

Step Up/Step Down FAQs

1) Do you have to be low income/no income to stay at Step-Up Step-Down?

All are welcome, regardless of income. It doesn't matter if you have \$1 or \$1,000,000 - if a person is over the age of 18, a resident of the state of New Hampshire, and is ready to actively work on their mental wellness, they are welcome at any Step-Up Step-Down location.

2) What does it cost to stay at Step Up/Step Down?

SUSD is available to all at no cost, regardless of income or insurance.

3) What other documentation do you need in addition to the referral packet?

We don't need any other documentation. Step-Up Step-Down is a non-clinical program. We do not need discharge paperwork, medical records, or any other items that contain private information. If you like, after a participant has been welcomed into our program, you are free to send any of this paperwork directly addressed to the individual, as we do not want to violate the privacy of any of our peer participants.

But we are all about teamwork! Communicating and collaborating with any members of a person's care team is not only welcomed - it is encouraged! We especially want to work with others while the individual is part of the conversation. We know from experience that having a strong support system increases the levels of success an individual has in finding their balance. Please do share things like care plans (with the person's written consent). However, we don't need any documents that include a lot of private information, such as medical records or therapy notes.

4) Who is not going to be a good fit for Step-Up Step-Down?

Those who seem to be having the most success are individuals who have their basic survival needs met (food, shelter, transportation, etc.) This might look like a lot of things - staying with a family member, borrowing a car, being approved for EBT, etc. There are many different solutions to be found. We have noticed that

those who are focused on arranging for their survival needs have a very difficult time focusing on their mental health.

We are unable to take individuals who are registered sex-offenders or have a recent history of fire starting. We are also unable to accommodate for individuals who need physical assistance with their hygiene, dispensing medication, and other basic tasks.

5) How long does the process take? Can we send someone to you tomorrow?

Unfortunately, no. The process can take several weeks to complete. While we will review a referral within 48 hours, we may not be able to provide a response until later. After that, interviews need to be scheduled and plans need to be made. We receive many referrals each week and we are doing our best to respond in a timely manner. Thank you for your patience. We are reviewing our approach on a regular basis and know that we will eventually find the most efficient solution.

6) Do you have a structured program schedule?

Programs and groups are created by members of the house and staff working together. While some benefit from a structured schedule, others prefer to work one moment at a time. We have a combination schedule that includes groups that the current members of the house want - IPS Topics, WRAP discussion, Coffee and Star Trek, Knitting/Crocheting group, and Afternoon Art. We often form spontaneous groups, such as watching a documentary and having a discussion, or joining in on a cooking project in the kitchen. More things are being added every day.

What is unique about SUSD is that, while these members of the house enjoy the groups we have now, when the dynamic changes and a new person enters the house, those programs will probably change. Each person's journey is different. Every new person into the house provides an opportunity to learn more, grow more, and try new things.

7) How do you lock up and administer medications?

Each member of the house has a lock box in which to store their medication. They are in charge of administering their own medication, including any OTC medications. We do not administer any medications at SUSD.

8) Do you provide transportation for your participants?

As of right now we are unable to provide any sort of transportation to our peers.

9) What sort of activities do you have there? Is there stuff to do besides talking about mental health?

Absolutely! We have subscriptions to Paramount+ and Hulu, art supplies, puzzles and games, a guitar, lots of books about lots of things, and we even have a basketball hoop in the barn for year-round fun. We continue to get new things all the time to try.

10) What about visitors?

We do allow visitors to our Northwood location. Peer participants sign up on a calendar with roughly the time we should expect that visitor. Visitors are allowed in any of the common areas and on the grounds and are expected to follow the same rules that we all follow in our household agreement. Peers can have up to two visitors at a time and other accommodations can be made with program manager approval.

We're operating during a pandemic, so sometimes we may have to temporarily stop allowing visitors or require stricter rules for visiting. We follow both CDC guidelines as well as state and local recommendations. When in doubt, we err on the side of caution.