

# Principles

Three principles underlie the formation and operation of Oxford House Chapters and explain why individual Oxford Houses group together to start Chapters:

## **Experience, Strength, and Hope**

The principle of Oxford Houses sharing their experience, strength and hope with each other is an extension of a basic principle underlying the twelve step self-help programs of recovering alcoholics and drug addicts -- AA and NA. While an individual's "program" benefits by helping others through sharing of individual recovery experiences, so too Oxford Houses benefit from the individual houses in an area sharing their successful (or unsuccessful) experiences with each other. Since every Oxford House has as its primary purpose achievement of comfortable sobriety and follows a standardized system of operations, a common ground exists for houses to learn from each other. Each Oxford House operates democratically and is financially self-supported following the Oxford House Manual<sup>®</sup> and the traditions designed to perpetuate the house as an alcohol and drug-free recovery environment. The similarities among houses range from day to day operations such as maintaining financial integrity through weekly reports concerning the house checking account to expulsion of residents who relapse. Living problems range from personality conflicts to keeping a house clean. Often the way that one house resolves such problems helps another house having similar problems to resolve them. The sharing of experiences among houses helps all Oxford Houses to become safe havens to assure comfortable recovery from addiction -- which is the sole reason for Oxford House.

*Experience: this is what happens in our house.*

*Strength: this is what we do to solve our group living problems, to keep our house socially and financially strong and to gain individual long-term, comfortable sobriety.*

*Hope: someday there will be enough Oxford Houses so that every recovering alcoholic and drug addict has the opportunity to live in an Oxford House to attain comfortable, long-term recovery.*