

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER

Expectations for Group Homes Serving People with Developmental Disabilities

This document describes Harbor Regional Center's expectations and aspirations for group homes. It reflects what clients, family members, regional center staff, and service providers have told us a good group home should be like. We look forward to working in partnership with our homes in the coming years to help them move their services steadily closer to these expectations and aspirations.

Basic to these guidelines is the principle of client self-determination. This means that people with disabilities make their own reasonable choices about how they live their lives, and these choices are respected by people around them.

A goal of all group homes is to help clients become as independent as possible and achieve the objectives they choose for themselves. Client choice guides services as long as these choices do not pose a threat to the client's health or safety or infringe on the rights of others.

Mission

1. The group home's mission statement promotes respect for people with disabilities and participation of people with disabilities in the community.
2. Group home staff know the mission statement and can explain how the mission affects what they do with clients.

The Client's Support Network

3. The client is helped to develop a reliable network of natural supports, including family, friends, and other people in the community.
4. Clients and their families are encouraged to maintain contact with one another.
5. A non-conserved adult gives his consent before staff communicate with his family about the client's life.
6. Staff develop ways for the family to be involved in the client's life if that is what the client and family both want.
7. Staff educate the community about people with developmental disabilities in order to increase community awareness and acceptance.
8. Staff involve clients in activities that increase their interactions with people in the community.

9. If a client is going through a major change at home, at work, or in the day program, staff work with the regional center counselor and other people in the client's support system to help the client deal with the change.

Staff-Client Interactions

10. Staff use positive approaches in all interactions.
11. Staff treat the client with respect.
12. Staff know the clients' likes and dislikes, goals and dreams.
13. Staff know what outcomes each client is working to achieve in the home.
14. A staff person attends the client's annual regional center planning meeting and the annual ISP (for clients attending day activities) or IEP (for clients in school) .
15. Staff know what medications clients are taking, what the medications are for, and their side effects.
16. The client and staff members communicate using the client's preferred language and method of communication.

Training and Support

17. Clients receive training and support to help them:
 - stay healthy,
 - stay safe from harm,
 - develop and maintain friendships and other social relationships,
 - make choices about how they live in the home and what they do in the community, and
 - get around in the community (including using public transportation).
18. The group home gives clients access to computers.

Asking for Feedback

19. Staff ask clients whether they are happy with the services they receive from the group home.
20. Staff ask family members and other people important to clients how well they are helping clients.
21. The group home makes changes in services as a result of what clients and others tell them.

Client Choice and Self Determination

22. A client's choices are reflected in his every day life in at least the following ways:
 - individualized schedule and daily activities,
 - bedroom space that is individualized with personal items, pictures, and other decorations,

- individualized and appropriate hair style, and
 - individualized and appropriate clothing.
23. Clients have choices in meal and snack selection.
 24. Clients receive individualized training and support to help them express their opinions and advocate for themselves.
 25. The group home provides support for a client council that meets regularly.
 26. The client council makes decisions or takes actions that affect the lives of the people who live in the group home.

Home Environment

27. The home is in a safe neighborhood.
28. The home is designed for four or fewer clients.
29. Each client has a private room.
30. In homes where clients share bedrooms, they are free to change roommates if the new pairings are appropriate and compatible.

Staff Training and Support

31. Staff are paid at least 150% of minimum wage.
32. Staff receive medical and leave benefits.
33. Staff members are paid for a minimum of 2 hours per month to participate in training.
34. Staff receive initial training that includes:
 - basic methods of interaction and communication with clients,
 - the principle of dignity of risk,
 - assistive technology and how clients may benefit from the use of appropriate adaptive devices,
 - how to recognize signs of pain, other discomfort, or illness in residents.
35. Staff are encouraged to attend outside training conducted by the regional center or other organizations.
36. Staff are given access to computers.
37. The group home management has instituted specific actions in an attempt to keep staff turnover low.