



Mental Health America
of Wisconsin

The R&R House: ***MHA's Peer-Run Respite for*** ***Wisconsin Veterans***

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R&R House Manager

Mental Health America of Wisconsin

Summary

- ▶ Background of Veteran-specific mental health issues
- ▶ State Opportunity for Peer-Run Respite for Veterans (PRR-V)
- ▶ Process for Accessing R&R House
- ▶ Questions/Comments

Veteran Mental Health Needs

▶ Veterans and PTSD

- ▶ At least 20% of veterans treated for PTSD, but underreported due to stigma, ineligibility for VA services, or obsolete treatment and diagnosis at time of separation (i.e. poor screening and treatment for Vietnam-era veterans).

▶ Military Sexual Trauma - MST

- ▶ Nearly 25% of females report sexual assault during their military service.
- ▶ Over 50% of females report sexual harassment during their service.
- ▶ Male service members also experience high rates of sexual harassment (38%) and are unlikely to report incidences of MST.

Veteran Mental Health Needs

▶ Suicide

- ▶ Approximately 20 veterans die every day from suicide nationwide.
 - ▶ Of those 20, only 6 are receiving VA care
- ▶ Veterans account for approximately 20% of suicides in Wisconsin.
- ▶ Female veterans more than twice as likely as civilian females to die by suicide, and 33% more likely to attempt using a firearm.
- ▶ Veterans aged 18-34 have 3x higher rate than non-military of same age.

▶ Substance Use and Addiction

- ▶ More than 20% of veterans with PTSD also have substance use disorder.
- ▶ Veterans suffered from overprescription of opioids and painkillers, both during service and after separation, leading to higher rates of addiction.
- ▶ Not accessing MH treatment leading to self-medication.

What is a Peer-Run Respite?

- ▶ Peer-run respite is a low-level crisis diversion house which allows someone who is experiencing an increase of mental health or substance use stressors to have a safe space to connect with peer support, engage or reconnect with treatment services, and to avoid the use of emergency services such as hospitalization or law enforcement and criminal justice resources.
- ▶ Open and staffed 24/7 by individuals with lived experience who have been trained to provide peer support services in a residential setting.
- ▶ Stays are short-term, limited to 5-6 nights, and all services are provided at no charge to guests.
- ▶ Publicly funded through state budget allocations and county government.

Peer-Run Respite in Wisconsin

- ▶ Three State-Funded Respite currently operate in Wisconsin, funded by Dept of Health Services (DHS), Division of Care and Treatment Services, and providing service since approximately 2015.
 - ▶ Iris House - Appleton
 - ▶ Solstice House - Madison
 - ▶ Monarch House - Menomonie/Eau Claire
- ▶ One County-Funded respite in Milwaukee County opened February 2019.
 - ▶ Parachute House - Milwaukee (East Side) - Received DHS funding in 2021.
- ▶ All respites currently open in Wisconsin are open to serve the general population (i.e. Veteran AND non-veteran) and do not have specific guidelines about serving the veteran population.

Proposal for PRR-V by MHA

- ▶ Largely modeled off success of other PRRs, with collaboration through learning communities.
- ▶ Peer Support Staff are trained as CPS, and include additional training on providing support to veteran peers recovering with PTSD and other skills.
- ▶ Provide access statewide, serving all Wisconsin veterans regardless of discharge status, length of military duty, or branch of service.
- ▶ PRR-V to be designed with veteran-inspired and veteran-created art and support access to complementary health techniques.
- ▶ Person-centered, recovery-oriented, culturally-informed care.

Process for Accessing R&R House

- ▶ **Completely voluntary and self-referred - 262-336-9540**
 - ▶ Veteran must take active role in contacting R&R House.
 - ▶ No drop-offs by law enforcement, not to be used in court sentencing.
- ▶ **Phone pre-arrival conversation**
 - ▶ Assess needs of potential guest, including desired recovery outcomes, referral requests, and identifying environmental risk factors which are a barrier to recovery.
 - ▶ Establish rapport between peer support specialist and caller.
 - ▶ Staff confers on decision to offer invitation to guest.
- ▶ **Guest Arrival and Orientation**
 - ▶ Complete guest expectation checklist.
 - ▶ Orientation to house, staff, and other guests.
 - ▶ Begin developing plan for peer services and departure planning.

Process for Accessing R&R House

- ▶ During the Guest Stay
 - ▶ Independent adult living skills (i.e. medication and financial management, personal hygiene, cooking/cleaning for self).
 - ▶ Person-centered support, allowing guest to determine level of engagement.
 - ▶ Counseling and treatment services available by referral, but no clinical services provided on-site.
 - ▶ Staff trained as Certified Peer Specialists, with certification in CPR, Narcan, Emotional CPR, Motivational Interviewing, Intentional Peer Support, and Quick Reaction Force trauma-informed certification.
 - ▶ Warm Hand-off referrals
 - ▶ Make connection with provider with guest present.
 - ▶ Stay on the line until the connection to resource is made.

Process for Accessing R&R House

- ▶ **Departure from the R&R House**
 - ▶ Guest requested to complete a survey to evaluate usefulness of the resource and recovery-oriented nature of the program.
 - ▶ Were referrals accessed? Were they useful?
 - ▶ Was the guest able to direct their own recovery?
 - ▶ Did the guest feel supported regardless of their ability, demographic, or other personal characteristics?
 - ▶ Does the guest feel more empowered to cope with stress?
 - ▶ Where would the guest have gone if the R&R House was not available?
- ▶ **Follow-up at monthly intervals**
 - ▶ Gather feedback on value of referrals.
 - ▶ Determine if guest avoided the need for more intensive or restrictive treatment options, such as inpatient treatment, emergency department visit, or law enforcement contact.

Process for Accessing R&R House

- ▶ Notes for potential guests:
 - ▶ Must have permanent address to return to. Not to be used as homeless shelter or transitional housing.
 - ▶ Only one stay of one week per 60 days.
 - ▶ No alcohol or illicit substances allowed on property.
 - ▶ No weapons permitted on the property, including in guest vehicles.
 - ▶ Can leave house for work, shopping, or other obligations.
 - ▶ Guests strongly encouraged to strictly limit trips outside of house during public health emergencies.
 - ▶ Safe storage provided for valuables and medication, including locked refrigerator cabinet for medication requiring refrigeration.
 - ▶ Bedroom doors equipped with digital keypads to allow guest to set their own code.

R&R House During COVID-19

- ▶ Original capacity allows for 3 guests at R&R House at a time, reduced to 2 guests while operating in public health emergency.
- ▶ While awaiting guests, R&R Staff provides 24/7 non-crisis warmline support to service members, veterans, and their families.
 - ▶ **262-336-9540**
 - ▶ Resource list with wealth of providers organized by name, city, and county.

Questions, Comments, Concerns

To refer a veteran to the R&R House,
please have them call **262-336-9540**.

**We look forward to serving those who served at the R&R House,
where NO veteran is left behind!**

For other comments, questions, or concerns, please contact
Peter Borucki at peter@mhawisconsin.org or call R&R House directly.

For general information on the R&R House, contact rrhouse@mhawisconsin.org