



**FreshStart**  
Ministries

# **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**RECOVERY & RESTORATION THROUGH FAITH**

[www.FreshStartMinistries.com](http://www.FreshStartMinistries.com)  
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This Family Packet is to provide you with the information you need to understand the structure and policies of Fresh Start while your loved one is enrolled. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office.

# **Welcome Letter From the Executive Director**

Dear Families and Friends,

Welcome to Fresh Start Ministries of Central Florida. Whether your loved one has just entered our program or is continuing their journey of transformation, we want you to know that you are part of this process too. Recovery does not happen in isolation—it is a shared journey that includes healing, accountability, and renewed hope for everyone involved.

At Fresh Start, we believe that lasting change is possible. Our program is built on faith-based principles and guided by evidence-informed practices that address the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. We are committed to helping each man find freedom from addiction, rebuild broken relationships, and discover purpose through God's transforming grace.

We also believe in the vital role of family. Your involvement, understanding, and encouragement are key components of long-term recovery. This handbook was created to help you understand the Fresh Start process, what to expect, and how you can walk alongside your loved one as they grow.

Thank you for trusting us to be part of this journey. We are honored to serve and partner with you as your loved one builds a foundation for a new life—one marked by faith, responsibility, and lasting transformation.

With gratitude and hope,

Scott Harrell

Executive Director

Fresh Start Ministries of Central Florida, Inc.

# Overview

Founded in 1986 by Pastor Joe and Kelly Cordovano, Fresh Start Ministries of Central Florida, Inc. is a 12-month, faith-based residential recovery program serving adult men. Located in Orange County, our 17,000-square-foot facility provides housing, counseling, education, and employment support to more than 60 residents annually. The program combines spiritual guidance, professional counseling, and structured daily living to help men overcome addiction and other life-controlling issues. Residents participate in classes, group and individual therapy, and work assignments designed to promote accountability, healing, and personal responsibility. Fresh Start offers an environment that is both compassionate and disciplined—a place where grace and structure work hand-in-hand. Our mission is to see lives restored, families healed, and men equipped to reenter society as responsible, faith-filled individuals who are ready to make a difference in their communities.

## Mission:

Leading men out of addiction into lasting freedom and transformation through a Christ-centered model of accountability, healing, and hope. We lead men (discipleship) out of addiction into lasting freedom (a lifelong ministry) and transformation (renewing of the mind) through a Christ-centered (faith-based) model of accountability (we do not deviate from our program structure), healing (a 12-month process where all wounds take time to heal), and hope (hope in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit).

## Core Values - F.A.I.T.H.

**F – Faith:** We build everything on the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ, guiding men toward spiritual renewal and a personal relationship with God. Faith is the anchor that empowers lasting change.

**A – Accountability:** We believe accountability brings growth and structure. Each man is called to take ownership of his actions, choices, and progress while being supported by mentors, staff, and peers who walk with him through every step of recovery.

**I – Integrity:** We teach that honesty and transparency are essential to transformation. Integrity restores trust—with God, with family, and with oneself—and creates a foundation for living a new life of purpose and consistency.

**T – Transformation:** We believe true recovery is more than behavior modification—it's a renewing of the mind and heart. Through faith, counseling, and discipleship, men experience deep inner change that leads to lasting freedom.

**H – Hope:** We cultivate a culture of hope, reminding every man that no story is too broken for redemption. Hope in Christ is what keeps the journey moving forward, even when the road is difficult.

# **Family Involvement**

## **The Role of Family in Recovery**

Recovery is not just an individual process—it is a family journey. When a loved one enters Fresh Start, the entire family begins a new chapter of growth, healing, and restoration. Addiction affects everyone connected to the individual, and recovery invites everyone to participate in rebuilding trust and strengthening relationships. At Fresh Start, we believe that when families learn, grow, and heal together, long-term transformation becomes more sustainable. We encourage families to stay engaged, informed, and prayerful throughout their loved one's time in the program. Your support, understanding, and consistency play a powerful role in their success.

## **Family Participation Opportunities**

### **Weekly Family Support Group (Required)**

Every Tuesday evening, families and significant others are invited to participate in our online support group. This 12-step family enhancement meeting is required for spouses or significant others and strongly encouraged for other family members. The group provides education on addiction, codependency, boundaries, and healthy communication while fostering a supportive environment for shared growth.

### **Special Family Events**

Fresh Start hosts periodic events throughout the year—such as graduations, holiday celebrations, and family days—to promote connection and encouragement. Families who are actively participating in our support group are invited to attend these events. These occasions provide meaningful opportunities to celebrate progress and reconnect in healthy, uplifting ways.

### **Ongoing Communication**

We maintain open and respectful communication between families and staff. Updates, scheduling details, and questions regarding residents can be directed through our administrative office or assigned counselor. Direct communication with residents should always follow program guidelines to protect both privacy and structure.

# **Program Expectations**

## **Expectations for Residents**

Residents at Fresh Start are expected to take full ownership of their recovery journey. The program is built on structure, accountability, and consistency. These expectations help build discipline and prepare men for a successful transition back into society.

## **Visitation and Communication Guidelines**

To maintain focus during the early stages of recovery, Fresh Start places certain limits on visitation and phone use. These boundaries create space for healing and help residents develop independence and discipline.

### **Visitation:**

- No overnight visits are allowed during the program except in special circumstances, such as the death of an immediate family member.
- Residents remain on restriction for the first four Saturdays of the program.
- Visitors are not permitted on property without staff approval. Any unscheduled visits must be reported to staff immediately.

### **Communication:**

- Cell phones are collected nightly at 6:00 p.m. and returned the following morning.
- Calls should be limited to designated times and handled respectfully.
- Residents without a personal phone may use the community phone as scheduled.
- All communication with residents must be conducted through proper channels. Families should not share or request personal staff phone numbers.

## **Maintaining a Safe and Structured Environment**

Fresh Start is a community of healing. To protect the integrity of the program, we maintain strict policies regarding safety, conduct, and approved items. Rules are designed to create a consistent environment where men can focus fully on their recovery without distraction or risk. We ask that families support these guidelines by refraining from sending or bringing prohibited items and by encouraging accountability. When residents and families work together within structure, growth and healing thrive.

### **Your Partnership Matters**

The Fresh Start journey is most effective when families walk in unity with the program. By learning, setting boundaries, and staying engaged, you model stability and faith that your loved one can follow. We are honored to partner with you in this redemptive process—where grace, accountability, and transformation meet to rebuild lives and restore families.

# **Program Rules, Structure, and Resident Conduct**

## **Purpose of the Program Rules**

At Fresh Start Ministries, structure is not about control—it's about creating consistency, safety, and accountability. Many of the men who come to Fresh Start have lived in chaos for years, and order provides the foundation for healing. The rules of this program are not designed to punish, but to protect. They establish boundaries that allow residents to grow spiritually, emotionally, and practically while restoring discipline and integrity.

Residents who embrace these principles will find that structure leads to freedom. When men follow the program, take ownership of their choices, and respect authority, they begin to rebuild confidence, trust, and responsibility—qualities that lead to lasting success beyond Fresh Start.

## **General Conduct Expectations**

Every resident is expected to maintain an attitude of respect, honesty, and cooperation. The following expectations form the foundation of community living at Fresh Start:

- **Respect for Others:** Treat all residents, staff, and guests with dignity and kindness. Disrespect, profanity, or aggressive behavior is not tolerated.
- **Honesty:** Truthfulness in words and actions builds trust and integrity. Dishonesty will be addressed immediately as part of personal growth.
- **Participation:** Attendance at all required classes, counseling sessions, church services, and work assignments is mandatory.
- **Clean Living:** Each resident is responsible for maintaining his living area, participating in chores, and contributing to a clean and organized environment.
- **Punctuality:** Timeliness reflects discipline and respect for others' time. Residents must adhere to all schedules.
- **Dress Code:** Modest, appropriate clothing is required. Clothing that promotes drugs, alcohol, or inappropriate content is prohibited.

## **Work and Employment**

Fresh Start is a working program. Employment plays a vital role in recovery by restoring purpose, responsibility, and dignity. Residents are required to work a minimum of 32 hours per week, Monday through Friday, and return to the property by 6:00 p.m. each evening. Residents are expected to maintain consistent employment, handle their income responsibly, and pay the weekly program fee. Employment must be approved by staff to ensure it aligns with recovery goals and schedule requirements. Job changes must be discussed with the Program Director in advance.

# **Program Rules, Structure, and Resident Conduct**

## **Substance-Free Policy**

Fresh Start maintains a zero-tolerance policy for the use of drugs, alcohol, or any mind-altering substances. Residents are subject to frequent and random testing. Any use, possession, or distribution of drugs or alcohol will result in immediate discharge from the program.

Prescription medications must be approved by staff and taken under supervision. Over-the-counter supplements, performance enhancers, or body-building products are not permitted unless medically necessary and cleared by staff.

## **Prohibited Items and Activities**

The following items and behaviors are not permitted on property or within the program:

- Illegal drugs, alcohol, or non-approved medication.
- Pornographic or sexually suggestive material.
- Tight or revealing clothing, or clothing with drug/alcohol imagery.
- Secular or explicit media content (music, movies, books).
- Electronic devices not approved by staff.
- Weapons of any kind (except small pocketknives with permission).
- Gambling, fighting, or threatening behavior.

These rules exist to ensure a safe, distraction-free environment for recovery and spiritual growth.

## **Cell Phone and Technology Policy**

Technology can be both a tool and a temptation. To promote focus and accountability, the following policies apply:

- Cell phones must be turned in nightly by 6:00 p.m. and may be retrieved after 5:00 a.m.
- Internet use is limited to job searches, educational purposes, or family communication as approved by staff.
- Residents are not permitted to communicate with clients, alumni, or outside contacts through social media during the program.
- Computers or tablets must remain in designated areas and are subject to inspection.

# **Program Rules, Structure, and Resident Conduct**

## **Visitation and Family Contact**

Families play a vital role in recovery, but early stages of the program require focus and minimal outside influence. Visitation is permitted only after the initial restriction period (first four Saturdays) and must be approved by staff. Visitors are not allowed on campus outside of approved times or without prior arrangement. All communication between residents and family must occur through appropriate channels. Residents should not provide personal phone numbers of staff or other residents. Boundaries protect both the individual and the program community.

## **Disciplinary Procedures and Growth Opportunities**

Discipline at Fresh Start is designed for restoration, not punishment. When a rule is broken, staff respond in a way that encourages reflection and change. Depending on the nature of the violation, disciplinary measures may include written warnings, loss of privileges, temporary restrictions, or in serious cases, discharge.

Men who accept correction and take responsibility for their actions often grow the most. The goal is to help residents learn from mistakes and strengthen their character in preparation for life after graduation.

## **Commitment to Accountability and Growth**

Every rule at Fresh Start exists to help residents achieve stability and freedom. Accountability is not about control—it is about partnership. When men commit to living with honesty, humility, and discipline, they experience the power of God's grace to restore what was lost. We invite families to support these principles by encouraging consistency, affirming progress, and partnering with staff to ensure every man has the opportunity to thrive.



# **Understanding Addiction, Recovery,** **and Family Dynamics**

## **Understanding Addiction**

Addiction is both a disease and a spiritual condition. It affects the body, mind, and spirit—distorting the way a person thinks, feels, and makes decisions. Chemical dependency changes brain chemistry, dulls judgment, and weakens the ability to cope with stress and emotional pain in healthy ways. What begins as an attempt to find comfort or escape often turns into a destructive cycle of dependency that damages relationships, careers, and self-worth. At Fresh Start, we approach addiction as a life-controlling issue that requires healing on every level. Recovery begins when a person chooses honesty and becomes willing to face the truth about how addiction has impacted their life and those around them.

## **The Path to Recovery**

Recovery is not a single event—it is a lifelong journey of transformation. True freedom comes through both spiritual renewal and practical change. Men at Fresh Start are taught to replace destructive behaviors with disciplines that restore health, integrity, and purpose. This process takes time, consistency, and surrender.

The stages of recovery often include:

- Awareness: Recognizing the reality and consequences of addiction.
- Healing: Addressing emotional wounds, trauma, and broken relationships.
- Growth: Learning healthy coping mechanisms and building self-discipline.
- Renewal: Living out new values and walking in freedom with accountability and faith.

Progress looks different for everyone, but growth always requires honesty, humility, and perseverance.

## **The Role of Family in Recovery**

Families play a vital role in supporting long-term recovery. Addiction impacts everyone it touches, creating patterns of mistrust, hurt, and fear. Healing requires participation from both the resident and their loved ones.

Families can help by:

- Setting healthy boundaries that encourage responsibility rather than rescue.
- Practicing patience and consistency during times of adjustment.
- Choosing forgiveness and understanding over resentment.
- Supporting participation in meetings, counseling, and church involvement.

Your steady presence and belief in your loved one's capacity to change are powerful motivators for growth. When families model grace and accountability, they create a safe place for long-term transformation to take root.

# **Understanding Addiction, Recovery, and Family Dynamics**

## **Codependency and Enabling**

Many families want to help, but sometimes good intentions can unintentionally prolong the problem. Codependency occurs when a person's identity and emotional stability become dependent on the behavior of another. This often leads to enabling—rescuing a loved one from the natural consequences of their actions.

Healthy support means allowing your loved one to experience the results of their choices while standing beside them in love. This approach fosters accountability and ownership. Setting boundaries is not rejection—it's an act of love that says, "I believe you can take responsibility for your life."

At Fresh Start, we teach families that enabling prevents growth, but encouragement inspires it. Families who stay connected to their own recovery journey through counseling or support groups often experience greater peace and healthier relationships.

## **The Path to Recovery**

As healing begins, families can start rebuilding trust and communication. This takes time and consistent behavior from both sides. The process often includes:

- Honest conversations with mutual respect.
- Forgiveness for past hurts and mistakes.
- Reestablishing routines, boundaries, and trust.
- Shared spiritual growth through faith, prayer, and community.

True restoration happens when families embrace grace, extend forgiveness, and commit to walking the journey together. Healing does not mean forgetting the past—it means allowing God to redeem it for a greater purpose.

## **A Reflection for Families**

Healing begins when grace meets truth. Recovery is not about perfection, but about progress—one day at a time, one decision at a time. Families who walk in faith, hope, and love will find that even in the hardest moments, transformation is possible. At Fresh Start, we have witnessed countless stories of redemption and restoration. What once felt broken beyond repair has become a testimony of God's faithfulness.

Your continued support, prayers, and patience are a vital part of that story.

# **Emotional and Spiritual Growth –** **Healing the Whole Person**

## **The Importance of Whole-Person Healing**

Healing from addiction is more than stopping a behavior—it's about restoring the whole person. At Fresh Start, we believe that lasting transformation happens when emotional health, spiritual growth, and personal responsibility come together in harmony. Every man is encouraged to explore not only what he needs to stop doing, but what he is called to become.

Addiction often begins as an attempt to manage pain, fear, or emptiness. True recovery addresses the root causes, helping each man face his emotions with honesty and courage. Our counselors and staff provide both spiritual guidance and professional support to help residents build a new foundation of stability and peace.

*“Transformation begins where surrender meets faith.”*

## **Emotional Awareness and Honesty**

Growth begins with awareness. Many men entering the program have spent years suppressing emotions—masking fear with anger or covering pain with pride. Recovery invites honesty, not only with others but with oneself.

Residents learn to name and process emotions like guilt, shame, fear, and resentment. Through counseling, journaling, and group discussions, they discover that feelings are not the enemy—denial is. Emotional honesty opens the door to healing and frees men to build genuine relationships rooted in truth.

*“Healing begins when truth is spoken in love.”*

## **Spiritual Transformation**

At the heart of Fresh Start is the belief that no lasting change happens without spiritual renewal. Each man is encouraged to cultivate a personal relationship with God, discovering his identity, purpose, and strength through faith. Spiritual growth isn't a one-time event—it's a daily choice to walk in humility, gratitude, and dependence on Christ. We teach that surrender is not weakness but freedom. As residents release control and invite God into every part of their lives, they begin to experience peace that cannot be manufactured. Over time, spiritual maturity replaces chaos with calm, and fear with faith.

*“Freedom comes not from control, but from surrender.”*

# **Emotional and Spiritual Growth –** **Healing the Whole Person**

## **The Power of Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a cornerstone of both emotional and spiritual healing. Many who struggle with addiction carry deep resentment, guilt, or regret. Forgiveness breaks the chains of the past, allowing space for renewal and peace.

We teach that forgiveness is not about excusing what happened—it's about releasing the hold it has on your heart. Residents learn to forgive others, seek forgiveness from those they've hurt, and accept God's forgiveness for themselves. This process restores dignity, rebuilds relationships, and renews faith.

*“Forgiveness doesn’t erase the past—it redeems it.”*

## **Cultivating a Healthy Mindset**

Emotional and spiritual health requires daily practice. Residents are encouraged to develop habits that reinforce positivity, gratitude, and self-discipline. Morning devotionals, journaling, and group reflection help men set intentions and recognize progress.

A healthy mindset also includes resilience—the ability to face challenges without giving up. By learning to see obstacles as opportunities, men develop confidence that extends far beyond their time at Fresh Start. Families can support this growth by encouraging consistency, celebrating milestones, and modeling hope.

*“Gratitude turns struggle into strength and progress into praise.”*

## **A Reflection for Families and Residents**

Emotional and spiritual growth takes time, patience, and faith. It is a journey of discovering who we were created to be and allowing God to restore what was once broken. Healing the whole person means learning to live with honesty, to love with grace, and to walk daily in purpose. Families who nurture both faith and understanding create the environment where recovery can thrive. Together, we can build a future where hope is stronger than fear—and where each new day is a testimony of God's redeeming power.

*“When faith takes root, freedom begins to grow.”*

# **Relapse Prevention and Life After Fresh Start**

## **The Goal of Long-Term Recovery**

Recovery doesn't end at graduation—it's a lifelong journey of continued growth and commitment. Relapse prevention is about more than avoiding substances; it's about building a new way of thinking, living, and relating to others. Maintaining freedom requires ongoing discipline, spiritual grounding, and community connection. Fresh Start helps residents develop healthy habits that sustain recovery beyond their time in the program. These include consistent prayer and devotion, regular church attendance, accountability relationships, healthy work-life balance, and continued involvement in support networks.

*"Freedom is not just found—it's maintained through daily choices."*

## **Common Triggers & Warning Signs**

Relapse is rarely a single event—it's a gradual process that begins with subtle shifts in attitude, behavior, and emotion. Recognizing early warning signs is essential for prevention. Common triggers include:

- Emotional triggers: stress, loneliness, anger, fear, or unresolved guilt.
- Situational triggers: being around old environments, people, or routines connected to substance use.
- Relational triggers: unhealthy friendships, romantic distractions, or family conflict.

Complacency is one of the most dangerous warning signs. When someone begins to believe they are "strong enough" to relax boundaries or skip meetings, they become vulnerable. Staying alert, humble, and connected to accountability partners keeps progress on track.

*"Stay humble, stay accountable, and stay free."*

## **Building a Relapse Prevention Plan**

A strong relapse prevention plan is proactive—it identifies challenges before they arise and establishes a clear strategy for maintaining stability. Every Fresh Start graduate is encouraged to create a personalized plan that includes:

- A daily routine centered on faith, work, and self-care.
- Regular communication with mentors, pastors, and accountability partners.
- Active participation in support groups or recovery meetings.
- Healthy coping skills for managing stress and emotion.
- Ongoing service and community involvement.

Planning ahead allows individuals to respond wisely rather than react impulsively. Preparation, prayer, and community are the foundation of sustained freedom.

*"You don't overcome temptation by willpower—you overcome it through preparation."*

# **Relapse Prevention and Life After Fresh Start**

## **The Importance of Accountability & Community**

Recovery thrives in community. Isolation, secrecy, and pride often lead back to old habits, while connection brings strength and encouragement. Men are encouraged to stay involved with the Fresh Start community after graduation through alumni meetings, mentorship opportunities, and the weekly Tuesday night support group. Support groups and accountability partners offer a safe place to share victories, struggles, and practical wisdom. The journey of recovery is ongoing, and staying connected ensures that no one walks it alone.

*“We recover best when we recover together.”*

## **Life After Fresh Start**

Graduation marks a new beginning—a time to put into practice everything learned throughout the 12-month journey. Life after Fresh Start involves rebuilding trust, managing responsibilities, and continuing to grow spiritually and emotionally.

Graduates are encouraged to:

- Maintain steady employment and financial responsibility.
- Remain consistent in prayer, worship, and personal devotion.
- Seek healthy friendships and avoid environments of temptation.
- Continue working with a mentor, pastor, or counselor.

Give back by serving others, sharing their story, and being a light of hope.

*“Graduation isn’t the end of recovery—it’s the beginning of a new life.”*

## **Graduation, Aftercare & Sober City**

To support long-term success, Fresh Start offers graduates the opportunity to live in Sober City, our aftercare apartment community. Sober City provides a structured, faith-based environment designed to help men transition smoothly back into independent living while maintaining accountability and fellowship. Residents of Sober City continue to work full-time, attend church, and stay connected with the Fresh Start family through alumni and support group meetings. This environment encourages healthy independence while protecting the progress made during the residential phase.

*“Sober City isn’t just a place to live—it’s a community to grow.”*

## **Reflection for Residents and Families**

The goal of Fresh Start has always been more than sobriety—it’s transformation. Life after the program will bring new opportunities and new challenges, but with faith, accountability, and support, every graduate can thrive. Families play a vital role in this continued journey. Your encouragement, prayer, and understanding can make the difference between fear and confidence, isolation and connection. Together, you can build a new legacy—one of strength, renewal, and lasting hope.

*“The end of the program is only the beginning of the promise.”*



# **Family Healing, Boundaries & Communication**

## **The Family's Journey of Healing**

Recovery is not just for the individual—it's for the entire family. Addiction causes wounds that reach beyond the person using; it creates pain, mistrust, and confusion for loved ones as well. Healing takes time, grace, and understanding on all sides.

Families at Fresh Start are encouraged to approach this season as their own journey of renewal. It's normal to feel a mix of hope, fear, and uncertainty. Just as your loved one is learning to live differently, you too are learning new ways to support, communicate, and trust again.

*"Healing begins when everyone stops blaming and starts rebuilding."*

## **Why Boundaries Matter**

Boundaries are not punishment—they are protection. Healthy boundaries help everyone know what is acceptable and what is not. They preserve trust, foster respect, and protect emotional well-being.

Families often struggle with knowing how to help without enabling. Enabling may look like rescuing your loved one from the consequences of their actions, while true support means allowing them to take responsibility for their choices. Boundaries make space for accountability to grow.

Examples of healthy boundaries include:

- Setting clear expectations for honesty and respect.
- Requiring consistent participation in meetings and church.
- Avoiding financial rescue or emotional manipulation.
- Saying "no" when necessary, without guilt.

*"Boundaries aren't walls—they're bridges built with wisdom."*

## **Communication that Builds Trust**

Healthy communication is the foundation of restored relationships. Many families have spent years speaking from fear, frustration, or defensiveness. Recovery invites everyone to learn a new way of communicating—with patience, clarity, and empathy.

Here are a few principles for strong communication:

- Listen first. Allow space for your loved one to share without interruption.
- Speak truth with love. Honesty without anger creates safety.
- Avoid manipulation. Don't use guilt or fear to influence behavior.
- Celebrate progress. Acknowledge even small steps forward.

Good communication doesn't mean avoiding hard conversations—it means approaching them with compassion and calm.

*"When grace leads the conversation, healing follows."*

# **Family Healing, Boundaries & Communication**

## **Managing Expectations After Graduation**

Graduation is a milestone, not a finish line. When your loved one returns home or transitions to Sober City, life will not instantly look “normal.” They will still need structure, accountability, and encouragement to maintain their progress.

It's important to remember:

- Trust takes time to rebuild—consistency proves change.
- Let natural consequences teach valuable lessons.
- Encourage independence instead of dependency.
- Keep communication open, but maintain healthy limits.

Your role is to support, not to supervise. Allowing your loved one to take ownership of their choices helps them grow stronger in their recovery

*“Give them room to grow, not room to return.”*

## **Encouragement for Families**

As your loved one continues the recovery journey, remember that your own healing matters too. Many families carry years of hurt, guilt, or exhaustion. God wants to bring peace and restoration to your heart as well.

Forgive where it's hard. Pray for strength when patience runs low. Surround yourself with people who understand your journey. Attend family support groups, seek counseling if needed, and lean on faith. Healthy families build healthy futures.

*“Grace for them begins with grace for yourself.”*

## **Reflection: Love with Boundaries, Grace with Strength**

Healing relationships is sacred work. It requires courage to speak truth, strength to maintain boundaries, and love to keep believing in what's possible. As you continue to support your loved one, remember that God restores families one act of faith at a time. True love doesn't mean saying yes to everything—it means showing up with both compassion and conviction. Together, families and residents can build homes filled with peace, trust, and lasting hope.

*“Love deeply. Stand firmly. Believe always.”*



# **Understanding Emotions, Triggers,** **and Personal Growth Tools**

## **The Role of Emotional Awareness in Recovery**

Emotional awareness is essential to long-term recovery. Many men who struggle with addiction have spent years avoiding or numbing emotions. Learning to identify, express, and manage feelings is a major step toward personal freedom and maturity.

At Fresh Start, residents are encouraged to recognize emotions as signals—not as threats. Feelings like anger, fear, sadness, or guilt are not weaknesses; they are opportunities for growth and reflection. By learning how to process emotions in healthy ways, men can make wise decisions instead of reacting out of impulse.

*“You can’t heal what you refuse to feel.”*

## **Understanding Emotional Triggers**

A trigger is anything—an emotion, memory, person, or situation—that causes a strong reaction or temptation to revert to old behavior. Recognizing triggers early is key to relapse prevention and emotional stability.

Common types of triggers include:

- Internal triggers: feelings of loneliness, stress, guilt, or overconfidence.
- External triggers: certain people, places, smells, or memories linked to substance use.
- Relational triggers: conflict, rejection, or unresolved family issues.

Residents are taught to pause, pray, and process rather than react. Understanding personal triggers allows individuals to take responsibility and build resilience over time.

*“Awareness is the first step toward freedom.”*

## **Coping Skills for Emotional Balance**

Healthy coping strategies replace old habits that led to self-destruction. These tools help residents manage life’s challenges while maintaining peace and sobriety.

Some effective coping skills include:

- Prayer and meditation: connecting with God to find strength and clarity.
- Journaling: reflecting on emotions and experiences for insight.
- Physical activity: using exercise to release tension and improve mood.
- Talking openly: seeking counsel from staff, mentors, or accountability partners.
- Gratitude: focusing on what’s good instead of what’s missing.

Each skill is designed to build self-awareness and encourage spiritual and emotional maturity.

*“Peace doesn’t mean the storm is gone—it means you’ve learned how to stand in the rain.”*

# **Understanding Emotions, Triggers, and Personal Growth Tools**

## **Replacing Old Patterns with New Habits**

Personal growth requires replacing old, unhealthy patterns with new disciplines. Residents learn that success in recovery is built one decision at a time. Whether it's showing up on time, being honest in counseling, or maintaining cleanliness, every small act of discipline builds integrity. Creating new habits helps men regain control over their thoughts and behaviors. Over time, these consistent actions develop confidence and stability that carry into every area of life.

*"Small daily victories become the foundation for lasting change."*

## **The Connection Between Thoughts and Actions**

Our thoughts shape our actions, and our actions shape our future. Many men in recovery discover that negative thinking—shame, self-doubt, or hopelessness—can be as destructive as any substance. Learning to renew the mind is key to transformation. At Fresh Start, residents are taught to challenge negative thought patterns with truth. Replacing lies like "I'll never change" with faith-based affirmations helps build a mindset of hope and confidence. As thinking changes, behavior follows.

*"What you believe about yourself determines the life you build."*

## **Tools for Personal Growth**

Fresh Start provides a variety of tools and disciplines designed to support personal and spiritual development:

- Daily devotions and accountability check-ins.
- Weekly counseling and group sessions focused on growth.
- Job readiness and life skills training.
- Mentorship and peer accountability circles.

Each of these tools helps reinforce consistency and long-term stability—encouraging men to continue their progress even after leaving the program.

*"Growth is a process, not a moment."*

## **Reflection: Emotional Strength Through Spiritual Growth**

True healing happens when emotional maturity and spiritual faith meet. As residents learn to face emotions with honesty and bring them before God, peace begins to replace chaos. Emotional stability and spiritual surrender work hand in hand—each strengthening the other. Families can support this process by creating space for open dialogue, encouraging accountability, and praying together. Growth takes time, but the reward is a renewed heart, a clear mind, and a life rooted in lasting transformation.

*"Emotional freedom is found when your heart aligns with your faith."*

# **Education, Work, and Life Skills Development**

## **Purpose of Work and Education in Recovery**

Work and education are essential components of lasting recovery. They bring structure, responsibility, and dignity back into daily life. At Fresh Start, we believe that meaningful work is both a spiritual and practical expression of transformation. When a man learns to work faithfully, manage his responsibilities, and take pride in his effort, he begins to rebuild confidence and purpose.

Employment teaches accountability—the same principle that supports sobriety.

Residents learn to view work not just as a job, but as a form of stewardship. Every task, no matter how small, becomes an opportunity to practice excellence and integrity.

*“Excellence is doing ordinary things with extraordinary purpose.”*

## **Education and Job Readiness Training**

Fresh Start equips men with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive beyond the program. Education and career readiness are key components of long-term success.

Residents receive instruction in:

- Resume writing and interview preparation.
- Workplace etiquette and professional communication.
- Financial literacy, budgeting, and goal setting.
- Basic computer skills and job application support.

Our goal is to help each man discover his God-given talents and apply them to a productive career path. Education restores confidence and gives residents the tools to provide for themselves and their families.

*“Preparation opens doors that talent alone cannot.”*

## **Daily Work Expectations**

Work is a vital part of recovery at Fresh Start. Each resident is required to work a minimum of 32 hours per week, Monday through Friday, and return to the property by 6:00 p.m. daily. These expectations foster time management, responsibility, and balance. All employment must be approved by staff to ensure that it aligns with the resident's recovery goals and program schedule. Job changes or requests for time off must be discussed with the Program Director. The goal is not simply to earn income, but to develop character through consistent effort.

*“Discipline today builds freedom tomorrow.”*

# **Education, Work, and Life Skills Development**

## **Life Skills for Sustainable Living**

Recovery extends far beyond staying sober—it's about learning to live well. Fresh Start teaches essential life skills that help men transition into independence with confidence and wisdom.

Key life skills include:

- Financial management: creating budgets and managing bills responsibly.
- Time management: balancing work, program, and personal growth.
- Conflict resolution: handling disagreements with maturity and respect.
- Healthy relationships: building trust and maintaining clear communication.
- Household management: maintaining cleanliness, organization, and order.

These skills prepare residents not only for independence, but also for leadership within their homes, churches, and communities.

*“The habits you build today become the life you live tomorrow.”*

## **The Power of Stewardship**

Fresh Start teaches that everything we have—time, talent, and resources—is a gift from God. Stewardship means managing those gifts with gratitude, integrity, and responsibility. By practicing stewardship, residents learn to honor God in their work, finances, and relationships. This principle is woven throughout every part of the program. Whether managing money wisely, showing up on time, or serving others, stewardship transforms daily actions into expressions of faith and maturity.

*“Faithfulness in little things leads to greatness in all things.”*

## **Reflection: Work with Purpose, Live with Integrity**

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These skills prepare residents not only for independence, but also for leadership within their homes, churches, and communities.

*“When you work with purpose, your labor becomes worship.”*

# **Community Reentry & Continuing Support**

## **The Transition Back into Society**

Graduating from Fresh Start is a major milestone—one marked by courage, growth, and faith. Yet, graduation is not the finish line; it's the beginning of a new chapter.

Transitioning back into society means applying the principles learned here—discipline, honesty, faith, and accountability—to daily life outside the structured environment.

Reentry takes time. It involves rebuilding relationships, re-establishing trust, maintaining employment, and managing newfound independence. Graduates are encouraged to take things one step at a time, remembering that transformation is a lifelong journey. The same daily disciplines that sustained success at Fresh Start will sustain success beyond it.

*“Freedom is not the absence of structure; it’s the wisdom to live within it.”*

## **Staying Connected to the Fresh Start Family**

Graduates remain part of the Fresh Start family long after leaving the program. Ongoing connection is essential for accountability and continued growth. Alumni are encouraged to stay involved through:

- Tuesday Night Support Groups: A safe and consistent space for ongoing recovery and family healing.
- Graduation (Last Tuesday of the month): Monthly gatherings for encouragement, testimony, and fellowship. Alumni are welcomed with open arms.
- Sober City Aftercare Apartments: A transitional community that provides affordable housing, peer support, and continued structure for men entering independence.
- Service Opportunities: Volunteering, mentoring current residents, or assisting at events.

Remaining connected to the Fresh Start community creates a strong network of support—a brotherhood that understands the journey and celebrates every victory along the way.

*“Connection keeps us grounded; isolation keeps us vulnerable.”*

# **Community Reentry & Continuing Support**

## **Spiritual Continuity**

Faith remains the foundation of lasting freedom. Recovery without spiritual growth is incomplete. Graduates are encouraged to maintain a daily rhythm of prayer, devotion, and fellowship. Finding a home church is vital for accountability and spiritual nourishment.

Engaging with a Bible study, small group, or ministry team helps keep faith active and growing. The disciplines that were developed during the program—quiet time, journaling, worship, and serving—continue to guide the heart long after graduation.

*“What began as recovery becomes renewal when Christ remains at the center.”*

## **Giving Back & Living with Purpose**

Every graduate of Fresh Start carries a story of redemption. Those stories are powerful tools to bring hope to others who are still struggling. Many alumni choose to mentor, volunteer, or share their testimonies in churches, recovery meetings, and community events. Giving back reinforces personal growth and keeps the focus on gratitude rather than self. When a man uses his freedom to serve others, he lives out the purpose God designed for him. True transformation multiplies—it impacts families, workplaces, and communities.

*“The greatest measure of recovery is not what you gain, but what you give.”*

## **Reflection: Freedom with Purpose, Life with Vision**

Reentry is more than a return to everyday life—it's the opportunity to walk in purpose and live with vision. Each graduate has the tools, faith, and community support to continue building a stable, fulfilling, and Christ-centered future.

Families play an important role in this ongoing success. Continue to offer encouragement, accountability, and patience. Celebrate progress and remind your loved one that growth takes time. Together, your faith and support become the foundation of long-term recovery.

*“Transformation is not a single event—it's a daily decision to live free.”*

## **A Message from the Executive Director**

Dear Graduate and Family,

Congratulations on reaching this powerful milestone. What you've accomplished at Fresh Start is more than completing a program—it's a testimony of God's grace, discipline, and perseverance. You've proven that change is possible, that faith can restore what was lost, and that hope can rebuild what once seemed broken.

As you move forward, remember this: the tools you've learned here will only grow stronger as you use them. Stay accountable, stay connected, and stay faithful. Keep your heart open to God's direction, and let your story become a beacon of hope for others still searching for theirs.

We are proud of you—and we are praying for you. Your journey is far from over; it's just beginning. Continue to walk in integrity, serve with humility, and live with purpose.

With gratitude and hope,

Scott Harrell

Executive Director

Fresh Start Ministries of Central Florida, Inc.



# **Final Summary and Resources**

## **Our Ongoing Commitment**

Fresh Start Ministries exists to lead men out of addiction into lasting freedom and transformation through a Christ-centered model of accountability, healing, and hope. Every graduate, family member, and supporter is part of this mission—restoring lives, rebuilding families, and renewing faith.

Our work does not end at graduation. We are committed to walking alongside every man who has completed the program and the families who have supported them. Whether through continued counseling, community engagement, or alumni mentorship, Fresh Start remains a family that never stops believing in the power of redemption.

*“Recovery doesn’t end at Fresh Start—it grows stronger as you live it.”*

## **Family & Alumni Resources**

- Tuesday Night Family Support Group: Weekly Zoom sessions offering encouragement, education, and prayer for families and loved ones of current and former residents.
- Monthly Graduation: Held the last Tuesday of every month, featuring testimonies, fellowship, and updates from graduates living in freedom. All Alumni are encouraged to attend.
- Sober City Aftercare Apartments: Affordable, supportive housing for men transitioning from the program into independent living.
- Pastoral & Counseling Support: Access to ongoing spiritual guidance and licensed counseling referrals through Fresh Start’s network.

## **How to Stay Connected**

Fresh Start Ministries of Central Florida, Inc.

4436 Edgewater Drive

Orlando, FL 32804

Phone: (407) 445-1445

Email: [info@freshstartministries.com](mailto:info@freshstartministries.com)

Website: [www.FreshStartMinistries.com](http://www.FreshStartMinistries.com)

Follow us online for ministry updates, alumni stories, and upcoming events.

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)

*“Stay connected to the community that helped change your life—your story can change someone else’s.”*



## **Final Word Of Encouragement**

To every graduate and every family member—thank you. Your courage, faith, and perseverance are the heartbeat of this ministry. Recovery is not a destination but a daily journey of surrender, growth, and gratitude. Keep moving forward with faith in God's plan and confidence in the work He has begun in you.

*“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.”*

You are proof that redemption is real and that no life is too far gone for God to restore. Continue to live in the light of that truth—and help others find their way home.

With gratitude and blessing,

**The Fresh Start Team**

Fresh Start Ministries of Central Florida, Inc.

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*“Restoring Hope. Rebuilding Lives. Renewing Families.”*