



Getting ready



to stay with us



ODYSSEY

Residential services for
youth | rangatahi at Odyssey

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Kia ora,

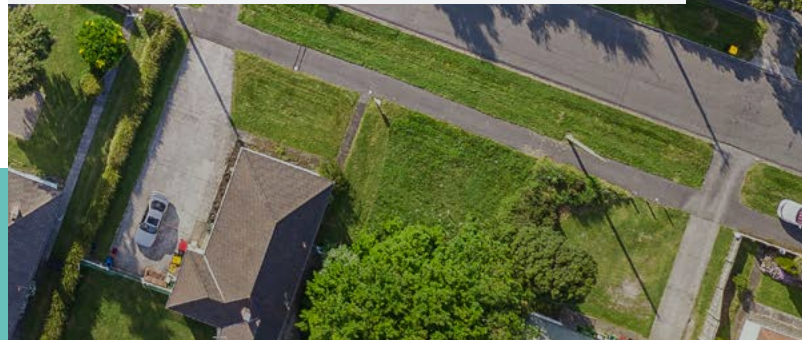
It's great to hear you're coming to stay with us.

Seeking help with drugs or alcohol is a big step and there might be all sorts of things going on for you right now. You might be feeling unsure about what happens next. That's ok.

We are here to support you to:

- Find a way through some of the tough stuff
- Reduce harms from alcohol or other drug use
- Work towards the life you want.

This booklet has information to help you get ready, feel more comfortable when you arrive, and get the most out of your stay.



What to expect in the house

Our house

You can have your own bedroom. Your room is your space. You are welcome to decorate it with things from home, taking care not to damage the walls! You are responsible for your room and keeping it clean and tidy.

Other areas in the house are shared with rangatahi (young people) and staff. These include the kitchen, lounge, and bathrooms. Everyone helps keep these spaces clean and tidy and make the house a nice place to live.



Who else lives and works here?

Our house has space for up to 13 rangatahi. Other young people in the house may have been in similar situations to you, and will be your peers during your stay.

There are also staff who will support you during your time in the house. Here are the people who you will meet:



What to bring

When you arrive, you'll be given a welcome pack with toiletries and other personal products. We provide bedding, blankets and towels, as well as a journal, pens and other stationery.

Odyssey helps people make changes. It is important that everyone feels comfortable being in the house. To make sure this happens, we have a dress code.

Things to bring:

- Up to 25 items of clothing (not including underwear or socks)
- Swimwear (no bikinis or speedos!)
- 3 pairs of shoes (including a pair of trainers)
- Sunglasses and a hat

We dress in a way that shows we respect ourselves, and respect other people's beliefs!

Modest, comfortable clothing

No gang or substance-related images

Not too short



- If you wear make-up, bring a few basic items (e.g. foundation, eyeliner, mascara). You will only be able to keep three items in your room, the rest will be kept in your locker
- Some photos or other personal items to make your space feel like home and help you to be positive and motivated

If you have them, please also bring the following items:

- Birth certificate
- Other personal identification: driver's license, passport, or community services card
- Bank statement or printout from the bank and bank card
- Copies of recent school reports or records

Don't worry if you don't have everything on the list. Our Youth Community team will help you get anything you might need

Please do not bring any:

- Alcohol or other drugs, including substance-related images
- Cigarettes, lighters or vaping products. We can supply nicotine replacement therapy.
- Money, jewellery or other valuables*

Medication must be arranged with your Youth Community key worker prior to admission. This includes over-the-counter items such as painkillers, ointments and natural medications.

When you first enter the house, we will check your belongings for any items that are not allowed. This is for everyone's safety.

*If you have a personal taonga (for example, pounamu), you can bring this with you.

You can also bring a phone and music player, but you won't be able to use them until later in the programme.

Settling into the house

Your first few days in the house are about getting settled. There is time for you to withdraw from any substances and learn the house routines.

You will be paired with a buddy for the first few days. They will help you to learn about the programme, life in the house, and what to do if there is an emergency.

During this time you will also have daily catch ups with staff.

Staying in touch with whānau and friends

With the help of staff, you decide what kind of whānau support will work best for you during your stay at Odyssey.

At the start of your stay, it's time to focus on you. This means at first you'll only be able to phone whānau.

Whānau can also come and see you on visit days.

Once you reach Level 2 in the programme, you can propose to go and visit whānau and approved friends, with Odyssey staff present. You can also add supportive friends to your contact list so you can speak with them on the phone.

From Level 3 in the programme, you can propose to make day and overnight visits on your own.

The house routine

We want to give you the best opportunity to help you make changes. Following a daily plan helps create good routines. During the week, our house follows a timetable of jobs, activities, school and groups.



A typical weekday

6am-7am: Wake-up

- ✓ Breakfast
- ✓ Jobs around the house
- ✓ Morning meeting

9am-12pm: school

12pm: Lunch

- ✓ Groups

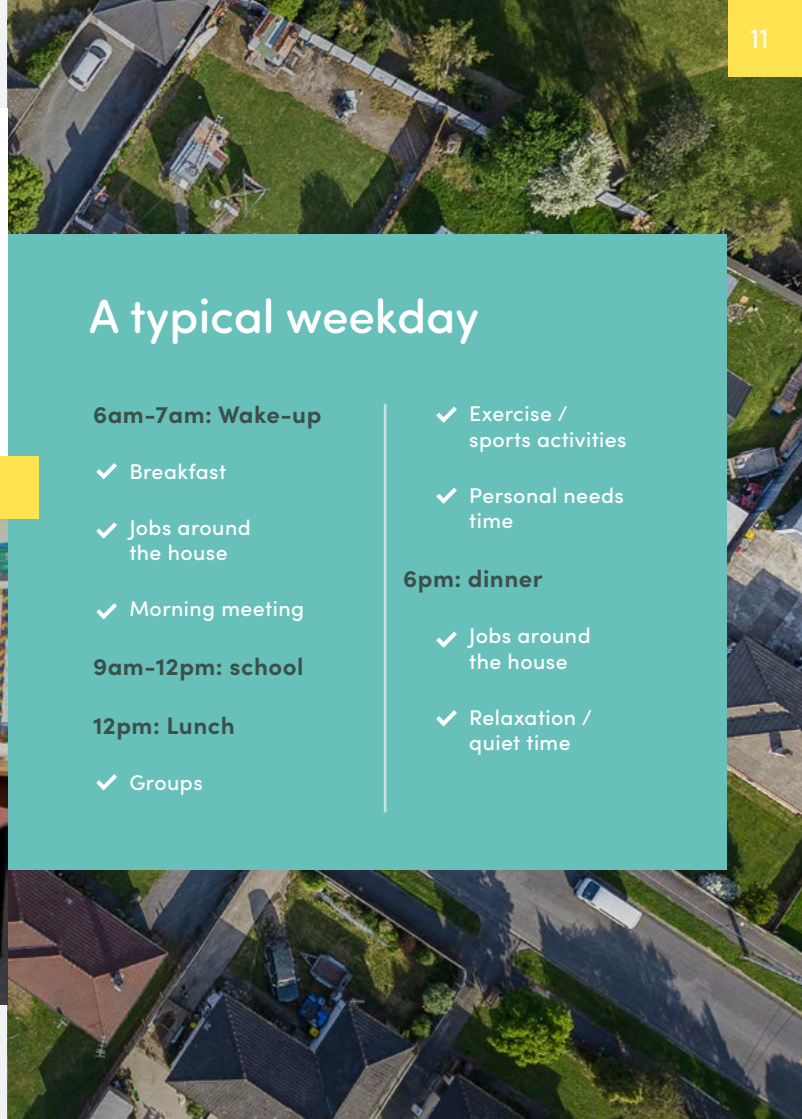
- ✓ Exercise / sports activities

- ✓ Personal needs time

6pm: dinner

- ✓ Jobs around the house

- ✓ Relaxation / quiet time



Opportunities during your stay

During your stay, you will experience new opportunities, or maybe reconnect with things you haven't done in a while.

School:

Education is an important part of our programme. Our school is different from mainstream schools, has a whānau feel, and one-to-one support. You will create your own learning plan with Odyssey teachers. Learning plans are based on what you enjoy and are good at, and help with achieving NCEA credits.

Culture:

We help you to find your roots and connect to your culture and identity. We support Kaupapa Māori approaches to wellbeing and you'll be able to get involved in kapa haka, learning te reo Māori and practicing tikanga (Māori protocols).

Work experience:

We offer a work training programme at Odyssey Café. Get work experience and gain NCEA credits in barista work and customer service.

Other things to do for fun

It's important to have fun while you're staying with us too!

Our weekly timetable includes time for exercise, outings, whānau visits, and social activities in the house (e.g. movie nights).

If you stay with us during the school holidays, you will also take part in our school holiday programme. This involves trips, outdoor adventures, and heaps of fun activities.



"I love being at this school! My head used to hurt when I tried to think and do work. Now it comes easy. The teachers never give up on you. I have never learnt as much as I have here."

The Therapeutic Community

Odyssey's residential programmes are based on an approach called a Therapeutic Community or TC.

A TC is a supportive peer environment. Members of the community gain skills to make changes and live the lives they want.

Our programme has different levels to help you progress with new skills. Each level has a unique focus and needs different skills to move to the next stage. Everyone moves up the levels at their own pace.

Roles in the house

In a TC, everyone has roles and responsibilities which help you to learn and live well with others. While you are staying with us, you will practise tools to help you make changes to your substance use. You'll get loads of opportunities to practise building healthy relationships and working together.

Living in a TC is also a great opportunity to gain skills for living independently, like cooking, doing laundry and gardening.

Privileges and responsibilities

Responsibilities in the house can include:

- helping new peers
- planning with staff about house needs
- running meetings

Privileges can include:

- independent outings
- visit to whānau or friends
- access to technology (phone or tablet)
- work experience at Odyssey Cafe or other workplaces.





Fred's story

Fred was 17 when he came to stay with us in Auckland. He stayed with us for almost six months. We spoke to him a month before he graduated.

What brought you to Odyssey?

I volunteered to come here to get a change from the drinking, to see if I could stay off it. I wanted to break the pattern: drinking too much, stealing, ending up in court. I'd been in court since I was 13 or 14, mainly because of the alcohol. I'd been to a couple of youth prisons. I was connected with a support worker, through OT [Oranga Tamariki], who referred me to Odyssey. I was getting older. Lucky I did come before it was too late, before I ended up in gangs. I knew it would

be a big change. Better to change now, before it's too late eh?

Tell us about your experience staying with Odyssey

Odyssey is not for the faint-hearted. It is quite a tough programme. Living in the residence gives you a chance to get things sorted. It gives structure in what you do. It's quite a big responsibility. You learn lots and get assigned different jobs.

What are some of the most challenging aspects of living at Odyssey?

When new people come in it can be hard, people who have been on drugs, and who are also away from family. Being away from family is hard. You come to bond with

other residents though. You've got to because you're living under the same roof. The programme becomes more challenging as you move up the levels. Then you also have more of a mentoring role, making others feel welcome.

Do you have any advice for newcomers?

Everyone is different; you have to work at your own pace, try and figure out what people are struggling with, and how you can help. Sometimes it's challenging. But in the end, you've got to do it for yourself. You have to keep talking. It's not easy to find ways to express how you feel, or to see how someone else is feeling. It comes down to communication, how you talk, how you seek support.

Anything else about your time here?

It definitely changes your life. It offers opportunities too. Like this café job training they run. It gives you work experience and credits. It means quite a lot of learning, baking cookies and cake - I made a vegan cake a couple of weeks ago. I've also been able to help out with catering, making salads and stuff. Now I'm trying the coffee side of it. It's got a good social side. You're working with others and interacting with customers. You get time out of the house and get a certificate to use to get a job somewhere else.

“Everyone is different; you have to work at your own pace, try and figure out what people are struggling with, and how you can help.”



How to get in touch


If you have any questions or need support before your stay, please talk to our Youth Community team.

(Please note our office hours are Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm.)

 09 849 2170

 youthodyssey@odyssey.org.nz

 odyssey.org.nz



It's not just who
you are now.

It's about who you
want to be. →



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