

The
OPEN DOOR



THE OPEN DOOR SHELTER • 4 MERRITT ST., NORWALK, CT 06854



RESIDENT HANDBOOK



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WHERE HOPES BEGINS

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to effectively address the causes and complexities of the homeless and working poor by providing shelter care, food, clothing, case management services, treatment services, transitional planning for short and long term goals, housing, education, employment, and another chance towards independence and success.

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings,

I would like to personally welcome you to The Open Door Shelter (ODS), and assure you that while you are here, we will provide you with our best services. We have a team of passionate and caring staff who are committed to providing you with treatment and services. Our mission is to effectively address the causes and complexities of the homeless and working poor by providing shelter care, food, clothing, case management services, treatment services, transitional planning for short and long term goals, housing, education, employment, and another chance towards independence and success.

AT ODS we have implemented a length of stay; which will help us to help you efficiently while you are here. Your length of stay will be determined based on your participation in three (3) phases of service.

Sincerely,

Mr. O
Executive Director

PHASE I

As a newly admitted resident of ODS, you will be required to participate in our first week orientation phase. This phase will include and not be limited to a transitional plan that you will develop with your assigned Transitional Coach. During this inventory, your length of stay will be determined by your Transitional Coach and will be based on your needs. ODS' length of stay ranges from 6-12 months based on your evaluation and the services that we can provide.

While in Phase I you will see your Transitional Coach twice or more for services and recommended services. You will be on the premises and understand ODS' Code of Conduct, and establish your goals and objectives with your Transitional Coach. You will be asked to help with internal chores in place of your Shelter's dues.

During this phase, you will be informed of our Hope Works Job Training Program in which you will have great opportunities to participate once you succeed established phases. You will also attend in-house groups and services.

PHASE II

You will be able to go out into the community in search of your listed goals with your coach. For instance, obtain basic needs, birth certificate, social security card, and photo id. We will assist you with your transportation needs by providing you with bus tokens. You will sign in and out while in this phase when you leave ODS with the consent of your Transitional Coach.

Phase II can be as long as 3 months. You will be attending outside services and groups for continued treatment and support.

PHASE III

At this phase you are either employed or aggressively involved in some employment, vocational, educational, support services treatment programs and are eligible for participation in the Hope Works Job Training Program. This is the last phase at ODS. If after 6 months we have not assisted you with achieving your goals, we will recommend further services for you.

Welcome to The Open Door Shelter (ODS). We want to provide you with a comfortable safe place to sleep. The attached rules and regulations must be followed. This is our Code of Conduct, and your signature to this document indicates you understand these rules and you will abide by them. If you cannot abide by these rules, you cannot stay here.

Admission Policy: We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation; and there will be no rejection on the basis of past conduct unconnected to the Shelter. You must be at least 18 years old. There is a \$3.00 charge per night; if you do not have \$3.00, you may do a chore in lieu of the fee. We are handicapped accessible and do not discriminate on the basis of disability or handicap.

ACTION PLAN:

You must visit your assigned Transitional Coach within 48 hours of your arrival, or your privileges at ODS will be suspended. After that, you must meet with your Transitional Coach at least once a week. Your Transitional Coach will require verification of income as part of an ongoing plan to save money. You are required to be cooperative in developing a transitional plan with your Transitional Coach in working towards your goals.

SCHEDULE OF HOURS:

Admittance: Monday – Saturday the shelter opens at 4:30 p.m., and at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Beds will be assigned between 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., and the shelter cannot guarantee that you will have the same bed each night. No one will be admitted after 10:00 p.m., and you cannot leave the building after 8:30 p.m.

Lights out: 11:00 p.m.

Wake up: Singles 6:00 a.m. - You may get out of bed at this time. We will wake you earlier if employment requires it.

Families 7:00 a.m. is your wake up time.

Dormitory: Closes at 7:30 a.m. - You must be out of the dormitory area by 7:25 a.m.

Locker access is until 7:15 a.m.

Departure: 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast: Singles – breakfast is served from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. No one will be served who arrives after 8:00 a.m.

You do not have to stay at the Shelter to eat in any of the meal programs.

Families – breakfast served from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Lunch: 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Monday through Saturday)
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Sunday only)

Dinner: 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Other: If you leave the building in the morning for any reason, including smoking, you cannot return to the dormitory area.

Families: The shelter is open 24 hours a day and a separate daily schedule applies.

After 5:30 p.m., all residents must enter through the double glass doors.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR:

- You must be courteous and treat everyone with respect.
- Do not bring weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia into the Shelter.

- There will be no violence towards anyone, or destruction of the shelter or anyone's property. Do not get into arguments with residents, staff members, or volunteers. Do not hit or touch anyone. Do not take or destroy anyone's belongings. Abusive language, including ethnic or sexual defamation, swearing, sexual harassment, or making fun in a demeaning way, is not allowed.

- If you have difficulties with other residents seek out the assistance of staff.

- There is no food or beverages allowed in the sleeping areas. There is no gum or smoking allowed in the building.

- No food may leave the building without being covered and bagged and without the presentation of a food card. Shelter residents are not permitted to take food outside.

- You must be fully dressed and ready to leave the building when you come to the Common Room for breakfast.

- Men and women must stay in their own dormitories. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated and there will be no sexual activity of any kind between residents or staff.

- You will be required to do work chores as assigned, and staff must confirm that your chore has been completed before you leave the building. If you do not have the staff do so, you will not be given credit for completing the chore.

- Shelter credits for extra chores are good from the day after they are earned, and must be used in consecutive days thereafter, whether or not the resident stays at the Shelter.

- Once frisked, residents may not leave the dorms without staff's permission or in case of an emergency. You will be searched and breathalyzed each time that you enter the building if we have any reason to suspect that you are intoxicated and may be detrimental to yourself or others. In the event you are intoxicated, you may be asked to walk off your intoxication, or be asked to be escorted to the emergency room by paramedics depending on your level of intoxication. A continued behavior will require ODS staff

to mandate you for treatment on-site or off-site. Refusal of treatment may lead to you being barred from the Shelter.

- Urinating or defecating on the grounds of Shelter properties is not allowed.
- Residents are not permitted in the laundry room, kitchen, pantry, or storage bin without staff's presence without authorization.
- Residents are not permitted to operate laundry room equipment without permission.
- Residents are not allowed to open doors for anyone without staff's permission.
- Shelter residents are not allowed to trespass or hang out at Shelter properties (i.e. sitting, standing, laying down on sidewalks, lawns, etc.).
- Shelter properties include 4 Merritt Street, 129 South Main Street, 139 South Main Street, 4 Couch Street, 70 Chestnut Street, 2 Merritt Place, 137 South Main Street, and 7 Chestnut Street.
- Shelter residents are not allowed to smoke in front of the Shelter except by the light pole near the Common Room's entrance.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages or using illegal drugs on Shelter properties (as mentioned previously) are not allowed. This includes but is not limited to the inside and outside perimeters.
- Shelter residents may not congregate on the sidewalk earlier than 5 minutes prior to opening up for meals or drop-in.
- Shelter residents may not assist with donations without staff's permission or intercept donations within or outside of the Shelter. You will be suspended.
- If a resident residing at the Shelter is arrested for the possession or sale of a controlled substance, he/she will be barred from staying at the Shelter.

YOUR BELONGINGS:

- The total volume of your belongings may not exceed what you can fit inside your locker.
- Important personal belongings (papers, etc.) can be put in a locker and locked. You can get into your locker between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. and between 8:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.
- Your clothes must be stored under your bed in the storage drawer or in a locker. You cannot hold another person's belongings. This can lead to suspension from the Shelter. Families have bureaus and totes. If you do not have a locker you may ask the shift supervisor to be put on a waiting list for one.
- Staff does not ordinarily hold medications or prescriptions. There are some exceptions to this rule, please ask a staff member or your Transitional Coach.
- Every morning take everything you will need for the day. You cannot come back into the dormitory to get additional clothes or belongings. Families- this rule does not apply to you.
- You are responsible for your belongings. When you move out of the Shelter, all of your belongings must be removed on the day that you leave. If you are absent from the Shelter after a full 72 hours, your belongings will be discarded.
- If a new resident, or a resident who has moved out and is returning leaves his/her personal belongings on the Shelter's premises unattended before receiving an intake and spending the night at the Shelter, the belongings will be discarded.
- The Shelter is not responsible for any valuables or belongings that are lost, stolen, or discarded.

KEEPING CLEAN:

- The Shelter is not responsible for any valuables or belongings that are lost or stolen.
- Showers are mandatory and you must take one between 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., or between 6:00 a.m. and 7:15 a.m., depending on your dorm assignment. (You must be out of the dorm by 7:30 a.m.). Families must be finished with their showers by 9:30 p.m.

TOWELS: To get a clean towel for a shower you must turn in your dirty one. Please use the laundry bin provided.

CLOTHING: There is laundry service here at the Shelter for individuals who do not have a documented income. All others must clean their clothes regularly at another facility. Monday - Friday, during business hours, you may leave bagged, identified, clean laundry with staff. These items will be searched and put in the dormitory. Families: See Special Rules.

BED LINENS: Beds must be neatly made each morning before you leave the dormitory area. Bed linens will be collected regularly for cleaning.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

- The Shelter has very strict rules about confidentiality. Staff will not tell anyone who calls or comes here that you are here. If you talk to staff members about personal problems they will not tell other residents. We will however, share some information with other agencies, which are working with you and we will ask you to let us share further information by having you sign a "Consent for Release" form when you first arrive here.

MAIL:

- Mail is given out at 7:30 p.m. only. No mail is given out during the day. When you move out of the Shelter you have 30 days to arrange to have your mail redirected to your new address. We will hold mail for you for 30 days only, and after that, we will return it to sender.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:

Quietly proceed to and exit through the nearest fire exit. Follow staff instructions. Do not leave the immediate area; you must be accounted for by the Shelter staff. If you leave the area, you will not be permitted back into the Shelter. Emergency exits are located in the Men's Dormitory, in the hallway between the Women's Dorm and the Family Wing, in the Family Wing, the front entrance door and the door in the Common Room.

VIOLATIONS OF CODE OF CONDUCT:

- If you break the rules of the Shelter, you may receive a verbal warning, a written warning, a suspension from the Shelter for a period of time, or you may be barred permanently from the Shelter. Consequences of violations will be enforced at the discretion of the Shelter staff and are listed below.
- Please note that the previous list of Expected Behavior is not all inclusive. Other unacceptable behaviors not listed may also result in disciplinary action.
- The Shelter's Board of Directors and Executive Director reserve the right to modify, alter, or delete policies. Advanced notice of revisions to residents shall not be necessary, and all decisions in regard to Shelter policy shall be final.

SUSPENSION- APPEAL PROCEDURE:

- The Executive Director along with the Appeal Board each Friday starting at 1:00 p.m. will meet with all residents who have received a request for suspension.

MISCONDUCT CONSEQUENCES

ABUSE OF STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, RESIDENTS:

Sexual Abuse:	Suspended for 1 month to permanently
Physical Abuse:	Suspended for 1 month or UFN*
Verbal Abuse:	Suspended for 1 day to 1 month
Threats:	Suspended UFN*
Harassment:	Suspended for 1 day to 1 month
Swearing, Abusive Language:	Suspended for 1 day to 1 month
Aggressive Behavior:	Suspended UFN*
Fighting in or outside of the Shelter:	Barred

ABUSE OF FACILITY:

Destruction of property:	Suspended for 1 month or UFN*
Theft:	Suspended for 1 month or UFN*
Smoking in forbidden areas:	Suspended for 1 day to 1 month
Repeated infractions of rules:	Suspended 3 months or UFN*
Urinating/defecating on Shelter property:	Suspended UFN*
Bringing bed bugs or roaches in on person or personal belongings:	Suspended UFN*

ABUSE OF PROGRAM:

Found with weapons/drugs on premises:	Suspended for 3 months or UFN*
Leaving premises/ attempting to return:	Suspended for 1 day to 1 month
Being uncooperative:	Suspended for 1 day to 1 month
Disrupting staff, volunteers, residents:	Suspended for 1 day to 1 month
Police required to be called for problem:	Suspended for 1 week
Not doing assigned chore:	Suspended until you see Caseworker
For holding other guests' belongings:	Suspended for 1 week
Use of cell phones in building:	Suspended UFN*
Hanging out on Shelter properties:	Suspended UFN*
Being in unauthorized area:	Suspended for 3 days or UFN*
Taking food off premises without permission:	Suspended for 3 days or UFN*
Bringing food/beverages into sleeping areas:	Suspended 1 day to UFN*
Found with alcohol/drug paraphernalia on premises:	Suspended for 1 month or UFN*
Failure to keep appointment with Caseworker:	Suspended until you see Caseworker

* UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

* The Shelter reserves the right to issue written warnings in lieu of suspensions.

Revised May 17, 2010

NO LOITERING ALLOWED

Singles:

No One is allowed to stand or sit in front of any of ODS' properties (4 Merritt St., 129 South Main St., 137 South Main St., 139 South Main St., 70 Chestnut St., and 4 Couch St.).

Anyone loitering in front of any of these properties at any time of the day will be given a written warning (if you are identified as a resident). Otherwise the police will be contacted. After (3) three written warnings you will be suspended from ODS and you may request an appeals meeting.

Families:

If you are going out front to have a cigarette you must return immediately after you have finished smoking, come inside to be checked, and proceed to the Family Area.



Resident Name

Date

Resident Signature

Date

Staff Name

Date

Staff Signature

Date



CODE OF CONDUCT ACCEPTANCE

Name: _____
(Print) Last Name First Name Middle Initial

I have been given a copy of The Open Door Shelter's Code of Conduct:

I understand the rules and agree to abide by them.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Staff : _____ Date: _____