



## Rules, Policies & Procedures Pertaining to the Friends and Families of Residential Clients at Stepping Stone of San Diego Treatment Center

We have pulled this booklet together because your loved one has taken a big step and entered Stepping Stone Treatment Center for Drug and Alcohol Addiction.

At this point you may be feeling overwhelmed, underwhelmed, tired, anxious, concerned, mad, frustrated, happy, joyful, and relieved. There may be a host of other things you are feeling that are not listed here. We are sure, if your loved one is here, the journey has not been easy. Addiction is a challenging disorder to live with both for the addict and for the individuals that love them.

There will be times that both you and the client will be grateful for the services we provide, times when you question the services we provide and times that you will be unhappy with the services we provide. We understand this.

To try and help with this process we have created this handbook for you, as loved ones of our clients, to have some insight, understanding, and answers about what is expected of you .... from us. We have rules for the clients that pertain to visitors, visitor hours, and expectations for the behavior of friends and family who support new people to this process. We thought it would be helpful to share these with you.

We also have a Family and Friends group who meet independently on the last Monday of each month. These are a group of people who have had family members in treatment and have found it helpful and hopeful to meet with each other. The meetings are held at Stepping Stone Outpatient treatment located at 3928 Illinois St., 92104. The contact information for them is Valerie at [vabreen511@gmail.com](mailto:vabreen511@gmail.com) Please contact Valerie or ask staff for further information if you are interested

We will attempt to give a brief explanation of the various rules and we hope you find the answers you are seeking here. If not, feel free to give us a call and if we can answer your questions, we will.

- Clients are not allowed to have visitors or guests during the first 15 days of treatment.

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A difficult rule for many is our 15 day acclimation rule. This allows the client time to get used to the new schedule, structure, rules and a host of other things. First days in treatment can be an overwhelming process and the connection to people outside of the facility can bring up a host of feelings that make it more difficult for the client to manage. Besides the first 15 days there are other times where staff may conclude we need a “retreat” from outside affairs to get the house in order. During these times visiting hours are not in effect, clients do not go on passes; instead, they are engaged in activities that will help them build more support amongst each other.

An important one on the list is “Client Confidentiality”. Please understand we are expected to adhere to strict guidelines pertaining to client confidentiality. If you call and ask about your loved one, more likely than not you will hear, “I am sorry I can neither confirm or deny any information”. It is frustrating to hear, but unless we can see a “confidentiality release form” in front of us, this is what we are required to say. Until we check the file....a lengthy process that requires going to a file room, pulling the file to

releases...so and so forth, and see that a release form is on file, we can't talk to you about your loved one.

Due to confidentiality, we are also tasked with monitoring who comes on the property. To do this, visitors are only allowed on property during visiting hours and only if their loved one has listed them as people who will come to visit them. You are required to enter the main office and sign into the visitor book. If the staff hasn't seen you before, they may ask you who you are visiting.

The rules regarding confidentiality and protecting clients are these:

- All clients are required to provide their assigned primary counselor with a list of visitors or guests whom the client anticipates coming on the property during treatment (e.g. spouse, partner, children, or sponsor).
- Each guest or visitor must sign in at the front desk before entering the gated areas.
- Each visitor must sign out in the visitor book prior to departing the property.
- Absolutely no picture taking or video recording by guests or visitors is allowed. Any pictures or video recordings taken during special events on the property must be approved by staff and will not be published without permission from the individuals in the images.

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## Visiting Hours:

- Monday – No Visitors
- Tuesday- 6:30pm to 9:30pm
- Wednesday- 6:30pm to 9:30pm
- Thursday- 7:00pm to 9:30pm
- Friday- 6:30pm to 9:30pm
- Saturday and Sunday- 1:00pm to 9:30pm

Next important issue is “ALL ITEMS” brought to the client, with the client, for the client or by the client need to be viewed by staff before they can be brought on the property. This is really important.....there are a lot of little rules about what is allowed, what isn't, and what needs special treatment. If staff gives the go-ahead then if something is found during a room search, it's on staff, not your loved one.

While these next rules may seem somewhat like a “given” you might be surprised at the state of mind some visitors arrive in. In our world drinking, smoking pot, and other forms of altering our state of mind is an acceptable practice. Due to this (or maybe because of this), it isn't clear to all visitors that they should not show up to a treatment center under the influence of substances. So we have these rules:

- Guests and visitors are not allowed to wear sunglasses while on the property.
- Guests and visitors must be sober while on property. Staff will ask guests to leave the property immediately upon suspicion of intoxication; visiting rights for these guests may be revoked.

We have clients who are at very sensitive times in their lives. Many of these clients come to us with a boatload of past trauma that they need to develop coping skills for in order to address. Due to this, we have many rules in place in an effort to create a sense of safety for these clients. Some people may think that these rules are “petty” but they are necessary. For instance, we have many rules about sexual relationships and touching. Many clients have sexual trauma in their past history, so we work to maintain safety by having rules like this:

- All guests and visitors are expected to behave appropriately while on the property.

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- Displays of public affection during visits with spouse or partner must be appropriate. Staff may intervene if displays of public affection are deemed inappropriate or if other clients are reasonably feeling uncomfortable by the display.
- Guests and visitors are required to follow the same rules as clients when they are on Stepping Stone property. Any guest displaying disruptive or inappropriate behavior or not following Stepping Stone rules will be asked to leave immediately; visiting rights for these guests may be revoked.
- Guests not conforming to Stepping Stone's dress code for clients will be asked to leave to change into appropriate clothing before returning to Stepping Stone property. (no provocative clothing, displaying too much skin, clothing promoting alcohol or drug use)

There are many different types of recovery support meetings (AA, NA, CMA, Smart Recovery, etc) on property that are open to the public. If you are a meeting attendee at this time, unless it is some type of special occasion, it might be better for all involved to attend separate meetings. This will allow your loved one time to develop relationships with other program people, to "stretch" which is a necessary part of recovery. If you are curious about this request, please ask to talk about it with staff, we would be happy to review the thinking behind this.

- During on-site recovery meetings, any guest not attending the on-site meeting must leave Stepping Stone property and may return when the meeting is over if visiting hours are still in effect)

Some rules are written in order to help maintain structure and boundaries for residents, staff, and the safety of the facility. The following rules deal with liability and ethical standards we are required to adhere to:

- All children under the age of 18 are required to be accompanied by an adult other than the client when on Stepping Stone property.
- Guests and visitors are not allowed to vape or smoke on the property; Stepping Stone is a non-smoking facility. Any smoking must be conducted at a minimum of 20' away from the property.
- Clients cannot use Stepping Stone staff, interns, volunteers, or Board of Directors as their sponsor.

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- Guests and visitors are not allowed in any of the bedrooms at any time. Guests and visitors must remain in Grand Central and the courtyard at all times.

We also would like you to know that after one month of treatment clients attend a weekly family group at residential. These groups are for people the client identifies as family and that the client is comfortable inviting to the group. Please ask your client about this if you are interested.

Thank you for taking the time to review these rules. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.