

GASTON RESIDENTIAL SERVICES, INC.
905-A N. NEW HOPE ROAD
GASTONIA, NC 28054
(704) 861-9280 PHONE
(704) 868-2154 FAX



Dear Family Member or Guardian,

Welcome to Gaston Residential Services, Inc., and thank you for selecting GRS as your residential provider. GRS believes that family members and guardians are of central importance in the lives of the persons who receive services from GRS. Families and guardians also play a key role in the successful transition of their person's move.

When a person is admitted into residential services, he or she enters a transition period. The challenge, for both the person and his or her family, as well as his or her GRS Team, is the person's adjustment to life in the new home. The person's ability to develop, in terms of friendships, personal goals, employment, recreation, and religious or spiritual pursuits, is greatly increased if this transitional period is successful.

Once the transitional period is complete, GRS hopes that family members continue to have a central role in the life of the person served. Families and guardians can support the person by helping to keep family connections strong, serving on the person's Interdisciplinary Team, providing complete medical and social history, and helping the person locate and learn to use natural community supports.

We have developed the following information to help you provide the best support for your family member as he or she prepares for, transitions and adjusts to their new home.

Communicating:

- A Qualified Developmental Disabilities Professional (QDDP) or Case Manager will be in charge of coordinating and overseeing the services that your family member receives. If you have any concerns or questions, such as for the quality of care your family member receives, medical/psychological issues, or programmatic issues, the QDDP or Case Manager for your family member is your contact person.

Visiting:

- It is a GRS procedure that the person does not go on overnight visits for the first 90 days after entering residential services (exceptions will be made if team members agree that such a visit would prove therapeutic). Day visits and phone calls from family members and guardians are encouraged as long as they complement programmatic considerations and are not detrimental to the adjustment to the home. While families are always welcome to visit, if you are planning to come by or take your family member out, it is expected that you will call first. This is to assure that a) your family member is home at the time you wish to visit, and b) there are no conflicts in his or her schedule that would preclude a visit.

Planning for Weekends and Holidays:

- After the transition period, your family member may enjoy overnight visits in your home. Please notify the Case Manager, QDDP, or designated professional as soon as possible about plans for overnight visits. Staff typically meets to discuss each person's weekend plans by each Thursday evening, and GRS requests that you inform staff about weekend or overnight plans no later than Thursday afternoon.

Holiday planning requires more detailed planning, and GRS requests that you confirm your family member's holiday plans at least two weeks in advance. Holidays, as you well know, are a busy time. At GRS, coordinating holiday plans means assuring that each person served has medicines prepared for a home visit, that time-off from worksites employing persons served by GRS is requested, and that appropriate staffing of the home is accomplished.

Confirming plans includes letting staff know whether or not you will be spending holiday time with your person. The following information will be needed: day and specific time you will pick up your family member, the length of the visit, and the day and specific time your family member will be returning.

Personal Items:

- Your family member should bring his or her own personal supplies. These typically include items such as: sheets, towels, comforter, shower caddy, pillows, shower rug, robe, slippers, personal hygiene supplies, shaving/grooming supplies, laundry basket and hangers. If these requirements cause a financial hardship, GRS or the person's Case Manager will assist the person in locating alternate sources of funding.

Each room is required to be furnished with a bed, nightstand, dresser, mirror, chair and lamp. If the person brings his or her own furniture, please check in advance since most rooms cannot accommodate queen or king size beds. If necessary, GRS can provide some or all of these items to use while the person lives in the home.

The person is responsible for purchasing additional personal items, including clothing, as the need arises. Typically, the person served has a fairly limited income, so family support in providing these items is always welcome. While there is a telephone (no charges for local calls) and television available in the living areas of each home, persons served may elect to have these items in their bedroom. In such cases, the person served is responsible for purchasing such items and for all costs associated with hook-up and monthly service.

Remembering that your family member is an adult who will be living with other adults, please refrain from bringing decorations and items intended for children, such as toys, dolls, teddy bears or cartoon character clothing and linens.

Financial Management:

- It is expected that GRS becomes the Social Security representative payee for persons served. This seems to be helpful for most families who no longer wish to carry the responsibility of reporting income to and communicating with Social Security Administration (SSA). It allows GRS to receive applicable mail and to speak with SSA staff on your family member's behalf.

Part of the financial service provided is to help the person learn budgeting and banking skills. To this end, each person has his or her own checking account. Each week, after bills are paid, staff assists the individual with deciding on recreation activities and budgeting money from his or her account for the activity. The person is assisted in writing a check for his or her weekly cash.

Medical:

It is important to understand that GRS' Nursing Section is licensed to provide certain medical services. These particular medical services represent one of the most regulated aspects of GRS' array of services, and strict adherence to rules and regulations is required. The Nursing Section is supervised by GRS' Director of Nursing, a Registered Nurse.

With this in mind, we encourage family members to note the following:

- All **medications** administered to the people residing in a home must have a written doctor's order.
- Please do not bring any **over-the-counter medications** from your home. Staff cannot administer over-the-counter medications unless GRS Nursing Staff have a written doctor's order.
- If you have medical concerns not addressed by the Case Manager or the QDDP, they will refer you to the Nursing Director or a member of the nursing staff at (704) 861-9280.
- If your family member has a medical concern while visiting in your home, please handle the concern as you would for any family member. If you consider the situation an emergency, please take your family member to an urgent care facility or to the local emergency room. When your family member returns to his group or supported living home, please be sure to inform staff about the medical concern, its outcome, and provide them with any paperwork/discharge information provided by the doctor or emergency personnel.
- Should your family member ever need to be hospitalized, GRS asks that you arrange to have a family member present at all times in the hospital with your person, including sleeping over. Vulnerable people, alone at the hospital, are not always safe. If a person cannot speak for him or herself, or if there are complicated medical conditions and medication regimens, it is best that someone who knows the person is with him/her at all times to assure accurate communication with and consistent medical treatment from hospital staff.

GRS will try to assist you if possible. However, we do not receive reimbursement while the person is in the hospital, and staff availability can be a concern. A GRS Nurse will provide daily nursing contact for the person at the hospital to give medical input and to insure a smooth transition when the person returns to the group or supported living home.

- If you take your family member to a doctor's appointment and GRS staff is not present, you will be expected to complete the required paper work and return it to your family member's staff. When you plan visits for your family member at your home, let group home or supported living staff know your plans at the earliest possible date. Staff typically meet to discuss each person's weekend plans by each Thursday evening, and GRS requests that you inform staff about weekend or overnight plans no later than Thursday afternoon. By law, the pharmacy must dispense all medications for the such visits, and without notice, this is difficult to accomplish

Family Support Services and Professional Services:

- GRS provides ongoing support services to families and guardians through its Family Support Group. This group meets at the GRS main office. Family members and guardians come together to share their experiences, develop friendships, provide and receive support, learn about advocacy for their family member, and discuss critical legislative issues.

Natural Supports:

- These are supports naturally occurring in a person's life – such as supportive family relationships and other relationships developed through participation in civic groups or religious or spiritual activities. Your family member will benefit from your help in keeping these supports strong.

You can support your person by letting GRS staff know about existing natural supports, church or club memberships, and by including your family member in family gatherings,

taking your family member to church or spiritual activities, and helping him or her learn about available supports in the community.

Helping GRS Support the People We Serve:

- Gaston Residential Services is a private, non-profit, 501 C3 organization. The costs of adaptive equipment or clothing and other personal items are not included in the costs of care covered by most benefits.
- Families and friends of GRS and the people it serves can help offset these costs by making monetary donations to Gaston Residential Development, Inc., which, like GRS, Inc., is a non-profit organization. Donations may be made in memory or honor of a loved one or to GRS to defray costs not covered by Medicaid.

In closing, know that while our primary mission is to support and empower the people receiving services from GRS, we appreciate the importance of families and guardians. We are committed to doing all that we can to assure successful transition for your family member. If you have questions about any of the items discussed above, you may call on our professional staff to answer your questions.

Sincerely yours,

Rita B.Thuot
Executive Director

The person's new address is: _____

He or she can be reached by calling: _____

The person's QDDP or Case Manager is: _____

The person's house manager is: _____

He or she can be reached by calling: _____

The number for the GRS main office is: 704-861-9280