

Trying to choose a Sober Living?

Here are 10 questions to ask.

1 How many actual full-time staff members do they have?

Many sober living homes have very few full-time staff. Instead, their staff consists of only house managers, student volunteers, PRN transient staff, or senior residents. This is a way to cut costs and many of the “staff” at sober living facilities are actually very early in sobriety themselves. This creates an environment that is inconsistent where residents are susceptible to falling through the cracks.

► **FACT:** Chapter House currently has 11 full-time staff members who are making a career at Chapter House. All staff are successfully in recovery and they are deeply invested in the success of each resident.

2 What is the night time supervision?

When a sober living program states they have 24-hour supervision, you may want to dig deeper. More often than not, sober homes have a “live-in house manager” who is a former resident and gets their own room and a small stipend in exchange for being the house monitor. Unfortunately, most of the troublesome behavior that happens in sober living happens in the middle of the night. It is impossible for a house manager who is asleep to be able to provide monitoring and supervision during sleeping hours.

► **FACT:** Chapter House has full-time staff working from 12am-8am that monitor the home throughout the night, including regular bed checks.

3 Do they have a required daily scheduled that must be followed?

Residents at sober homes often lack discipline – they lay around, sleep late, play video games until 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning and generally “do nothing.” Additionally, residents may be required to leave the house during certain hours of the day with no accountability and no direction. An environment with little structure and accountability is a set-up for failure and relapse.

► **FACT:** Chapter House has a weekly schedule that accounts for every minute of the day. Chapter House’s full-time staff supervises residents to actually follow a firm recovery schedule including wake up and lights out. Additionally, residents at Chapter House are NOT permitted to play isolated games at any time during their stay.

4 Exactly how do they help with career/education goals and life skills?

Every sober living house promotes their services of helping residents learn life skills, find a job and create a new life. It is important to understand how they do this. How much time is spent with them on these services? How is the time structured? What is the curriculum? What kind of accountability is in place? More often than not, residents at sober living homes are told they have 2-4 weeks to find a job or else they will be placed on probation. They may provide a list of nearby businesses, but ultimately, the resident is left to figure it out on their own.

► **FACT:** Did you know that Chapter House has a full-time education and career coach who meets with each resident to walk with them through building their resume, doing online applications, applying for college, requesting transcripts, and going to interviews and advising appointments. Additionally, the life skills curriculum at Chapter House consists of specific and measureable milestones that include completion of the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace curriculum and a mock job interview. Residents are taught to grocery shop for themselves, and are taught to budget their money on a fixed weekly grocery allotment of \$60/week.



5 What kind of transportation do they provide? Do they have vehicles?

It is important to know if a sober living program has their own vehicles to provide necessary transportation to residents. Many sober living homes push residents to use public transportation or get rides from other residents. At best, they may have a house manager that can provide occasional rides. Residents are left to navigate a new city and place them in a vulnerable position to miss important appointments.

► **FACT:** Chapter House has a 9-passenger Ford Excursion and two 15-passenger transportation vans. Chapter House provides on-time transportation to all doctor's appointments, counseling and psychiatrist appointments, the grocery store, daily 12-step meetings, and the gym. Transportation is also provided to all recreational activities, to and from the airport, to initial job interviews, to initial college admission meetings, and all meetings with legal professionals.

6 What's really included in the cost?

Underneath the published cost of a program can lie numerous ancillary costs. A program may provide adventure outings, gym memberships, yoga, therapists, psychiatrist, and nutritionists – but is there an additional cost for these services? Make sure you understand the difference in what is included in the program and what is made available at additional costs.

► **FACT:** Did you know that Chapter House charges a flat rate and does not charge one single ancillary fee. The fee includes services such as recreational activities, unlimited access to our psychiatrist, regular work with a nutritionist, transportation, and 2 different gym memberships. Visit ChapterHouseRecovery.com to review all the additional benefits built into the flat rate.

7 How are drug tests handled?

Find out if a sober house is making a profit off urine drug tests. A concerning number of programs are affiliated with drug testing labs or own a drug testing lab. They profit immensely by charging up to \$1500 for a basic drug tests that costs \$25 at a drug store. From there, these urine specimens are sent for even further testing that can yield up to a \$5000 profit from just one drug screen. Some programs give up to 5 drug screens a week to yield higher profit.

► **FACT:** Did you know that Chapter House provides regular and unlimited drug screening as part of the cost of the program. Chapter House does not affiliate with a lab and does not bill insurance for drug screening.

8 What is the activities schedule?

While a sober living program may have pictures on their website of amazing adventure outings and recreational programming, that doesn't mean they are a regular part of the program schedule (or included in the cost of the program). Request an activities schedule so you can have a clear understanding of what to expect.

► **FACT:** Did you know that Chapter House has an activities calendar published on their website? To see the activities schedule, please visit ChapterHouseRecovery.com. Keeping the residents involved and active is a priority that is built in to the weekly schedule. Young men often build relationships through shared activities and these connections are key to a healthy recovery environment. Activities are never an additional cost.

9 How many residents are assigned to each case manager?

Case management is a common service provided at sober living homes, but it is important to ask how many residents are assigned to each case manager. Case managers are many times working with 15 – 25 residents at a time, which makes it impossible to provide personalized attention to each resident. Questions to ask regarding case management include: What happens during case management meetings? How long do they last? How many residents are assigned to each case manager?

► **FACT:** Did you know that Chapter House case managers use a written curriculum to review progress in every area of life – emotionally, spiritually, financially, physically, and logistically. A case manager is never given more than 5 residents at a time and they meet formally once a week, and even more frequently informally.

10 Do they have certifications or other oversight?

It is important to know if a sober living residence is authorized by the city through a certificate of occupancy that provides oversight and inspection of living conditions.

► **FACT:** Chapter House Sober Living has a certificate of occupancy through the city of Richardson and Chapter House Counseling Center is licensed by the Texas Department of State Health Services.