



RUTH HARBOR
MINISTRIES

Maternity Home
Resident Handbook

Program Overview

Ruth Harbor has a unique approach to providing services. We model Christian family life and are home for women parenting babies as they work towards their goal of independent living. During your stay at Ruth Harbor the staff will be supporting you to become strong, successful, and independent in your relationships, life skills, as well as spiritually and emotionally.

During your time here you will progress through a series of 4 Phases, each one designed to aid in your successful journey. Each Phase will bring new opportunities, goals, privileges, and responsibilities. The rate in which you move through the Phases will be determined by your participation, attitude, and growth. Your House Parents and Life Coach will explain the Phases in greater detail during your orientation.

We will be at your side when you face challenges and there to celebrate life's victories—look at us as a team dedicated to seeing you succeed! Each member of the Ruth Harbor team is here to pour into you, love you, and help achieve your goals.

You will find Ruth Harbor is a welcoming place that will consistently meet the basic needs of you and your child. You will have a comfortable, safe place to live, plenty of food to eat, and staff dedicated to walking beside you.

We understand settling into a new home can bring up many emotions both good and uncomfortable, please know this is normal. In time we are confident you will adjust to your new home and routine. Remember, you are not in this alone. You have a whole team to cheer you on!

While you are here it may be hard to let go of some of the past patterns, thoughts, and behaviors that have been unhealthy or kept you stuck. You may start to feel restless or question your decision to come to RH. You may disagree with a rule, programming or feel something is unfair. You may feel the program is too hard or expecting too much from you.

When that happens, please talk with your Life Coach and honestly assess what you are receiving at RH, versus what you have had to give up. Short term sacrifice can lead to long term reward!

Here are some questions to ask yourself when things get hard:

- Why did I come here in the beginning?
- What was so great about where I was before?
- What am I getting here that I can't get on my own?
- Where and what would I be going back to if I left?
- How will my decision impact the ones I love and care about?

An open heart, mind, and communication are key in growing and succeeding!

What to Bring

Most items that you will need during your stay are provided by Ruth Harbor. This includes bedding, towels, personal care items and food. You will want to bring personal items that make you feel comfortable in a new setting, such as pictures, a special pillow, blanket or small belongings that have special meaning. We encourage you to bring any musical instruments you play for your own enjoyment or to share your talent with others.

Each resident will be given an area to store personal belongings. This space is extremely limited, so we are unable to store large items. Please discuss this with the House Parents or Program Director before your arrival.

House Parent Responsibilities

House Parents are the leaders of the home and provide you with coaching and stability. They live in an apartment onsite and are on duty 5 days per week. During their time off there will be an Assistant House Parent that will stay in the home.

House Parents are there to see you reach your goals and will come alongside you to support, encourage, coach you on your journey. They will provide a safe, well-kept home for you and your child to live in. It is important for you to know some of their key responsibilities so that you can know what to expect from them.

Cooking: House Parents and residents work together to create a menu for the week. Each resident will have a turn to plan and cook a meals. Breakfast and lunch will be made by you and there will be days that will be self-serve or group cooking, depending on the schedule for the week. There will also be days that will be self-serve depending on the schedule for the week. This helps create a good balance where you can learn to cook from the House Parents and also practice making meals for yourself.

Supervision: For safety reasons, House Parents will always need to know where you are. You will communicate with them by phone or text. Because schedules in the house can be chaotic, and rarely line up, a House Parent will be on the first floor from 6:00 pm until 9:00pm to assist as needed, any changes in schedule will be communicated with you. Otherwise, they are “on call” and can be called or texted when you need them.

House Operation: If you notice anything is broken or not working properly let a House Parent know. They will also ensure the home is always stocked with needed cleaning, hygiene, and food supplies.

Assistant and back-up house parents are a valuable part of our team and carry many of the same responsibilities and authority, while on duty, as the House Parents. They should be treated with the same respect as you would House Parents.

Life Coach

You will have a Life Coach to help guide you through the Ruth Harbor process. Meeting twice a week with your Life Coach is required for each resident. Your Life Coach will coordinate and develop your personal care plan by helping you identify and set goals in the following areas of your life: Physical Health, Emotional Health, Social Support, Spiritual Health, Life Skills, and Parenting.

Your Life Coach will be helping you address physical, emotional, and spiritual needs during your stay. Your active participation in these individual meetings is vital and required, as they are central to your overall success.

Care Plan

Because we are invested in helping you meet your personal goals, an individualized care plan will be developed within your first 30 days at Ruth Harbor. Your care plan will consist of key goals specific to your development and desire for success and steps you may take to reach those goals. You play an important role in creating your care plan and the team helps to ensure that you are successful in accomplishing your goals.

Care Plan Monthly Evaluation

- We will meet monthly to review and update your care plan. Weekly meetings with your Life Coach will present an opportunity to discuss any modifications that may need to be made before the next care plan meeting. You must show progress towards your goals outlined in your care plan to continue to qualify for Ruth Harbor's program, lack of forward progress may result in dismissal from RH.

- The Care Plan meeting will include House Parents, Life Coach, and yourself. Occasionally the Program Director may join in the meetings for oversight purposes. These meetings will be conducted monthly until you leave or Ruth Harbor.
- As part of your Care Plan you may be required to attend counseling with a licensed professional, and/or attend appropriate group meetings in person, as needed.

Learning Opportunities

Your Care Plan will include education in an areas that will help you grow and develop. It may also include personal interests and hobbies you would like to pursue.

Often times we partner with other agencies to provide programming in their areas of expertise. We also utilize community volunteers to hold workshops in their area of knowledge. The following is a partial list of topics you may explore while you are here:

- Life Skills
- Parenting skills
- Decision making
- Sexuality
- Nutrition and Meal planning
- Budgeting and Finances
- Career planning
- Healthy relationships
- Stress management
- Other hobbies or interests

We want you to be able to grow and enrich all parts of your life and personal well-being. Learning new things, participating in hobbies, or simply reading a good book can spark your imagination, add joy, contentment, and overall life satisfaction.

We welcome you to use the public library and the resources they provide.

Please let us know of any specific materials or supplies you may need to explore a new or existing hobby or interest. Ruth Harbor will do our best to provide materials within reason.

School – Work - Volunteering

According to which Phase you are on, you will be required to either be enrolled in school, work, or volunteer while you are in the RH program.

Ruth Harbor prioritizes education for building a strong, healthy, and successful life. If you have not earned your High School Diploma, you will be required to successfully complete the HISET program. If you are interested in enrolling in classes, several area schools are available for continuing or completing your high school education, college courses, or certificate programs.

It is necessary for your future independence to find employment. The House Parents and Life Coach will assist you and provide guidelines as to a location perimeter you may look for employment as well as an acceptable schedule. They will also assist you in finding safe, reliable child care. **Before a job offer may be accepted, it must have the approval of the House Parents.**

Volunteer work is encouraged overall, but volunteer work will need to be found if you are not in school or employed. This can be very helpful for discovering interests and abilities in a particular area of work or for building a positive referral if you have a poor work history. Contributing to others in the community not only helps them, it helps you feel good about yourself!

Faith Engagement

The Ruth Harbor program is founded on Christian principles and values. It is not a requirement or necessary for you to be a Christian or become a Christian to be admitted into our program or during your time at Ruth Harbor.

We will offer spiritual discussions, devotions, and Bible studies. While you may or may not agree with the Christian perspective, we ask that you remain respectful.

We also require Sunday church attendance when you are not on pass, and invite you to ask questions and investigate your own beliefs.

Money and Budgeting

If you are employed, you will deposit your earnings into your personal bank account. IF you do not have one, your Life Coach will help you establish an account. The House Parents and Life Coach will need your permission to view your account online with you to review transactions, as part of assisting you in learning to manage money.

No one will access your account without you present.

A savings account will be established for you to deposit a percentage of your earnings toward your future independence.

To keep relationships in the home healthy, we ask that you do not lend money to nor borrow money from, another resident.

While at Ruth Harbor you are given the opportunity to earn Ruth Harbor bucks to spend on baby items, equipment, housewares for an apartment, or special items in the RH store. These Ruth Harbor points are for use while you are a Ruth Harbor resident, although a portion of your bucks will still be available to you upon your leaving the program, up to 60 days after program completion.

We ask that you use your time here wisely and save as much money as possible to work toward independence.

Passes, Visitors, Social Events

Passes, visitors, and attending social events are an important part of living a well-rounded life. The frequency of passes, visitors, and attending social events outside of Ruth Harbor is dependent on your current Phase.

These times with family members or friends are arranged through the House Parents, who are responsible for your safety and the family-like quality of the home. The House Parents require a **48-hour notice** in requesting passes to manage scheduling, transportation and support needs required for all residents. Weekend passes need to be approved by Thursday morning to get onto the weekend schedule. Assistant and back-up house parents are unable to approve last minute passes.

All duties must be completed and approved before going on passes.

Residents are responsible for their own transportation in using passes.

Passes, Visitors, Social Events:

- **Passes:**
 - Up to two overnight passes are allowed per resident per month.
 - Overnight passes may be from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm the following day.
 - House Parents have the right to limit overnight passes if they sense unhealthy situations.
 - Residents are not to use overnight passes to visit each other's homes.
 - Up to two day passes per month will be allowed for each resident to be used for social events, outings, family visits in town, etc.
 - House Parents will have the authority to approve or deny day passes.
 - Day passes are from 8am-8pm or within these time parameters.
- **Outing passes:**
 - Passes are for the event of outings with family, hair appointments, dinner, etc. that last a few hours in duration and are to be authorized per the house parents. Outing passes are to be given per

the House Parent's discretion and are earned based upon behavior, attitude, progress, and decision making.

- **Visitors:**
 - All visitors in the home must be approved by the House Parents, and may be subject to a background check. Visitors may only come to the home while the House Parents are present, stay in public areas, and may not go to the second floor.

Curfew

- All residents are to be home from their work/school day no later than 6:00 pm., or a time agreed upon with the HP beforehand.
- All residents are to be home from passes by 8:00 pm.
- House Parents operate the house schedule, therefore your arrival and departure times need to be approved beforehand.
- If you are going to be late in arriving back at Ruth Harbor, you must communicate with a House Parent before your scheduled return time. Failure to communicate will result in negative consequences.
- **When in doubt, communicate with the House Parents! Many problems can be prevented with clear communication.**

Medical Care and Illness

Medical and medicinal expenses are not paid by Ruth Harbor, and are the responsibility of the resident. If you do not have insurance, we will help you apply for state assistance (known as Medicaid or Title XIX).

Should you feel sick or have a concern about your physical wellbeing or that of your child, tell the House Parent immediately so that you can receive proper care. The House Parent on duty will help you assess whether or not an immediate trip is needed, or if an appointment can be made. No one will be denied or prevented necessary medical care.

IMPORTANT: We use Mid-Wives or the Iowa Clinic at the downtown Iowa Methodist location for high-risk pregnancies. We recommend that you deliver at downtown Iowa Methodist.

The House Parents may restrict you to bed rest, if necessary, for your wellbeing, or that of other residents.

House parents are to be given a doctor's note or visit summary after every appointment to secure continuity of care in the home and for the health of the mother/child.

State licensure regulations require that all prescription medications be kept in a locked box and dispensed by the staff.

At Ruth Harbor, we care about the health and wellbeing of both residents and staff. Therefore, we are proud to be a non-smoking home. Smoking, vaping, etc. is not allowed anywhere on the RH premises. No alcohol or drug use, including tobacco products, will be permitted.

Any illegal or dangerous contraband will be confiscated at the time of identification by the House Parents, and are grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, and may need to be reported due to Mandatory Reporter guidelines.

To ensure the health and safety of all residents and children, if a resident is showing signs of, or is suspected of illegal drug or alcohol usage, a drug test may be administered.

House Guidelines

The general tone of the home is one of respect and caring for all who live here, including House Parents and Residents. We like to have fun, play games, go on outings, etc. You will be encouraged to participate and suggest ideas for the house!

You will have an opportunity to learn and demonstrate your life and cooperative skills while at Ruth Harbor. Light household duties are assigned on a rotating basis, some are done weekly and others are daily, such as straightening your room or helping with meal preparation and cleanup.

You will be expected to be in your room by 10:00 pm each evening to ensure quiet time and adequate rest. Residents are not allowed in each other's bed rooms, instead we encourage you to use the peace room or other areas of the house to spend time together.

Because we care about the health and safety of your child, due to SIDS risk and child safety we strongly discourage co-sleeping with your child.

For privacy and safety reasons, residents are not permitted into the House Parent's personal living quarters at any time or the basement without being accompanied by a House Parent.

Community Living

Part of being a successful adult is learning to care for yourself and the place where you live. This is even more important in Ruth Harbor as you will be experiencing living in community with others. House Parents and residents work together to keep the home clean, organized, safe, and healthy for all who live there.

You may learn new skills for interacting with others that will help you the rest of your life in work, school and personal relationships. We encourage positive interaction with the staff and other residents in the home. If you experience a problem, we ask you to try and resolve the conflict with the person directly at first. If this is unsuccessful, ask the House Parents for a special time to discuss this so the problem can be addressed and harmony restored.

You are also required to participate in house meetings when they are held. This is a time when you will meet with the house parents and other residents to discuss any concerns or questions you may have. At the end of this handbook is a separate page with a statement of Ruth Harbor's resident grievance process.

As you and your child will be living in the company of others and in the Ruth Harbor home, it is expected that you teach and maintain boundaries with your child. This is in regard to the property of others, items in the home, keeping them from potentially dangerous situations, and respecting others personal boundaries. In return, the same courtesy will be shown to you, your belongings, and your child.

Establishing good parenting habits and skills is also an important aspect of being in the Ruth Harbor home. Ruth Harbor staff will offer coaching and encouragement to you in this area. We respect that your child is your responsibility and parenting decisions are up to you, however, unsafe or unhealthy circumstances will be addressed with the expectation of all operating within safe parameters.

As part of caring for your home and providing a safe environment your room will be expected to be in good order with a floor free of debris, to ensure safe passage in cases of emergency. No food or drink, other than water is allowed in private rooms. Staff will do a door inspection of your room weekly to insure tidiness, and any requests for cleaning must be completed within 48 hours.

Dress Code

We ask that you dress modestly while you are outside your room. No halter or mid-drift tops, no tight jeans, shorts or see-through clothing. No clothing with profanity or inappropriate sayings is allowed. Shorts and skirts must be modest and not reveal the buttocks when bending over. Cleavage must also be covered at all times. Tank top straps must be at least 2 finger widths or wear a shirt over or under it. No bikini type bathing suits. If you are in need of clothing let the House Parents know, and Ruth Harbor will help you obtain clothing.

Laundry and Showers

You will be responsible for doing your own laundry while living at Ruth Harbor. If this is a skill you have not yet learned, the House Parents will teach you. Laundry supplies are provided for each resident.

- Laundry days are assigned by room number. This assures you have a designated time you do not have to share with others.
- The laundry will be open 6AM- 9PM, each day. This allows for a little time before and after the workday in order to do a few loads of laundry as needed.
- Laundry will be removed from the laundry room by 9PM each evening.
- If your work/school schedule gets in the way of your laundry time you can talk to the House Parents about another possible arrangement in order to get it done.

Daily showering and good personal hygiene is required. Residents are encouraged to set a shower schedule with the other residents.

Electronics

The house parents reserve the right to restrict any TV or radio programming, CDs, DVDs or reading materials that are inappropriate to the home.

Public Computer Use:

- We provide a computer for you to use.
- It is to be used for school work and job/volunteer searching
- No social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or streaming movies is allowed.

- Email may be checked with the permission of a House Parent
- Each resident is provided a specific log in and password. You must not share this with other residents, because your internet activity is recorded.

TV Use:

- The TV is an earned privilege by following instructions and accomplishing daily goals. (Chores, school, employment, care plan goals, etc.)
- All programs must be approved by the House Parents and abide by Ruth Harbor values and guidelines.

Cell Phone Guidelines

During Phase One, you will not have cell phone access, however, you will have the ability to make necessary phone calls. Phases will determine the hours in which you will have cell phone use.

At no time are cell phones allowed in bedrooms, on the second floor, or during church.

We ask that you are polite in your phone usage and not use them at meal times, when talking with staff, or during other moments where it would be rude not to give your full attention. Ruth Harbor staff may confiscate and limit cell phone usage if these guidelines are not upheld.

Transportation

It is the policy of Ruth Harbor Ministries to provide safe, affordable, and appropriate transportation options, for program related purposes, for residents living at Ruth Harbor.

House Parents may provide transportation for residents as the schedule allows for necessary doctor's appointments, school and work. It is the resident's responsibility to find personal transportation for passes.

Resident-Owned Vehicle:

- Residents may park their own vehicle on the property under appropriate circumstances.
- Resident must have a valid driver's license. A copy of her license will be placed in the resident file.
- Vehicle must be properly registered and insured. Resident will provide documentation of insurance and registration which will be placed in resident file and updated at each renewal period.
- Resident is responsible for all vehicle maintenance and for the purchase of gas for the vehicle.
- Vehicle will be safe and functional for transportation.
- Resident will not allow others to drive her vehicle.
- Residents may not transport other residents.
- A resident wishing to purchase a vehicle during her stay at Ruth Harbor will work with the Life Coach and House Parents to demonstrate her ability to meet the necessary expenses of ownership.
- Children will be transported in a car seat appropriate to their age, weight and height. Initial car seat installation will be inspected by RH staff. Children will not be allowed to be transported in improperly installed car seats.

Resident Disciplinary Process

It is our intention to maintain a positive home atmosphere and good communication at all times. We also expect you to respect staff, house and programming guidelines, and other residents at all times. If in the event of non-compliant, disrespectful, abusive, or rude behavior to either other residents or staff, residents will be subject to disciplinary action.

All reasonable efforts will be given to successfully resolve the issue at hand and restore peace and harmony in the home.

The process will be as follows:

- Verbal warning to address behavior and concerns. Coaching will be given on correcting the behavior.
- In the instance the behavior continues, additional coaching will be provided as well as a written warning and correction plan.
- If the behavior persists, a meeting will be held including the resident, house parents, life coach, and program director, to address changes that need to be made.
- If three or more written warnings have been issued for the same behavior within a 90 day period, it will be grounds for dismissal from Ruth Harbor.

Every resident will be given ample notice and opportunity to correct behaviors. Disciplinary action will not come as a surprise or without full consideration from the House Parents and staff.

Resident Grievance Process

*“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”
Colossians 3:13-14*

Ruth Harbor observes and protects the legal and human rights of residents at our facility. Residents have the right to express a grievance or complaint they have relating to the program. Every effort will be made to resolve complaints at the time and with the person with whom they occur. When problems arise, trust and faith may be hindered if not handled promptly and properly.

Grievance with another resident

- If another young woman offends you, you are first to go to that young woman and calmly explain what has been done to offend you. Your goal in this step should be to try and resolve the issue.
- If she does not hear or understand your concerns, or refuses to resolve the issue, the next step is to go to the House Parents and discuss what happened. They will counsel you how to best approach the next step. If necessary, they will meet with you and the other young woman so that the matter may be made right.
- If, after the House Parents have done all they can do, and you remain dissatisfied, you may fill out the Conflict Resolution form and give it to the Program Director. A meeting will then be scheduled for you to share your concerns.

Grievance with a Staff Person

- If a staff person offended you, you are first to go to that person and explain the problem in a calm manner. The purpose of this step is to resolve the issue by allowing both of you an opportunity to share your thoughts.
- If you feel the problem has not been resolved with the Staff Person your next step is to fill out the Conflict Resolution form and give it to the Program Director, who will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your concerns.

Grievance with Another Resident

- If another young woman offends you, you are first to go to that young woman and calmly explain what has been done to offend you. Your goal in this step should be to try and resolve the issue.
- If she does not hear or understand your concerns, or refuses to resolve the issue, the next step is to go to the House Parents and discuss what happened. They will counsel you how to best approach the next step. If necessary, they will meet with you and the other young woman so that the matter may be made right.
- If, after the House Parents have done all they can do, and you remain dissatisfied, you may fill out the Conflict Resolution form and give it to the Program Director. A meeting will then be scheduled for you to share your concerns.

Grievance with a Staff Person

- If a staff person offended you, you are first to go to that person and explain the problem in a calm manner. The purpose of this step is to resolve the issue by allowing both of you an opportunity to share your thoughts.
- If you feel the problem has not been resolved with the Staff Person your next step is to fill out the Conflict Resolution form and give it to the Program Director, who will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your concerns.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Conflict with: _____ Date of Conflict: _____

- I have tried to calmly talk about the situation with the other person.
- I have met with my House Parents to discuss this situation.

Summary of Conflict and Steps Taken Thus Far

Signature _____

Mandatory Reporting

All Ruth Harbor Staff Members are mandatory reporters. This means that any suspicion of child abuse or neglect is reported immediately to the State of Iowa Department of Human Services. If you have questions about this role, please talk with a staff member

Emergency Plans

In Case Of Fire Alarm

Everyone is to proceed to the nearest exit and meet in the Ruth Harbor parking lot. Once everyone is accounted for, the residents may move into the Administration office.

Tornado/Disaster

Everyone is to go directly to the basement. Bring your pillow and blanket if time allows. Proceed to the carpeted room on the north end of the basement. If that room cannot be reached, go into the first bathroom at the bottom of the basement stairwell. Practice drills occur periodically to insure that you are prepared for these events.

