



## CASE STUDY

The Friends of Addiction Recovery are concerned that there's no place for people in their community to live after they leave treatment or jail that will support people as they look for jobs and work to regain their lives. They believe that the city's jail is overcrowded with people who ought to be in the community, earning a wage and staying on their recovery program.

They would like to renovate an abandoned duplex to provide a supportive living environment for recovering addicts and alcoholics. They would like to use Oxford Houses as a model, so that a safe and sober living situation is controlled and operated by the individuals living in the house.

In this recovery living arrangement, residents will be able to stay as long as they need to, so that a time limit, a pressure that can be a barrier for some in recovery, will be removed. There will be three rules for residents: Don't use drugs or alcohol, pay an equal share of the rent and do your chores. If people use, they are evicted.

The Friends of Addiction Recovery doesn't have a lot of money, but they have committed members who would be willing to donate their time and skills to fix up a house. They have received commitments for renovation materials from concerned business leaders. Some of their members have been incarcerated. The group has been working to educate their city council about addiction recovery and the severe housing shortage for people who need a safe and sober living arrangement.

They learned that the city had condemned a duplex house after the building had suffered extensive damage in a fire. A lot of work would need to be done to remodel the home. In addition to fire damage, the house had been poorly maintained over the years and is in serious disrepair. The owner had also filed to pay property taxes.

Friends of Addiction Recovery approached the city manager to see if the city would consider donating the home to them for remodeling as a recovery home. The duplex house is zoned as a two-family dwelling. City code defines a family as one or more individuals related by blood or marriage, or no more than five unrelated individuals, meaning that there would be a 10-person limit on the size of the group in this house.

After Friends met with the city manager and sympathetic council members, the town's council sold the house to the recovery support group for \$1 and a commitment to repair and restore the building.

While the group was negotiating with the city, they inspected the property and talked with some of the neighbors. They told the neighbors that they were from a nonprofit organization that helped people get back on their feet and that they wanted to fix up the house, which was an eyesore, and improve the neighborhood and providing housing to people who needed it.

After the city council donated the house to Friends of Addiction Recovery, members came out to start clearing out the debris. A neighbor came over to talk with them and found out that the people who would be living there were people who had been in jail and used drugs. He was very upset. He felt that he had been duped – he hadn't been informed about the type of house that was being proposed by his city council member and the Friends of Addiction Recovery hadn't informed him about who would really be living there.

He is concerned about the possibility of early-release prison inmates living in his neighborhood, without supervision. "There's already too much crime in our neighborhood already. We don't need more criminals living around here."

He called some neighbors and they got together to talk about the situation. They decided that the house is needed, but should be built on hospital or jail grounds so that professionals can deal with any problems that arise. Others expressed concerns about children being around people living in the house and concerns about property values.

They approached their city council member and the mayor to find out if it was legal to use the duplex as a recovery house. They want to have the house fixed up, but they don't want to have it used as a recovery house. The city's legal department is now researching whether or not the proposal to use the duplex as a recovery house would be lawful.

There have not been any news reports of the neighbors' concerns or of the donation of the property to Friends of Addiction Recovery.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What should Friends of Addiction Recovery's strategy be?
2. Who should we deliver messages to (audiences)?
3. Who should deliver the messages (messengers)?
4. What should our message be to each audience?