

**DirectCare**  
**GROUP HOME**

**PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

A private organization that does not discriminate against sex,  
race, religion, age, disability, national origin, or color.

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

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We understand that this time of placing your child in the Group Home is stressful and confusing. Please remember that we do not want to take your place. Our goal is to return your child to your home. At times there are several different agencies involved with your child and it can be very confusing for you as a parent. Please ask us to assist. We hope we can help you understand how we are involved with, but separate from these other agencies.

DirectCare Group Home is a private organization that provides shelter care for adolescents. We contract with the Smoky Mountain Center MCO to provide long-term and crisis care for youth. Although we contract with other agencies, and often work closely with them in case planning for your child, we are not a part of these agencies. We want to work closely with you to develop a case plan that is appropriate for you and your child's needs. This often necessitates working with other agencies to provide the needed services. Our main goal is always to successfully reunite you as a family, therefore we make decisions about your child jointly with you and the other agencies involved.

We want your involvement in your child's placement here, and you can call the Group Home (828-229-3200) at any time with questions or concerns you may have. In order to help your child adjust to placement here, we request that you do not contact your child directly for the first thirty (30) days of placement. This facilitates the child's adjustment to the Group Home. We understand this time is hard for you as well, and encourage you to contact staff whenever you want to.

This booklet is to acquaint you with the rules, daily schedule, and operation of the Group Home and what we expect from you and your child. Reports of your child's decisions to abide by these rules, or their choice to ignore them, will be forwarded to all agencies and individuals involved in this placement, including you. If the courts are involved in the referral, they will receive monthly reports for as long as your child is in placement here. As a parent, your cooperation in your child's treatment will be included in reports.

## ADMISSION

To facilitate their "settling in", residents are only be allowed phone calls and visits with you and their minister, attorney, social worker and/or counselor. Contact days and times will be discussed at intake. While on the Group Home premises or on Group Home activities, they will be with an adult at all times. You and your child will assist in the development of a treatment plan which will outline your goals and objectives. Your child's behavior will be closely monitored, evaluated, and reported to the appropriate agencies, individuals and yourselves.

### THE FOLLOWING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED:

- Violence. This includes verbal assaults, fights, threats, self destructive behavior (such as tattoos, and eraser burns, suicide gestures, possession of weapons) and property destruction.
- Inappropriate sexual conduct.
- Use or possession of drugs or alcohol, including inhalants.
- Stealing.
- Runaway.
- Any behavior that endangers or jeopardizes the residents, staff or program.

Note: Any of the above may result in removal from the Group Home and criminal charges.

### RESIDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING IN THEIR POSSESSION:

- Tobacco products: RESIDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SMOKE OR POSSESS TOBACCO PRODUCTS
- Matches
- Lighters
- Prescription or Over the Counter drugs (all are kept by staff)
- Anything that can be considered a weapon
- Solvents or Aerosols
- Money (kept by staff for your use)
- Clothes, posters or music promoting alcohol, drugs, or violence
- Soda, candy, and toys
- Hats/Caps

# EXPECTATIONS FOR RESIDENTS

## TREATMENT:

- We expect you to assist in the development of your treatment plan and to follow the plan.
- We expect you to participate in group and individual counseling.
- We expect you to take personal responsibility for your own actions and feelings.
- We expect you to begin and maintain a daily thinking journal.
- We expect you to progress on the Level System to the best of your ability.
- We expect you to keep all information concerning other residents of the Group Home confidential.

## SCHOOL:

- You are required to attend school and follow school rules.
- We expect you to earn passing grades, and bring home weekly progress reports.
- We expect you to stay on school grounds (principals office) until group home staff arrives to pick you up.
- We expect you to use study time wisely.
- We expect you to choose appropriate peers as approved by the DirectCare staff, DSS, court, and/or probation agent.

## APPEARANCE:

- We expect you to keep yourself clean, your clothes neat, and your appearance respectable. (Pants must fit well enough to stay up w/o a belt)
- We expect your behavior to match your appearance (clean, neat, and respectable). Be polite. NO inappropriate language or gestures
- NO ear rings, nose rings, ETC. NO PIERCING JEWELRY.

## HOUSEKEEPING/RESPONSIBILITIES:

- We expect you to follow the daily schedule. You will have a weekly chore, yard work to do, a room to keep clean and laundry to do.
- We expect you to clean up after yourself.
- We expect you to ask before getting a snack.
- We expect you to keep all food and drink in dining room.
- We expect you to stay out of the hallway, the garage, and the vehicles unless you have staff permission to be there.
- We expect you to stay in your room after lights out.
- We expect you to use only your own belongings. NO borrowing, trading, buying, selling, etc.
- We expect you to only use the phone with our permission. NEVER answer the phone. Calls are limited to 15 minutes and long distance calls require a phone card.

## FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

- We expect you to be involved in your child's service plan development
- We expect you to attend all meetings pertaining to your child.
- We expect you to take or accompany your child to appointments
- We expect you to work with staff to reunite your family.
- We expect you to be willing to participate positively in therapy.
- We expect you to contact staff with concerns regarding your child's placement and/or treatment issues
- We expect you to have regular contact with your child.

## HOME VISIT RULES

- Your child is to be returned to the Group Home by the responsible party at the proper time. If there is difficulty with transportation, the Group Home must be notified immediately.
- The responsible party agrees to defray and financial responsibility incidental to accident, illness, or injury incurred by the child while on the home visit.
- The child will not drive a vehicle unless they have
  1. authorization from the parent and/or responsible party, and
  2. a valid driver's license.
- The parent/responsible party will supervise the child at all times unless prior permission to do otherwise has been received from the appropriate authority.
- The child will obey all instructions given by parents/responsible party as well as all laws, curfews, and regulations.
- Any infractions of the aforementioned are to be reported upon return of the child to the Group Home.
- The parent or other responsible party is responsible for all transportation and/or expenses.
- The child and the parent/responsible party must agree that the parent/responsible party is in full charge of the child and will supervise and be responsible for his/her own actions.

## YOUR CHILD'S RIGHTS

- To be in an environment that does not discriminate based on age, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, handicap or religion
- To participate in the development of an individual plan of appropriate services
- To send and receive sealed mail unless:
  - there is suspicion of illegal, injurious, or unauthorized content. In said cases, the resident will be allowed to open the mail in the presence of designated staff.
  - the person with legal custody of the resident requests that mail from or to specific individuals be censored. This request must be documented and the resident must be advised.
- To wear his/her own clothing, to keep and use personal possessions, and to earn the privilege of keeping and spending their own money.
- To be free from physical restraints and isolation except for emergency situations, or when isolation or restraint is a part of a treatment program
- To be free from unnecessary or excessive medication
- To make and receive telephone calls
- To be informed orally and in writing of client rights
- To safety and integrity
- To counsel
- To expect DirectCare Group Home to provide them with medical care, shelter, food and a healthy living environment
- To not be subjected to any physical, sexual, or mental abuse
- To visit with family, when not contraindicated by the service plan
- To be free from exploitation
- To express opinions on issues concerning your care.

## **RESIDENT GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

- A. Grievances have to be filed with the Executive Director or Group Home Mgt. in writing within 24 hours of the occurrence. It must concisely detail the perceived offense and what policy or procedure was violated. The Executive Director or Group Home Manager will respond within seven days.
- B. Complaints must be brought to the Executive Director or Group Home Mgt within 24 hours. The Executive Director or Group Home Manager will respond within 7 days.

## **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS**

It is the policy of DirectCare Group Home to allow resident to practice their religious or spiritual beliefs. Residents are not allowed to impose their beliefs on other residents. Transportation to religious activities can be arranged for the resident by either staff or family members. During intake a parent or guardian must discuss religious activities they want their child to be involved in with STAFF.

*THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INCLUDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION*

*1. LEVEL SYSTEM*

- *LEVEL 1*
- *LEVEL 2*
- *LEVEL 3*

*2. INFRACTIONS*

- *LEVEL 1*
- *LEVEL 2*

*3. TACTICS TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITY*

*4. PATTERNS OF THINKING ERRORS*

## **LEVEL SYSTEM**

Purpose: To ensure decisions made concerning your child's progress, privileges, status, and needs are made fairly and consistently. To provide a communication link between your child and staff regarding each individual's perception of your child's movement toward planned goals and/or future placement.

### **PROCEDURE:**

As a new or returning resident, your child will be placed at Level I. Staff will meet with them regularly to discuss progress, problems, needed changes, etc. When the resident believes he/she has met the expectations of a level (and maintained it), they may find a sponsor & petition for the next level. We do take into consideration the individual's unique situation as well as cognitive development and capabilities.

Residents may be restricted from any privilege at any level if basic expectations are not met. Serious rule infractions may also result in a drop to a lower level.

### **LEVEL I:**

Expectations:

- Follow all rules, court orders, Probation Officers, and DSS expectations, etc.
- Exhibit appropriate behavior.
- Display an appropriate attitude.
- Discuss goals with staff, identifying changes that need to occur.
- Establish good staff/peer relationships.
- Attend school and maintain **PASSING GRADE**
- Actively participate in group, individual, family and/or substance abuse
- counseling.
- Be responsible in regards to chores, following daily schedule, etc.
- Acquaint yourself with and prepare for expectations of Level II.

Privileges:

- **ELIGIBLE FOR GROUP HOME RECREATION.**
- **PHONE CALLS - MINISTER, LAWYER, COUNSELOR, SOCIAL WORKER**
- **CORRESPONDENCE**
- **WEEK NIGHT BED TIME -- 8:00 p.m.**



## LEVEL II:

### Expectations:

- Maintain and stabilize all of Level I expectations.
- Re-evaluate treatment plan and make needed adjustments.
- Begin using new strategies you have learned to meet needs.
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- Accept responsibility for your own behaviors.
- Show progress in looking at problems realistically.
- Develop honesty in evaluations of self and others.
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- Be able to identify feelings and emotions.
- Acquaint yourself with and prepare for expectations of Level III.

### Privileges:

- ALL OF LEVEL I'S PRIVILEGES
- MAY HAVE APPROVED TAPES AND STEREO IN ROOM
- MAY HAVE ONE INCOMING AND ONE OUTGOING PHONE CALL PER WEEK (with staff discretion and approval)
- MAY HAVE 30 Minutes OF \*\*FREE TIME DURING THE WEEK
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- WEEK NIGHT BEDTIME -- 9:00 p.m.
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## LEVEL III:

### Expectations:

- Maintain and stabilize all of Level I and II expectations.
- Reassess treatment plan and make needed changes.
- Relationships should be showing genuine concern for others.
- Motivation toward change should be coming from within, instead of from others.
- Accepts suggestions and constructive criticism.
- Discusses feelings and emotions with staff without prompting.
- Shows ability to make appropriate choices.
- Shows ability to resolve problems with minimal support.
- Handles responsibility of added privileges.
- Assumes leadership positions appropriately.
- Assist new residents in a positive direction, in positive and appropriate ways.

### Privileges:

- ALL OF LEVEL I AND II PRIVILEGES (cont.)
- TWO PHONE CALLS Per Week (with staff discretion and approval)
- WEEK NIGHT BEDTIME -- 9:30 p.m.
- \*\*TWO HOUR FREE TIME ON THE WEEKEND

*\*\*NOTE: Free time is considered an activity. Group Home staff must approve where they are going and what they will be doing.*

CONSUMER NAME:

DATE:

**THE FOLLOWING INFRACTIONS WILL RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE ASSIGNMENT OF ONE (1) POINT. CIRCLE INFRACTIONS.**

FAILING TO DO CHORES, CLEAN ROOM, FOLLOW SCHEDULE

RETURN SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

BEING OUT OF ROOM OR OTHERWISE DISTURBING OTHER RESIDENTS AFTER LIGHTS OUT.

BORROWING, TRADING, SELLING, OR BUYING BETWEEN RESIDENTS (ITEM GIVEN TO STAFF FOR SAFE KEEPING)

ROUGH-HOUSING or FIGHTING

INAPPROPRIATE JOKES, LANGUAGE, INNUENDO, OR GESTURES

NAME-CALLING, PUTDOWNS.

REFUSING TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ACTIONS/ATTITUDE

SABOTAGING OTHER GROUP MEMBER'S PROGRESS OR GROUP PROGRESS

BEING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SPACE, BELONGINGS, OR PRIVACY.

FAILING GRADES

NOT FOLLOWING STAFF DIRECTIONS, MANIPULATING AND GAME PLAYING.

THREATS TOWARD OTHERS

VERBAL AGGRESSION

DISHONESTY

*Five (5) OF THE ABOVE INFRACTIONS OR THE ACCUMILATION OF Five (5) POINTS IN ONE WEEK (BETWEEN SUNDAY 8 AM THRU SUNDAY 8 AM) WILL RESULT IN DROP IN LEVEL.*

CONSUMER NAME:

DATE:

THESE INFRACTIONS WILL RESULT IN NO PRIVILEGES FOR A WEEK (7) DAYS.

"NO PRIVILEGES" AND 8 PM BEDTIME. AFTER THE WEEK OF NO PRIVILEGES THE CONSUMER WILL RETURN TO LEVEL 1. CIRCLE INFRACTIONS.

RUNAWAY ATTEMPTS, TRUANCY, ALARM TAMPERING.

POSSESSION OF TOBACCO, LIGHTERS, MATCHES, PORNOGRAPHY, OR ANY OTHER PROHIBITED ITEMS (KNIFES,GUNS, ECT.)

TATTOOING, PIERCING SELF OR OTHERS

BLATANT DISRESPECT FOR OTHERS, INSUBORDINATION

OUT OF SCHOOL OR DAYTREATMENT SUSPENSION

ENDANGERING OTHERS

PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

THEFT

BREAKING CONFIDENTIALITY

THREATS TOWARD OTHERS

RUNAWAYS

DRUG/ALCOHOL POSSESSION

*ANY OF THESE INFRACTIONS MAY TRIGGER LAW ENFORCEMENT INVOLVEMENT AND/OR CRIMINAL CHARGES. THE ABOVE CONSEQUENCES ARE TO BE USED AS GUIDELINES FOR STAFF. EACH INFRACTION WILL BE EVALUATED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS WITH THE INTENT BEING TO DELIVER CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE FAIR, LOGICAL, AND EFFECTIVE.*

## **CONSUMER TACTICS TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITY**

- CONTINUALLY POINTING OUT STAFF INADEQUACIES
- BUILDING YOURSELF UP BY PUTTING OTHERS DOWN
- TELLING OTHERS ONLY WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR AND NOT THE TRUTH
- LYING --- BY OMISSION, BY DISTORTING THE TRUTH AND DISCLOSING ONLY WHAT BENEFITS YOURSELF
- VAGUENESS. (EXAMPLES: "SOMEONE", "I'LL THINK ABOUT IT", "MAYBE", "IF I FEEL LIKE IT")
- DIVERT ATTENTION AWAY FROM YOURSELF. INTRODUCE IRRELEVANT MATERIAL
- ATTEMPT TO CONFUSE OTHERS
- MINIMIZE THE SITUATION
- AGREE OR SAY YES WITHOUT REALLY MEANING IT
- SILENCE
- PAY ATTENTION ONLY TO WHAT SUITS YOU
- MAKE A BIG SCENE ABOUT A MINOR POINT
- PUT OFF DOING SOMETHING BY SAYING "I FORGOT"
- PUT OTHERS ON THE DEFENSIVE. USE TACTICS SUCH AS DEGRADING, QUIBBLING OVER WORDS, ATTEMPTING TO EMBARRASS, USE ANGER TO INTIMIDATE
- BE TOTALLY INATTENTIVE
- ACCUSE OTHERS OF MISUNDERSTANDING
- CLAIM THAT YOU HAVE CHANGED JUST BECAUSE YOU DID IT RIGHT ONCE

## CONSUMER PATTERNS OF THINKING ERRORS

### 1. CLOSED THINKING

DOESN'T WANT TO LISTEN, DOESN'T LOOK AT SHORTCOMINGS, DOESN'T SHARE THOUGHTS, IS GOOD AT POINTING OUT OTHER'S FAULTS, LIES BY OMISSION

### 2. VICTIM STANCE

SEES SELF AS VICTIM, BLAMES SOCIETY, THE SYSTEM, FAMILY AND PAST. BLAMES OTHERS.

### 3. LACK OF ABILITY TO BE SELF CRITICAL

FOCUS IS ONLY ON POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES, FAILS TO ADMIT OWN DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS, BUILD SELF UP AT EXPENSE OF OTHERS

### 4. LACK OF EFFORT

DOES NOT DO THINGS THAT ARE UNPLEASANT OR BORING, SAYS "I CAN'T", MEANS "I WON'T"

### 5. LACK OF INTEREST IN RESPONSIBLE PERFORMANCE

BELIEVES RESPONSIBLE LIVING IS BORING AND UNSATISFIABLE, HAS NO SENSE OF OBLIGATION, WILL RESPOND ONLY IF THERE IS AN IMMEDIATE PAYOFF

### 6. LACK OF TIME PERSPECTIVE

DOES NOT USE PAST AS LEARNING TOOL. EXPECTS OTHERS TO ACT IMMEDIATELY UPON DEMAND. MAKES DECISIONS BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS, NOT FACTS.

### 7. FEAR OF FEAR

POSSESSES IRRATIONAL FEARS BUT REFUSES TO ADMIT THEM. PRIMARY FEAR OF INJURY OR DEATH. PROFOUND FEAR OF PUT DOWNS. FEELS WORTHLESS WHEN HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

### 8. POWER THRUST

COMPELLING NEED TO BE IN CONTROL OF EVERY SITUATION. MANIPULATES AND LIES TO GAIN CONTROL. REFUSES TO BE DEPENDANT UNLESS ADVANTAGE CAN BE TAKEN.

### 9. EGOCENTRIC

DIFFERENT AND BETTER THAN OTHERS, EXPECTS OF OTHERS THAT WHICH HE/SHE FAILS TO DO, QUILTS AT FIRST SIGN OF FAILURE.

### 10. OWNERSHIP ATTITUDE

PERCEIVES PEOPLE AND THINGS AS OBJECTS TO POSSESS. HAS NO CONCEPT OF OWNERSHIP OF RIGHTS OF OTHERS.