



Lydia's House Resident Handbook

May 2020, Ongoing Response to COVID-19

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Introduction

Lydia's House Affirmation

This is my community. It is composed of people just like me. It will be kind if I am kind. It will be forgiving if I forgive. It will patiently endure wrongs if I endure them. It will be a community of loyalty, love, faith and service if I who make it what it is am filled with these. Therefore, with God's love, I dedicate myself to the task of being all these things I want for Lydia's House.

Dear Guests,

We welcome you to the Lydia's House community today. We know your journey here has been a long one and we hope the time you spend with this community will restore you and strengthen you for all the journeys ahead.

Life together will have delights as well as struggles. We will disappoint and hurt one another. We will also get to work through our differences and experience reconciliation.

We promise to work alongside you to help make the most of your time here, and we welcome you and your family to the community. We are glad you are here.

-- The Lydia's House Community

Our Mission, Vision, & Guiding Principles

The mission of Lydia's House is to provide safe, stable and supportive housing to women and children in transition and crisis.

The vision of Lydia's House is to be a demonstration of God's beloved community, a home where women from all walks of life can help one another grow toward wholeness.

In our life together three core principles guide our words and actions toward one another:

TRUTH: Lydia's House promotes honest communication and encourages members to "speak the truth in love."

RESPECT: Every member of the Lydia's House community is a child of God and should be treated as such.

KINDNESS: Lydia's House encourages tempering each interaction and conflict with kindness, believing that a community functions best with kindness at its core.

What is Lydia's House?

Lydia's House is a home for women and children who are in transition or crisis. Guests have experienced "traditional" homelessness or other housing crisis. One or two volunteers also live in the house. (Lydia's House was named after Lydia in the Bible who offered hospitality and kindness to Jesus' disciples. She was known as a "dyer of purple cloth" which is why there is so much purple around the house.)

Our Addresses:

Physical Address: 2024 Mills Ave, Norwood, OH 45212

Mailing Address (if you need additional privacy): P.O. Box 128808, Norwood, OH 45212

Mail, Phones and Building Guidelines

Incoming Mail: Your mail will be put in your box, unopened. Please allow a volunteer to sort the mail when it arrives.

Phones: The Lydia's House office can be reached at 513-549-7752 during business hours.

Getting in and out of the building: You will receive a key code upon entering the community. Please keep this key code private. Your code will be deleted when you leave the community.

Who's Who at Lydia's House

The **Guests** of Lydia's House join the community for different amounts of time, typically about three months. We may have as many as four adult guests and six child guests at any time.

One or two **Resident Volunteers** live at Lydia's House. They are in charge of dealing with emergencies and caring for the community. They also provide accountability for monitoring curfew hours, performing drug screens, and making sure dinner gets on the table Sunday through Thursday.

Other **Core Community Staff** live across the street or in the neighborhood. These individuals may join the house at dinner and they help with the running of the house.

Some **Outside Volunteers** will come through the house to assist with various needs.

A Typical Weekday at Lydia's House

6 AM: The house begins to wake up and quiet hours end.

9 AM: Guests are generally expected to be away from the house at school, job training, errands, etc. by 45 days into their stay unless they are physically ill. Volunteers may or may not be in the house during this time. If we are under 'shelter in place' orders and you do not have essential employment, you are welcome to stay in the house.

6 PM: Dinner time. All guests and resident volunteers are invited to attend community dinners Sunday - Wednesday if you are feeling well. **

8:00 PM: Up by Eight! Bedtime for young children. Kids should be upstairs at this time. **

9:30 PM: Quiet hours begin.

10:00 PM: Evening curfew for late arrivals (curfew is midnight Friday and Saturday)

** Subject to change based on the house's coronavirus status **

Individual Responsibilities

Your Lydia's House Stay

Your first week at Lydia's House will give you time to settle in. You will get your room set up, meet with different people, and start planning how you will use your time at the house.

By the 2nd week, you will start applying for different housing opportunities. Applications for different income-based housing projects are available when you're ready. We will also start pursuing education and/or employment opportunities, as well as government supports that you might be eligible for.

After 45 days we will have a celebration to mark your halfway milestone. It is also expected that you would be in an education program or working by this time, unless you are expecting a baby or had one recently.

Room Deposit and Rent

You will have the following commitments regarding money while at Lydia's House:

Room Deposit: Within the first 30 days, you will be required to pay \$150 for a room deposit. If you leave your room in good shape you can receive this money back when you leave.

Rent: You will not pay rent during your first 90 days at Lydia's House. On your 90th day, you will pay \$200 per month. This rent is similar to what you may pay in a subsidized apartment and will allow us to offer a landlord reference to wherever you may apply to live. Rent at Lydia's House goes toward the cost of your room, utilities, food, and any activities organized by the house for you and your children. *Note: If you owe back debt to Duke Energy or a past landlord you may be required to start making payments the second month of your Lydia's House stay.*

Savings: If you would like to save money for a future goal, Lydia's House is happy to save your money for you in a secure bank account with your name noted. Staff can also assist you open up a bank account.

Incentive Program

By working on your goals and meeting house expectations you will be able to earn tokens that are entered into weekly and monthly drawings. You can earn tokens by passing room inspection. You must have passed every room inspection to qualify for the monthly drawings.

Curfew and Overnights

To make sure the house is quiet at night, Lydia's House has a curfew policy. Your curfew will be 10 PM (Midnight Friday and Saturday). If you are breaking house rules your curfew will be decreased.

Holidays typically mean a midnight curfew. Feel free to check on this before you make your holiday plans.

After your first month at Lydia's House you will be eligible to take an overnight away from the community. However, this is subject to change depending on the house's Coronavirus status.

Sobriety Policy

Guests at Lydia's House are encouraged to make healthy choices. The following is expected of all who live at Lydia's House:

- No Alcohol Use or Possession while at the house. If you are working on sobriety, we require you to maintain that outside the house as well. If you are at least 21 years of age and choose to drink alcohol while away from Lydia's House, you must come home sober.
- No Drug Use or Possession while at the house or away from the house
- No Smoking cigarettes on the grounds of Lydia's House. If you are a smoker you will need to leave the Lydia's House yard completely to smoke.

Screens will be performed randomly or if there is suspicion of drug or alcohol use by the resident volunteers. If you take an overnight away from the house, you will be screened. If you test positive for drug use there will be serious consequences. See the "Safety of the Community" section for more details.

If you have a history of substance abuse, you may be required to do regular drug screens and attend 12-step meetings.

Care of Children

We are glad you've chosen Lydia's House as a home for your children. While we know there are many different ways to be a parent, we ask each Lydia's House guest the following:

- Do not yell at or hit your children to correct them.
- Be on the same level of the house as your kids. For example, if they are outside, you should be outside as well.
- Keep your children with you if you leave the house, even if you just go down the street.
- Make sure your children's immunizations are up-to-date, for the health of all of the kids.
- If you want another guest or volunteer to babysit your child, please fill out a care of children form and get a signature before leaving the house.

If you become sick or otherwise unable to take care of your children, we will call your emergency childcare contact. See Care of Children form to choose your contact. If your contact cannot be reached your children must go with you or 241-KIDS will be called to care for the children.

Please be respectful to other guests by being mindful of where your children are, of any messes that need cleaning up, and by respecting quiet hours.

Lydia's House promises if a volunteer is trusted with your children, they will be thoroughly screened and trained prior to babysitting, though childcare is limited to emergencies due to COVID-19 social distancing policies.

Please dispose of diapers in designated diaper pails or outside garbage only.

We will provide you with opportunities to improve your parenting through provided occupational therapy services.

Health Care Guidelines

Each Lydia's House guest is working to become healthier. While living at Lydia's House you agree to do the following:

- Attend doctors' appointments as scheduled.

- Take prescription medications only and exactly as prescribed and keep your medication list updated in case of emergency.
- Share ongoing health challenges with the resident volunteer.
- Provide care for children when ill, including doctors' visits and medications.

Lydia's House can help with transportation, although we will always request you try Medicaid transportation first. If you have medication related expenses you are struggling with Lydia's House may be able to offset some expenses.

Group Responsibilities (How we Live Together)

COVID-19 Safety

Though individuals served at Lydia's House are generally 'low-risk' for developing serious cases of COVID-19, we are doing what we can to reduce the risk of acquiring and spreading this illness.

- Upon arriving to Lydia's House, a staff member will provide education to you about coronavirus symptoms and your particular risks, as well as the specific responses we will take when there is an increased risk within our community.
- Whenever you meet with a staff member, they will complete a brief symptom screen. Please be honest so that we can ensure all stay as safe as possible.
- Staff will weekly assess the risk of COVID-19 through public health data and symptom checks. Based on this information, Lydia's House will be classified as being on green, yellow, or red. Each level has different guidelines and community practices to promote safety.
- Staff will regularly disinfect high-touch areas within the house.
- At meetings of more than two people, temperatures will be taken and hand sanitizer distributed.
- Please talk to staff if you are in need of any supplies needed to keep you safe, such as masks, soap, or hand sanitizer.

Technology Policy

At Lydia's House we realize technology can be used as a tool or used as a distraction. It can help us communicate or can keep us from communicating with those around us. Here are the guidelines we've adopted in the house to help us manage our tech:

- You cannot talk, text, or otherwise use your phone or screen on the 1st floor. If you are expecting an important call you can keep the phone on vibrate in your pocket. If you do accept a call please move to the basement, second floor, or outside to take the call.
- The 1st floor ban on phones has a few exceptions:
 - If you are telling a story to the larger group and want to show everyone something on your screen.
 - If you are taking pictures of an event.
 - If you are doing a chore and wish to listen to music (keeping in mind that all lyrics may not be appropriate for kids).
 - If you are in a meeting where you need to access your schedule or other information kept on your phone.
- You are welcome to use the house phone if your phone is off or if you do not have a phone. It is your responsibility to check the messages in the basement if you are expecting a call on this line. Ask a volunteer to show you how to check the messages if you need this service.

Visitor Policy **

You are welcome to have your friends and family members visit you during your stay at Lydia's House. Please plan your visits with these guidelines in mind:

- Visitors are welcome from 12:00 PM to 9:00 PM. If you'd like your visitor to stay for dinner, check with the house duty volunteer for the evening to see if there is room and enough food.
- Visitors can be on the second floor with you as long as the bedroom door is at least half open.
- Stay with your visitor during their visit. If they are in a room, you should be too.
- Visitors are required to follow all of the same rules as guests. If your visitor is breaking rules, they will be asked to leave.
- All visitors should be introduced to the house duty volunteer.

** Subject to change based on house's coronavirus status

House Meetings

On the second Sunday of every month there is a mandatory house meeting. This is the place to take problems or ideas that affect the entire house. This meeting also includes a drawing for the monthly incentive prize.

Worship Services and Parties

You are invited to participate in weekly worship services on Sunday with the Lydia's House community, though this is optional. ** We also have regular parties that we invite all current and former guests to.

** Subject to change based on house's coronavirus status

Transportation

Each Lydia's House resident can receive a one-month Zone 1 bus pass free of charge at the beginning of her time at Lydia's House, plus a pass for any children requiring one. Additional bus passes may be possible in the months following.

If you have an appointment and need someone to come with you, Lydia's House may be able to drive. Talk to a resident volunteer and fill out a transportation request as early as possible to get this on the schedule. Please request Medicaid transportation for medical appointments.

If you have a car, you must have a valid driver's license to operate the car. Otherwise, Lydia's House will require you to park the car until a valid license can be obtained.

Meals and Food

All guests and resident volunteers are invited to attend community dinners Monday-Wednesday, if you are feeling well. ** These meals will usually happen outside if the weather is nice.

Each room will have a mini-fridge, microwave if needed, for food preparation if you are feeling ill or community meals are cancelled. If you are eating in your room due to illness, you will also be provided with a colored set of dishes. Please place dishes in the dish bin daily so they can be washed in the dishwasher, after which they will be returned to you. All food in your room must be stored in the sealed plastic bin or refrigerator in order to reduce the risk of pest infestations. Keeping your kitchenette clean will be assessed in your weekly room check.

The kitchen is available for one family to cook at a time. ** You must clean up the kitchen when done.

** Subject to change based on house's coronavirus status.

Lydia's House Storage

Lydia's House wants to support your family to have what you need. We keep toilet paper, personal care items (soap, feminine hygiene products, toothbrushes, etc.), diapers/wipes [subject to availability], basic canned food items, and toys/books available. Please talk to staff if you are in need of any of these items or check the 2nd floor hall closet.

House Duty

Though you have your own space, we recognize questions will come up during your stay. For this reason, we always have an individual designated to be on house duty. Their number will be posted on

the outside chalkboard and indoor magnet board. Please contact them first if you have questions or concerns related to your room or the house.

Services Provided

Lydia's House staff will continue offering case management and occupational therapy services while being mindful of social distancing and the house's current coronavirus status.

Chores, Room Cleanliness and Maintenance

Lydia's House depends on everyone that lives in the house to keep the place clean.

While you live at Lydia's House, you are in charge of cleaning your room. Staff will inspect guest rooms approximately weekly for the following:

- Kitchenette is sanitary and all food is in the sealed food bin.
- No items other than furniture stored on the floor to minimize fire risk.
- No storage situations that could cause infestations.
- No candles, incense, or anything that requires a flame. Decorative candles that have not been burned are okay.
- No lamps other than those initially provided. If you would like to add a lamp talk to a resident volunteer.
- No space heaters in the room
- Bathrooms cleaned at least weekly.

If you find a maintenance repair issue in the house (such as a broken window, laundry machine not working, leaking toilet or tub, signs of bugs or mice, etc.) please report it to the live-in volunteer as soon as you notice the problem.

Laundry

Each Lydia's House resident is responsible for her own laundry. Here are some guidelines for doing laundry:

- All guests can use the 2nd floor washer and dryer when it is available.
- In order to not disturb others, these are the times approved for using the 2nd floor washer and dryer:
 - Time when washer/dryer can be used:
 - Monday through Friday: 9 AM - 9 PM
 - Saturday and Sunday: 10 AM - 10 PM
- Bleach is not allowed. If you feel you need to use bleach you can take your clothes to the Laundromat.
- If someone's clothes are in the washer or dryer, please care for them like they were your own.

- In order to reduce germs in the house, please wash clothes on “hot” and wash sheets and towels weekly.

Quiet Hours

Lydia’s House will be home to many people, children and adults. To make sure everyone gets enough rest we ask that Quiet Hours be followed.

- Quiet Hours are 9:30 PM to 6 AM Sunday through Thursday.
- Friday and Saturday Quiet Hours start at 10:30 PM.
- The rooms on the second floor are very close together. Please do not have loud conversations in your room during quiet hours.

Safety of the Community

Lydia’s House works to be a safe space for women and children who have been in crisis. Preserving that safe space means that decisions that endanger yourself or others will be taken seriously. Problems that would cause immediate consequences include:

- You test positive for using drugs or alcohol.
- You become violent with volunteers, residents or property.
- You disclose your location to a person who has acted violently toward you in the past.
- You bring a weapon into the house.
- You physically or verbally abuse or neglect children.
- You become unable to participate in community due to ongoing physical or mental conditions.
- You are unable or unwilling to follow the major rules of the house.
- You violate our COVID-19 safety policies.

If one of these things happen, you will be asked to stay in the house (mostly in your room) until a new plan is made. This will take place within 24 hours. These are the options for a new plan:

- You will be asked to leave Lydia’s House. You might be transferred to a treatment facility, another shelter, or anywhere else there is appropriate shelter available.
- You will remain at Lydia’s House with an updated focus agreement with new expectations such as an earlier curfew, measurable behavior change, etc.