

ADDICTION: Half Way Houses & Sober Homes

Trap

Aaron finally decided to get help for his addiction. He entered a residential treatment facility and four weeks later transferred to a half-way house. The \$1,000 deposit and weekly rent for the half-way house was paid by Aaron's parents. Unfortunately, just two days later, Aaron relapsed and failed to return to the facility by curfew. Aaron was evicted the next day for violating the rules and his parents were not entitled to any refund.

Tips

Half-way Houses are not regulated in Florida and the State Landlord-Tenant Act does not apply to those facilities because residency isn't the main focus. Half-way Houses or Sober Homes may complete voluntary certification by the Florida Certification Board. The key to a successful stay is understanding the terms of signed agreements and following the rules.

- The best ones have rules and the consequences for non-compliance in writing, and apply both consistently. Residents are required to sign paperwork acknowledging their understanding. Always ask for copies of all signed documents, keeping them for your records. Violations of the signed agreement may result in immediate eviction and forfeiture of any deposit and rent paid to the facility. Parents who pay for their adult child's care might not be given copies of documentation or information about an eviction.
- Carefully research and visit several locations before selecting one. Talk with the counselors and ask for references. Check their credentials to help determine if this is the right place for you. Walk around the facility to see how well it is maintained. How long has the facility been established? What is the average length of stay? How are issues between residents handled? What assistance is given to residents looking for a job? What circumstances allow for a refund of your deposit?
- Ask for a copy of the rules of the agreement. Don't be pressured into making a quick decision. Take the agreement home and review it thoroughly before signing.

For more information, call Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs at 561-712-6600 (Boca/Delray residents call 1-888-852-7362 toll free)