



# Rainbow Recovery Center Member Handbook

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# WELCOME

## **Welcome To Rainbow Recovery Center!**

Welcome to the new Rainbow Recovery Center. We look forward to having you here as you progress on your road to recovery from mental illness. It is our hope that you will find RRC a safe and comfortable setting.

As a member you will have the chance to work with staff and peers in a more direct and encouraging way. You can gain the skills you need to help you in recovery, tools to help you find employment and give you peace of mind.

RRC provides two meals a day. Breakfast is served daily at 9:00 am and lunch at 12:00 daily. Free coffee is served until 12:00 and often we provide snacks, when available.

As we progress we will be offering life skills classes, employment training classes, WRAP Classes and can offer you skills to help you improve your experience by having a broad range of volunteer work available.

Here at RRC you can help your fellow peers by participating in groups, helping through volunteering in the everyday running of RRC and by sharing your experiences with your fellow peers.

It is our hope you will find our center a great place to be and an encouragement along the way. Recovery is possible! And we want to be a part of your recovery!

## **About Rainbow Recovery Center**

**Rainbow Recovery Center** is a program of Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic.

**Recovery Center:** A recovery center is a place where those with mental health issues can come to work on their recovery. Recovery is very individual, and no one else can tell you what it is. Recovery is a process, the process of looking at one's goals, strengths, and needs and working on attaining them. The Rainbow Recovery Center, as a recovery center, is a place where those working on recovery can meet to work on their goals. A person need not even call it recovery. Call it your higher power, call it the force, call it by no name at all, the important aspect is that a person uses the resources available to them to look at bringing joy, and whatever else they want, into their life.

### **Funding:**

Funding for the Rainbow Recovery Center comes from the North Sound Mental Health Administration, Whatcom County, the United Way, and donations.

### **The Rainbow Recovery Center's hours:**

Hours are 8 am to 3:45 pm Monday through Friday. Once a month we will be open later than this, by arrangement with the Member Council. We are closed the following holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Jr. day, President's day, Memorial day, Independence day, Labor day, Veterans day, Thanksgiving day, the day after Thanksgiving day, and Christmas day.

### **Mission statement**

To provide a safe, supportive, and welcoming recovery oriented environment where adults with mental illness can:

- Gain confidence and learn social and vocational skills

- Pursue their own recovery in collaboration with peers, advocates, staff, friends, and neighbors; and

- Educate the broader community and raise awareness about mental illness.

## History of Rainbow Recovery Center

In the spring of 1997, a group of mental health consumers, family members, advocates and professionals opened a drop-in center. This center, located in downtown Bellingham, in a former soda bottling facility, was designed to help mentally ill adults recover from the effects of their illnesses, and reintegrate into the larger community.

This center, called Rainbow Recovery Center and operated by the Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic, is a primary source for basic needs, such as meals, showers, laundry facilities, and human companionship. It is also a source for referrals to other agencies (including WCPC) for professional counseling, medications, housing and financial entitlement access, among others.

Meetings for members and staff convene every morning at 9:30. Various support groups and other special meetings occur at specific days and times. Social activities, including dances, game tournaments and classes, often occur at the Rainbow Recovery Center. However, others, such as picnics, occur at various parks in Bellingham, particularly Lake Padden.

Rainbow Recovery Center members have also been involved in community activities, including the Ski-to-Sea parade and festival, the Gallery Walk (now the Downtown Art Walk), and the Community Food Co-op annual party. Many members have also served on mental health advisory boards and in programs dealing with such issues as substance abuse and homelessness which affect so many of our members.

Combining the dedication and experience of long time members with the energy and fresh ideas of more recent members, the Rainbow Recovery Center has grown exponentially, from around 200 members in its first year, to nearly 1000 members this year.

Like any other community, we have experienced the various cycles of life, i.e. the births of members' babies, marriages, illnesses, deaths, and shared in one another's joys and struggles.

It is with confidence, and with hope, that Rainbow Recovery Center will continue to perform this mission to help those struggling with mental illness for many years to come.

## Staff

A Peer Counselor is better called a "Recovery Specialist". They are people who have excelled in recovery and are an example of recovery. These people have gone through the rigors of life and then proceeded to take the Washington State Peer Counselor training and returned here to Rainbow Recovery Center to work as a way to give back to the community and you. They are specially trained in helping you get on the road to recovery and keeping you there.

Peer Advocates are members who are stable in their mental illness and have received a simplified training of the Peer Counselor training. They too want to give back to their community by helping those here at the Rainbow Recovery Center. They can help in many ways and be an encouragement in your recovery.

Peer Advocates are Russ, Mike, Charles, Lisa, and Tyger

Peer Counselors are Renee and JoAnn

In addition to these staff we have:

Kitchen- Kat

Clerical- Lillian

Coordinator- Joe

Director- Gail

## **Behavior while in the center**

We strive to create a safe atmosphere here at the Rainbow Recovery Center. Therefore, we expect that members can monitor their behavior accordingly. All members here have a mental illness, but all members are responsible for their own behavior.

Verbal abuse, physical abuse, weapons, property damage, theft and substance abuse will not be tolerated.

Further, we ask that people be abstinent from drugs and alcohol since at least midnight before they come in the center.

We expect that people will not bathe or shave in the restrooms.

People are expected to wear shirts and shoes, as well as be expected to wear modest clothing that covers them adequately.

## **Outside the building**

It is important that the Rainbow Recovery Center maintain a positive public image. Often so many people would be standing outside of the building that the community makes assumptions about what is going on. The assumptions that people make, whether right or wrong, is that what is happening is dope sales and things of that sort. The trouble with this is twofold. The first thing is that to some extent they are correct, the second thing is that to some extent they are wrong. It is important that we present the best image possible to the community. That is, we have neighbors, these neighbors are trying to run their businesses and lead their lives just as we are. Out of respect for them and the Rainbow Recovery Center certain standards should be upheld.

This is what we ask of our members: No dogs tied up outside or smoking outside or 'loitering' outside. Outside means the whole front of the block on Holly between Bay and Commercial, and the whole interior of the block, the alleyway. We cannot tell people they cannot stand on sidewalks, but we can tell people that if they persist in not following the above rule their Rainbow Recovery Center membership will be suspended. Some may feel that this is too much to ask, but it is felt that this is necessary to keep the Rainbow Recovery Center. That is, if the Rainbow Recovery Center is a source of problems for our neighbors, there is every reason to believe that we would simply not have a place to house the Rainbow

## Recovery Center

If there is no place to house the center then the Rainbow Recovery Center would cease to exist. This would be a great personal loss to many members and to the community in general.

## **Suspension of Membership**

The following is a policy that describes the general and most common circumstances under which people would be "suspended" from membership. Suspended from membership means that a person has created a disturbance or presents a difficulty such that they are asked to leave the building for a longer period than one day. In general, a person who has their membership suspended could have it reinstated by having a discussion with staff and attending Member council. There are circumstances in which a member would not be allowed to return at all. This is described below.

### **Short term suspension**

Members may be restricted from access to the Rainbow Recovery Center (site) by any paid staff under the following general circumstances:

1. Theft of Rainbow Recovery Center or member property
2. Being intoxicated on site
3. Physical violence or threats of same
4. Inappropriate sexual behavior, i.e. unwanted touching or repeated inappropriate remarks
5. Disregard for property, i.e. intentional destruction or misuse
6. Repeated minor violations, i.e. failure to properly check in at front desk, disregarding laundry protocol, use of office phone without permission, taking center food outside

7. Alcohol or illegal drug consumption on site or within view of site
8. Malicious rumors in regards to other members, i.e. continued discussion with other member in regards to unsubstantiated allegations of other members serious misconduct despite repeated requests to cease

In general, violations as mentioned above (1-8) will lead to a person being asked to leave and attend the next member council to seek reinstatement should they so choose.

### **Long term or permanent suspension**

The following violations (9-12) will be considered major violations wherein a member would be banned indefinitely without recourse to the member council:

9. Felony theft on site
10. Drug dealing (as seller) on site or within view of site as observed by paid staff, that is the sale of illegal substances or prescription substances
11. Assault involving a weapon of any kind or serious assault that leads to serious bodily harm
12. Any pattern of violations of any kind or sort that recurs despite repeated attempts to remedy the circumstances
13. Arrest or conviction for drug sales on or off site including out of view of site



## Member council

Member council is a member run forum to discuss issues of concern, propose new ideas, make policy recommendation and changes, and reinstate members who have had their membership suspended. Minutes are taken at each meeting and are placed in a binder near the front of the building. The Member council consists of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and a secretary.

The following are Member council procedures as adopted by motion at Member council:

### Roles:

- Chairperson-responsible for running council meeting and providing structure
- Co-chair-responsible for checking the agenda and forwarding it to chairperson for use at council meeting, fill in for chairperson as needed or at discretion of chairperson
- Secretary-takes notes from council meetings and assist chair and co-chair with any clerical tasks related to council meeting

### Basic rules for council meeting:

- You must be recognized by the chair or co-chair to speak
- The chair or co-chair may cut off your speaking as needed and at their discretion
- Respect time limits
- Stay on topic
- No personal attacks
- If you cuss, your turn to speak is immediately over



## **Reinstatement of members that have been suspended**

Some members, depending on the nature and severity of the violation they committed, do not have recourse to the member council as an option. A member who is seeking reinstatement at member council should show up 5 or 10 minutes before it starts, currently 1:00 Wednesday. The chair or vice-chair invites the person to speak when it is time. The member will make whatever statement they wish. A staff person will read the circumstances of the incident as described by staff. Other members will then have an opportunity to ask questions of the member seeking reinstatement. The person will then be asked to leave the building, and other members can make statements in regards to the member and the incident. A secret ballot will be taken among members as to whether or not the individual should be allowed back in the Center, a simple (yes), or (no) majority will decide the outcome.

If a member is reinstated the individual must wait until at least the next business day to come in. Further, they must set up a time to meet with staff before they return unless staff waives this requirement. The director, the coordinator in the director's absence, reserves the right to veto a reinstatement where issues of safety and security must prevail.

## **Checking in and out**

Everyone who comes to Rainbow Recovery Center is asked to check in at the Reception Desk upon arrival and check out when leaving. Please be patient with the front desk staff, they are not paid and we are fortunate to have members who are willing to perform this function. The Rainbow Recovery Center has over 100 active members, with new ones every day, so please do not take offense if someone at the desk has trouble recalling your name.

We request that member do not gather at the front desk area and that you be respectful by not visiting with front desk staff while they are working. The front desk people are very busy and need a quiet work area to answer phones and to do their work in general. Also please do not congregate in the hall between the front desk and the commons room.

## **Guests**

In order to have a guest, you must seek approval at a member council meeting or the daily 9:30 meeting at least 24 hours before the guest comes in. Guests must be at least 18 years old and have valid, state-issued picture ID.

## **The Basement**

The basement is used for meetings and groups. If a person cannot get into the basement due to a disability, every effort will be made to accommodate them. The basement is not wheelchair accessible.

## **Hygiene**

Some hygiene items are available. Please see the hygiene monitor if you need such an item.

## **Belongings**

Do not leave belongings of any kind here overnight or they will be given to the Goodwill. We simply do not have the space to store people's belongings and if we did we would quickly be buried. Bicycles are not allowed in the building to be brought into or stored inside the building. Large backpacks should be left in the designated area so as not to pose a tripping hazard.

## **Sleeping**

Do not sleep or give the appearance of being asleep here at the Rainbow Recovery Center. If a staff or Peer Advocate asks you to wake up and later you are asleep again, you will be asked to leave for the rest of the day. We encourage you to talk to us if you have medical concerns in this area of your life, i.e. narcolepsy.

## **Laundry**

Check with any peer advocate about our Laundromat voucher program.

## **Mail**

It is possible to receive mail here at the Center, you need a valid, state issued photo ID. We need to retain a photocopy of your I.D. for our records. Each and every time you come to check your mail we ask that you bring your I.D. Please check your mail regularly as we will only hold mail for 30 days. If for some reason you need your mail held longer than that please discuss this with a peer advocate. If you move and wish to have your mail forwarded please let us know verbally and in writing, we will only forward mail for 30 days. After the 30 day window all mail will be returned to sender unless other arrangements have been made. Similarly, if a person has had their membership suspended, mail will be returned to sender 30 days after their membership has suspended.

## **Phone use**

The phone is not available for use. It's to be used only on an emergency . Please see a Peer Advocate to discuss phone use.

## **Computer use**

There is a computer available to use the internet and do word processing. Please see a Peer Advocate.

## **Refrigerator use**

The common area refrigerator is for anyone to use. If you decide to use it your items must be labeled with your name and the date. Please do not place too many items in the refrigerator as this limits the space available to others. Items in the frig that are not labeled or are older than 5 days will be disposed of.

## **Opportunities for volunteering and community service**

The Rainbow Recovery Center would cease to function without the efforts of the members. The real work that is done here is done by the members. We invite you to become involved in the Center to the extent to which you are capable and interested. There are many opportunities for a person to volunteer their time. If a member needs to fulfill community service hours please discuss this with staff, this option is readily available.

## **Membership**

Membership is open to anyone who has a mental illness and is over 18 years of age. New members sign up by coming in or calling and seeing about the availability of a Certified Peer Counselor to do an intake with them. We try to be as accommodating as possible but there are times where a new applicant may be asked to return sometime later as staffing patterns may not allow for the time it takes for a new intake.

## **Gladstone house**

Gladstone House is a 5 bed house run jointly by Sun Community Services and the Rainbow Recovery Center. Sun receives money that covers the rent and provides some food. Certified Peer Counselors from the Rainbow Recovery Center provide staffing for the house. People are eligible to be considered for the house if they are homeless and they are not currently involved with mental health services. Prospective candidates must be clean and sober, willing to get involved with DSHS and the mental health system, and able to get along in a group setting.

## Meals

Breakfast and lunch are served at RRC. Food is normally pretty simple fare. The kitchen heavily relies on the expertise and energy of the members to produce good quality meals. If you are interested in having lunch on a particular day, the kitchen staff need to know this by 10:00 am. There are no exceptions, including staff. The cost for lunch is a chore or \$1. There is a sign up sheet for chores. If there is a time when the chores necessary to have lunch (i.e. lunch cook, servers) are not filled, then lunch will not occur. You must sign up for a chore for lunch before 11:00 am in order to have lunch that day, there are no exceptions to this. We will not hold lunches past 12:25.

## Coffee

Coffee will be served to you, please ask who the coffee server is, if there is not one please consider being the coffee server yourself.

### Warning!

**If there are no servers for meals or coffee, we will not be able to have breakfast, lunch or coffee!**



## Thank you

Thank you for coming in to Rainbow Recovery Center. Without members interested in exploring recovery this place would not be possible. It is your energy that will make this a place useful and beneficial to yourself and others. Please feel free to let us know what you think, your feedback is valued in helping us make this a program that is helpful and accessible.

## Suggestions/ Complaints

We have a suggestion box if you have ideas, suggestions, or complaints. If you have suggestions or complaints we would encourage you to talk with staff. Further, the North Sound Mental Health Administration provides an Ombud's service that investigates and helps people resolve complaints. There number is 1-888-336-6164.



# Rainbow Recovery Center Member Handbook

The following is the Rainbow Recovery Center Member Handbook, revision of the date of 10-1-09.

The member handbook is a comprehensive guide to the Rainbow Recovery Center. The member handbook will be revised as needed and every attempt will be made to inform members in writing and at meetings of such revisions.

By signing below I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the member handbook and have had an opportunity to ask questions or ask for clarification.

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**Print Member Name**

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**Member**

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**Date**