

SIGNS OF A SICK HOUSE

A gradual change occurs as a house moves away from Oxford House principles and moves toward individuals who believe they have a better way of doing things. Oxford Houses function best when the members follow the principles of democracy, financial self-support, and zero tolerance for using. Below are listed some telltale signs to indicate a house is not functioning well. Are one or more of these signs occurring in your house? If so, it is time to take corrective action. If you are unable to reach a solution, then it might be time to call your housing service committee or another house in your area in for help.

Signs:

- ⇒ Someone is using and not asked to leave, or may leave for only a few days and the house accepts him / her back.
- ⇒ Rents are not being collected, or the house accepts excuses for non-payment.
- ⇒ House bills are not being paid in a timely fashion.
- ⇒ Monthly audits are not conducted on the books.
- ⇒ House meetings are not being held regularly, or if they are, it is a race to see how fast it can be completed.
- ⇒ "How goes it" or personal processing time after house meetings is being ignored.
- ⇒ Every effort is not being made to fill empty beds.
- ⇒ The house is dirty inside or out.
- ⇒ There is no participation in chapter or other Oxford activities.
- ⇒ Individuals are not working or are not practicing an active program of recovery.
- ⇒ Members are keeping secrets (their own or others' secrets).
- ⇒ One or two individuals are running the house.



HOUSE CHECK-UP

As summer comes to a close, all houses need to check their status. Each member of the house should read this and take positive action.

1. How is the outside of your house? Is it the best in the neighborhood or at least one of the best? Are the lawns and shrubs trim, leaves raked, weeds gone, and all unnecessary junk removed? You have several adults in your home, probably more than your neighbors and this is the first impression people have of Oxford House and its residents.
2. It is time to repaint, wash walls, and really deep clean everything inside. A thoroughly clean house makes for a healthy environment physically and mentally. Does your house need maintenance, caulking bathrooms, replacing broken hardware, shampooing carpets, etc? Take care of your home.
3. Are your house finances in good order and following the Oxford House guidelines? Is your loan current? This repayment makes it possible for other houses to open. Does the house insure the safety of its funds by signing authorized checks (all house members voted) at the house meeting only; by giving receipts for all income; by completing a monthly audit when your bank statement arrives; and by sharing all bills and receipt expenditures at your meeting? Do you use a 2-key lock box for your checkbook and petty cash? We trust everyone but not their addiction.
4. Does everyone participate in house and chapter activities or do they just use your house for cheap living? Do you participate in regular presentations to the treatment centers and agencies?
5. Are you adhering to the three basic Oxford charter rules? Is everyone paying his or her share on time? Is your house a zero tolerance for alcohol and drugs, including prescribed narcotics? Does everyone participate in the decision making for your house? Remember we have no bosses and each resident's vote is equally important.
6. Are your house files and notebooks in good order? Are all your forms in order?
7. Do you make new members feel welcome by walking them through all the house guidelines and physical aspects of cupboards, refrigerator, etc? Have you tried the "buddy" system?
8. Is everyone attending your weekly house meetings? Are you rushing through the meeting or do you allow time for the democratic process to work? Do you allow ample time to hold a "How Goes It" or processing? This has proven to be one of the critical aspects of a stress free home.
9. Do your house members make recovery, attitude, and behavior change a focus by practicing the principles in all their affairs? Oxford house is a privilege for recovery not cheap digs for dysfunctional people.

If you are experiencing difficulties in any of these areas, contact your housing service chairman or outreach representative for suggestions on improvement. We can ALL make the time to clean up and sharpen up our homes and our lives for a better chance at long term recovery. Oxford house is RECOVERY, RESPONSIBILITY, and REPLICATION.

CORRECTING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES PERMANANTLY

Raising individual share of expense
Adjust your EES to match your house expenses

Cutting unnecessary costs:

Cable-go to basic

Telephone-look for competitive pricing plans

Keep your utility bill down by having one set temperature on the thermostat at all times 68 to 70 is suggested.

Buying house supplies in bulk

Turn off lights and TV's

Filling house vacancies as soon as a bed becomes Available.

Do not allow residents to get behind in EES. Individuals should always be current.

Monthly audits done by the whole house at a business meeting. Review bank statements.