in situations where the safety of the client or others is a concern. This can include things such as self-harm, suicidal ideation, crisis situations, homicidal thoughts, reports of abuse of a child or elder, and other compelling professional reasons that may exist.

Nurstead Mental Health & Consulting Services uses an electronic health record system (EHR) for storage of client files, notes, and information. EHRs are e-signed with cyber security and privacy as the utmost concern, and as such, client records are only accessible to our company and assigned staff. With any paper records that may be stored, Nurstead staff ensure documents are consistently protected by proper storage to ensure each client's right to privacy.

It is also you and the other clients' responsibility to maintain the privacy of each other and what is shared while in the program. This means that when sensitive topics or personal information are shared in groups, that it does not create a safety concern. It is important to ensure that you do not share this with others, just as you would not want the other clients to talk about what you have shared with them. This includes not confirming or denying another client's participation in the program to outside persons or agencies via telephone, face-to-face, or written requests.

Client Rights

1. Each client has the right to be treated with respect and dignity. This shall be construed to protect and promote human dignity and respect for individual dignity.
2. Each client has the right to a safe, sanitary, and humane living environment.
3. Each client has the right to a humane psychological environment protecting them from harm, abuse, and neglect.
4. Each client has the right to an environment which provides reasonable privacy, promotes personal dignity, and provides opportunities for the client to improve his or her functioning.
5. Each client has the right to receive services suited to his or her condition and needs for treatment without regard to his or her race, religion, sex, ethnic origin, age, degree of disability, handicapping condition, or legal status.
6. Each client has the right to participate in the development of his/her Recovery plan. Clients have the right to request family participation in recovery and dismissal planning.
7. Each client, on admission, has the absolute right to communicate his or her change of address with a relative, friend, clergy, or attorney by telephone or mail.
8. Nurstead Mental Health & Consulting Services will not deprive any client of civil, political, or personal property rights.
9. Each client shall have and retain the right to confidential communication with an attorney, personal physician, or clergy.
10. No client shall ever be neglected or sexually, physically, verbally, or otherwise abused.

11. Each client has the right to have his or her own clothing and personal possessions. This right may be forfeited or limited only if the personal property is determined to be potentially dangerous to the client or others, or if the property is determined to be functionally unsafe.
12. Each client has the right to manage his/her own financial affairs.
13. Each client shall have the right to practice his or her own religious beliefs and afforded the opportunity for religious worship. No client shall ever be coerced into engaging in, or refraining from, any personal religious activity, practice, or belief.
14. Each client has the right, without fear of reprisal, to present grievances on behalf of his/herself to staff, directors, government officials, or any other person to work for improved client care. For additional information, see Grievance Policy and Procedure.
15. Each client has the right to access adequate medical care; however, Nurstead is not responsible for any debts incurred by clients.
16. Each client has the right to receive a written statement of the services provided by Nurstead Mental Health & Consulting Services to that client.
17. Each client shall have an orientation to the Transitional Living Program during which time regulations, client's responsibility to obey all reasonable regulations of the facility and to respect personal rights and private property of other clients and staff are explained.
18. Nurstead Mental Health & Consulting Services shall respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional services. Only for compelling professional reasons may confidentiality be broken without consent. This involves situations in which the safety of the client or other individuals are at risk.

Nurstead Transitional Living Program Rules

All program participants must agree to the following rules in the attached program agreement prior to the completion of their mental health evaluation and functional assessment being completed.

1. Participants agree to be substance free throughout the program.
2. Participants agree to notify staff immediately of any substance use.
3. Participants agree to weekly random urinalysis testing.
4. Participants agree to complete all treatment recommendations, including individual counseling, group counseling, and meetings with CSW/CPSW staff.
5. Participants agree to provide staff with a list of all currently prescribed medications including proof of medical marijuana card.
6. Participants agree to notify staff of new employment, including providing proof of employment, work schedules, etc.
7. Participants agree to notify staff of any changes to their legal issues including changes to their parole/probation, upcoming court dates, new legal issues, etc.
8. Participants agree to sign a release of information for their respective APPO office for participation letters, treatment recommendations, and notification of agreement infractions. No other information will be released unless the participant signs for it or if

the specific staff is required to disclose in case of imminent risk, discussing with emergency personnel, or ordered in court.

9. Participants agree to manage their mental health symptoms including therapy, groups, and medication recommendations.
10. Participants agree that if mental health symptoms distract from engaging in the program or are deemed not suitable for a transitional living environment, they will work directly with staff to find alternative solution (not sure how to word this).
11. Participants agree to curfew of needing to be back to the campus by 9:00 PM each night.
12. Participants agree to notify staff if needing to work late, going out of town, or if they otherwise will not be able to meet curfew and/or miss other services as part of the program.
13. Participants agree that after 3 missed curfews, their PO will be notified, and they will be placed on a behavioral contract. Failure to follow through with behavioral contract will result in PO being notified and removal from the program for a minimum of 3 months.
14. Participants agree to utilize the concept of a therapeutic community where the participants make decisions as a team on how to clean the living quarters, budgeting/ sharing resources if desired, and holding each other accountable.
15. Participants agree to utilize conflict resolution including involving staff to resolve issues that arise with other participants.
16. Participants agree not to make threats to other participants or staff. Depending on the nature of the threat, this could result in a warning or immediate removal from program for minimum of 6 months up to a lifetime ban. The participant's PO will be notified in either circumstance.
17. Participants agree that if physical violence occurs against participants, staff, or property, they will be removed from the program, their PO will be notified, and they will be barred from returning to the program for a minimum of 6 months. Depending on circumstances, this could result in a lifetime ban.
18. Participants agree to not steal from other participants or staff. Those who are caught will be removed from the program, their PO will be notified, and they will be barred from returning to the program for a minimum of 6 months. Depending on circumstances, this could result in a lifetime ban.
19. Participants agree that if they test positive for substances or disclose active use, they will be referred for treatment including rehab/detox immediately. Failure to follow through with treatment recommendations could result in removal from the program and not being allowed to return until able to test negative (not sure how to word this).
20. Participants agree that if they bring substances into the transitional living they will be immediately removed from the program, their PO will be notified, and they will be barred from returning to the program for a minimum of 6 months.
21. Participants agree that if they are trying to sell or encourage other participants to use substances, that they will be removed from the program, their PO will be notified, and they will have a lifetime ban.
22. Participants agree that the transitional living program is a 6-to-12-month program. Participants who require longer stays may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

23. Participants agree to abide by all rules set out by the transitional program including those listed in this agreement, agreed upon by the therapeutic community, and those implemented as part of any behavioral contract.

Community Living

Living with housemates can be difficult at times. It can also be the perfect opportunity for clients to practice implementing the skills they are learning from the program. Listed here are some tips for living with housemates:

- ★ **House Meetings...** Upon admission to the program, staff will hold a house meeting to introduce you to the others who live in your house and discuss how you will approach working with each other. Discussion will revolve around planning for things like cleaning, providing apartment supplies, storage of food, visitors, etc. Monthly house meetings are held by staff each month to work through any difficulties or discuss improvements. Ad hoc meetings may also occur as needed or requested.
- ★ **Cleaning the Apartment...** Every client is responsible for picking up after him/herself. Each client is expected to take responsibility for the deep cleaning of an area and their room. For example: one housemate cleans the living room/foyer/stairs, one housemate cleans the kitchen, and one person cleans the bathroom.
- ★ **Meals/Food...** Each client is responsible for meal preparation as part of living in the home and a schedule for each house is created in the monthly house meetings. Clients in the culinary program may also be asked to prepare meals at times as part of practice in this program.
- ★ **Visitors...** Agency policy states that any guests are required to follow the same guidelines as clients regarding refraining from destroying, defacing, damaging, or removing any part of the apartment property, while also not engaging in any criminal or drug related activity while on the premises. Agency practices state visitors are not permitted in the client's sleeping areas, and they must be always accompanied by staff or clients. Any on-site visitors must check in with staff before entering the premises and no on-site visitors are allowed after 7pm except in exceptional situations.
- ★ **TV time...** All clients have access to the television sets in their houses, and TV time is seen as an opportunity for clients to compromise, interact, and learn with one another. A house compromise will be utilized to determine selections for viewing when more than one housemate wishes to watch different television programs. Housemates are expected to utilize the television in an appropriate manner (reasonable volume, cooperation and fairness in sharing TV time).

- ✦ **Maintenance Issues...** If something breaks or is in need of repair, you are to notify staff as soon as you are aware so they can contact the appropriate repair people. DO NOT try to repair it yourself or throw anything out unless you have permission from the CEO or Program Manager.
- ✦ **No Violence/Bullying...** Violence and Bullying will not be permitted at the apartments. If violence or bullying occurs, alert staff immediately.
- ✦ **Tobacco Products...** All Tobacco/Nicotine products are prohibited in all Nurstead facilities, and any use may not occur within 20 feet of the buildings. This includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, vapes, and smokeless tobacco.
- ✦ **No Alcohol/Illegal Drugs...** No alcohol or illegal drug use is permitted on Nurstead property, nor should anyone be intoxicated while at these locations.
- ✦ **Criminal Activity...** Any form of criminal activity that occurs on Nurstead properties is cause for immediate removal from the program and may result in law enforcement being contacted and charges being pressed.

Personal Belongings

All Nurstead Transitional Living Homes are fully furnished with all items one may need for daily life including furniture, cooking wares, cleaning supplies, towels, bedding, etc. Individuals are allowed to bring personal items to the transitional housing units and are encouraged to make “their space” feel like home while they live there. As this is a shared living space, the number of personal items in the living areas may be limited. There are recommended and prohibited items listed below, but these are not exhaustive lists.

Personal Item Suggestions

- ✦ Clothing
- ✦ Personal Hygiene Products
- ✦ Bedspread or Quilt
- ✦ Books/Magazines
- ✦ Radio/Alarm Clock
- ✦ Diary/Journal
- ✦ Photos of Family, Pets, Friends
- ✦ Hobby/Crafts

Prohibited Items

- ✦ Weapons of ANY kind
- ✦ Alcohol, marijuana, and illicit drugs
- ✦ Large furniture items
- ✦ Pets and animals of any kind are not allowed in Transitional Living houses
- ✦ Extension cords

- ✦ Space heaters, candles, incense
 - ✦ Chemicals that may be prohibited due to risk of harm through use or misuse
1. All personal belongings brought into the house will be screened by staff to ensure that they meet appropriate safety standards. Items that aren't in accordance with the policies may not be allowed. The judgment of staff will be absolute in deciding whether an item is appropriate or not.
 2. The number of personal belongings is to be kept at a reasonable limit as suggested above. Items must be able to be stored neatly in the available locker and closet space.
 3. Clients are encouraged to keep valuable/expensive personal items that could be lost/stolen as well as any prescribed medications locked in their locker. **Nurstead is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

Emergency Procedures

Psychiatric Emergency: If you think you or another client needs to be admitted for psychiatric care for your/his/her safety and welfare, call or have staff call the Nurstead Crisis Line.

Medical Emergency: If emergency medical treatment is required or thought to be required, call or have staff call 911.

Tornado Emergency: Take shelter immediately, in closet, near an inside wall, or in the basement. Stay away from all windows. If you have enough warning/time, go to basement of 712 or 713 Rencher. Otherwise select a room, ideally in the interior of the house and without windows, such as a bathroom.

Fire Emergency: Exit apartment immediately. All clients should evacuate to the empty lot located at 722 Rencher Street, and staff will conduct a count and ensure all clients are present and accounted for.

Personal Safety Emergency: If someone is threatening/utilizing violent behaviors, call 911.

Client Grievance

Clients are encouraged to speak to agency staff (administrative, professional or support personnel) if they are NOT SATISFIED with an aspect of their treatment by staff or the environment in which services are provided. The Program Director and CEO/COO will respond to the client's concern within 3 business days. If the concern is not resolved to the client's satisfaction after talking with agency staff, the client is encouraged to use the Grievance Procedures outlined below. A written notice of the Grievance Procedure is provided to each client and/or legally authorized representative and/or parent/guardian and to an individual of the client's choice.

1. All clients have the right and are encouraged to communicate his or her grievance to a Nurstead staff member or program representative. There will be no consequences or retaliation for the client filing a grievance.
2. All clients have a right to file a formal written grievance. The client may request a form from any staff member. (Grievance Forms are located at the Nurstead Transitional Program office, the main administrative office, and each location). The client should fill out the form and return it to any staff member.
3. If the client is uncomfortable filling a grievance on his or her own, the client may request any staff member to assist him/her.
4. Written grievances shall be forwarded to the Program Director. If the client needs assistance with the form or in composing the complaint/grievance, assistance will be provided by their program staff, The Program Director, or the client's representative of choice.
5. In instances where the decision maker is the subject of a grievance, decision making authority shall be delegated to the CEO or COO.
6. Time frame for expedient resolution is 3 business days upon receipt of the complaint/grievance by the Program Director.
7. The client will be sent a written notice of the grievance outcome and steps for appealing the outcome from the Program Director.

Emergency Numbers

Police Dept.:	911
Ambulance:	911
Fire Dept.:	911
Plains Regional Medical Center:	575.769.2141
Nurstead Crisis Line:	575.401.2354

Suggestions for Help with Transitional Housing

Experience has repeatedly demonstrated that there are a number of factors which promote a positive experience. If you are able to embrace new ideas, you will find yourself able to complete your goals and will feel good about the changes you have accomplished.

1. Accept that you must be personally responsible for your own behavior and that you need to give up behavior that does not work well for you.
2. Commit yourself to changing your unhealthy behaviors by learning from your mistakes and exploring why you made these mistakes.
3. Commit to being open about your thoughts and feelings and do not keep secrets.
4. Commit yourself to talking directly to staff and peers about your thoughts and feelings rather than acting out and maintaining.

5. Commit yourself to being honest in all your relationships and to avoid lies and distortions. This also means being honest with yourself.
6. Be willing to follow program rules and limits even if you don't agree with them.
7. Accept the value of relationships with others so that learning to develop and maintain close, trusting relationships will be an important life goal.
8. Accept the value of work, which means going to work, setting goals for yourself, and striving toward honest financial and personal independence.
9. Accept that you can learn from your own experiences and the experiences of others if you are willing to take advantage of these experiences as "teachable moments."
10. Accept that Nurstead staff is dedicated to helping you achieve and maintain your recovery!
11. Keep in mind **HOW** to obtain and maintain recovery: **H**onesty, **O**pen-mindedness, **W**illingness.