

Learning by Doing

Residents of Pavillon Place Model each other to Learn how to Live a Life in Recovery

Through the powerful example that comes from living in a positive, peer-to-peer environment, residents of Pavillon Place are rebuilding their lives while experiencing personal growth during the critical months of early recovery.

For many, the weeks and months following treatment for addiction can be particularly fragile, fraught with a myriad of fresh emotions, great expectations, more than a few frustrations and a lot of hope.

In entering or re-entering that world, the foundational tools that greatly aid a life in 'successful' recovery can either be non-existent, unhealthy or simply unreliable. There are jobs to acquire or return to, families to reconnect with, bills to pay, relationships to forge, meetings to attend, a clean and sober life to nurture.

Sober living residents such as Pavillon Place introduce a critical safety net between treatment and an immediate return to 'life.' Its therapeutic value rests in that peer-to-peer environment which is undergirded by 24-hour staff support, job assistance services and a requirement to follow some basic, but important rules.

Recovery oriented Pavillon Place staff are always available and are on-site to provide structure and support while residents learn to walk the steps to integrate or reintegrate into life. All of the residents utilize Pavillon's Outpatient Program as part of their stay, which for some is a few months and for others it's as long as 18 months.

"In the recovery effort, there is no one size fits all," said Brian Coon Director of Clinical Services for Pavillon. "Each person finds their new path in a different time frame and in a different way, but by being on the recovery road together, it is tremendously powerful in those early stages."

It works best for individuals with a high level of motivation who are able to maintain some level of independence, balanced with accountability to themselves, their fellow residents and the on-site staff. The Sober living approach is also not a magic bullet. Residents are exposed to real life challenges and they are tested.

"We tell the families that this environment can help to keep their loved ones clean and sober, but it's not a guaranteeThey will still face real life challenges," Coon said.

The role of the staff is to monitor, gauge and collaborate with the residents just exactly when it's time to face those various tests. That can come about in the form of applying for a job, going back to school, re-connecting with a spouse or other meaningful person, purchasing a car, applying for credit or any number of processes that the residents would and will face in their own daily lives.

"Together, we ask the question, 'At what point are you ready for those real life and real world experiences,'" Coon said.

Some believe they're ready, and through a give and take of group and individual feedback, they find that they're really not as ready as they thought. Growth in recovery comes in stages of stops and starts.

There are currently two sober living houses in the Pavillon Place program, both centrally located in a thriving area of Greenville, SC. One residence houses 14 men and the other houses eight. Initial assistance involves everything from helping them get involved in a 12-step community, locate a sponsor, find connections through service work and identify some reachable goals through school or work.

For more information about Pavillon Place, call Tom Vogelgesang, House Manager.

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