



Supportive Recovery: Screening and Admission

Building strong connections relies on finding the right match between your residence and the person looking for a recovery home. It is important that both sides work together for the best possible outcomes.

Disclaimer: This fact sheet provides helpful tips for supportive recovery operators. For information on registration and operational requirements, please visit [Assisted Living in BC](#).

Introduction

Having a good screening process will help you to decide who to admit to your residence. Persons who are interested in moving into your residence also need to learn about your residence to decide whether your approach to recovery and the services you provide will be safe and appropriate for them.



Key words and definitions

Screening: Making sure that the services you provide will be a good fit and will meet the needs of a person before you accept them as a new resident. You may need to collect information from several sources. This may include asking the potential resident a few questions, and meeting with them in person before you admit them. It should also include reviewing any assessments provided by healthcare providers, as well as information provided through referrals to your residence.

Assessments: Information from healthcare professionals about a potential resident's physical and mental health. For example, this information may include medical diagnoses, laboratory reports, notes from a physician or a psychologist, and information about a person's medications.

Admission: The process of accepting a new resident after you have completed screening to make sure that your services will meet their needs. This includes accepting the resident into your residence, getting them settled, and introducing them to the staff and other residents. It should also include providing clear information about the home policies, the daily schedule, and the rules that they must follow when living in your residence.

Determining if a service can meet needs

As the operator of the supportive recovery residence, you and your team lead the screening process. You must make sure that the [assisted living services](#) you have been approved by the Assisted Living Registrar to provide will meet the needs of a resident who is considering your services. If a person's needs are higher than you can meet, they will need to look for a different setting, such as a licensed treatment facility.

You have a responsibility to gather information and to assess the person's needs. The person who is considering moving into your residence has a responsibility to provide accurate information. This teamwork helps both parties to make informed decisions about whether you can meet the potential resident's needs and their recovery goals. It's important to understand what residents expect from you and from their stay with you, as this will help to minimize misunderstandings and potential conflict during their stay.

You must also consider whether they are able to meet the requirements for living in a registered assisted living residence, which are outlined in the [assisted living services fact sheet](#). For example, residents must not have behaviours that put the health and safety of others at risk.

It is a good idea to use a standard screening form that will help you make these decisions. You can see a sample in the [Provincial Standards for Registered Assisted Living Supportive Recovery: Implementation Resources](#) (pages 32-39). For additional information, please also review [A Handbook for Supportive Recovery Operators](#) (pages 18-20).

Information to ask for when screening potential residents:

- Personal and recovery goals
- Healthcare needs
- Mental health needs
- Cultural needs (e.g., Indigenous medicine, ceremony, etc.)
- Treatment history
- Accessibility needs
- Gender identity, sexuality, and related considerations
- Social supports
- Post-recovery housing needs
- Withdrawal management service needs
- Criminal history (e.g., for co-ed services or services involving minors)
- Legal requirements and legal status (for services involving Corrections)

Information you should share with potential residents

Persons who are considering your residence need detailed information so that they can decide if the services you can provide will be a good fit for them. Some of this information could include:

- **Organizational culture:** Does your residence have a specific focus or culture, such as group therapy, land-based healing, therapeutic community, etc.?
- **House rules:** What are your rules about the following: behaviour, attendance at meetings, chores, medications, phone use, computer use, room searches, cleanliness, drug testing, having visitors, going out into the community? What will happen if they do not follow the rules?
- **Medication-assisted treatment:** Is there support for residents who are on prescribed opioid agonist treatment (OAT) or other medications? Are there any medications you do not allow at your residence? What are your rules for storing and monitoring medications? Being clear will prevent conflicts and help potential residents decide if your residence is the right one for them.
- **Access to professional care:** Do you have any registered health care professionals such as nurses or professional counsellors on site, or are they available within your organization? If so, is there an additional cost to see them, and how much notice is required? Will you be able to support a resident to see a health care professional? What will you do to support residents who do not have a family doctor?
- **Match with current residents:** What are the typical recovery goals of your current residents? Do any of them have jobs or go to school? Does the residence have a mix of genders, or does it provide services to only specific genders? Do the residents have a culture of supporting each other?
- **Relapse policy:** What will happen if a resident has a relapse or slip? Will they be kicked out? What are the rules about this, and are there any second chances? If so, who makes that decision? Is naloxone available to all residents? Are staff trained to use naloxone?
- **Success rate and aftercare:** Are any records kept of residents who return, either due to a relapse, or because they have become volunteers or staff at the residence?
- **Peer support:** Does the residence have staff with lived experience only, or are there also staff with professional training?

Screening decision: Admit or refer to a different service

You must give potential residents enough information so that they can decide what is best for them. You should inform them about your policies and approaches (e.g., for reducing stigma and harm). They also need to know your rules, and what will happen if they break them. This will help them to decide whether your residence is the right one for them, or whether they need to look for a different service.

If the service you are providing is not a good fit, you could use the information you have gathered to help refer the person to a service that is a better fit for them. You can ensure warm handovers of persons to staff at other services by providing information such as the screening form and a phone call introduction. Before doing this, check that the person looking for a recovery home agrees to having you share information about them.

People with substance use disorder face stigma from society. This may be both out in the community and within a recovery home. Reducing stigma is an important part of recovery and can lead to better outcomes for your residents. If your residence provides a safe, stigma-free environment built on trust, safety, and acceptance, your residents will have a better chance of recovery than if they are in a less supportive environment. Residents should never be judged, shamed, mistrusted, or embarrassed, and should be able to access help when they need it. Staff should consider whether their screening decisions are influenced by bias or stigma.

In smaller towns, sometimes there are not many services available. If this is the case, your health authority may be able to help you. Please contact your regional health authority for service information or visit the BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU)'s listing of BC Recovery Services for information about your region.



Summary

- ✓ Screening and decision-making are a joint effort between staff and the potential resident.
- ✓ Good screening processes will help you decide if your residence can meet the needs of a potential resident, or if you need to refer them to a different service.
- ✓ The screening process should also help a potential resident to make an informed decision about whether your residence is a good fit for them.

To learn more, visit the [Tools and Resources - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#) and scroll down to the Fact Sheets section.



For more information about other topics, and to access training that can support you in your work, simply scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet camera. A pop-up message with a link will appear - tap the link to access more content.