



# Phase Guide

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# Phase Overview



# Mission

Merci's Refuge is a residential program offered at no cost to women in crisis who desire to arise to their created purpose. Merci's Refuge (MR) is not simply a place for women to live. The primary purpose of MR is to provide women a realistic opportunity to focus on the root issues that hold them back from experiencing joy, accomplishing their goals, and reaching their God-given potential. These root issues may include past abuse, neglect, unresolved anger, and bitterness, spiritual frustration or confusion. Which often show up in the form of substance abuse, self-harming behavior, unhealthy relational/emotional boundaries, isolation, fear, anxiety, depression, instability, or compulsive behavior. The program is intensive, requiring women to follow a full daily schedule, actively participate in group and individual activities, comply with procedures for outside visits, and be dedicated to purpose and know Christ. It is our ultimate goal that women will grow in their understanding of God and his purpose for their lives while at Merci's Refuge. We believe that if this occurs women will one day experience a fullness of joy that will radically alter their lives and their children's lives.

Through group and individual mentoring and pastoral or professional counseling women explore and identify issues of their heart, mind and soul that may be holding them back from obtaining their goals. Simultaneously women take part in life-skill classes in nutrition, parenting, money management and entrepreneurship, healthy relationships, and spiritual growth while continuing to work on life goals and preparing to live adult lives outside of MR by obtaining and maintaining a job, completing school or starting a degree program, getting involved in a local church, building Christian community and accountability, resorting relationships, and striving for peace and joy.

We want all women to feel welcome but unfortunately due to resources we are only able to accept women above the age of 18 and give priority to new mothers with children up to the age of 1 years old (12 months).

## Goals & Requirements of all phases:

- Pursuit of learning your God-given calling and vocation
- Phase reviews are required to transition into the next phase (presentation with residents and staff of your accomplishments, goals, testimony, and future goals). Staff will be ensuring that you consistently complete your chores, homework, and are working towards completing goals.

# Belong Phase 1

## Main Goal

The main purpose and goal of the *Belong* phase is to give residents a transition period and the space to learn rules and requirements of MR. The first thirty days are typically the hardest and therefore staff limit distractions and take privileges away such as phones, TV use and not allowing communication with unhealthy people to truly have space to transition into MR.

## **General Rules and Requirements**

### Main differences and rules required:

- Residents are only allowed to smoke alone, and off all pregnancy resource and MR property.
- Residents must submit a weekly schedule and reflection guide by Sunday at 9 pm under office door.
- Residents must be accompanied with a staff or volunteer to all appointments, to run errands, or complete other tasks outside of MR. Residents must be back before 4pm.
- Residents are *not allowed* to have visitors or visit others outside of MR for their first 30 days within the program unless it is a mentor or sponsor.
- Residents are *not allowed* to leave the premises of MR unless for short 5-10 minutes walks, or otherwise approved leaves.
- No personal phones are allowed. Residents will have a 30-minute time slot for phone calls every week.

### Required programs:

- Ditch the Baggage or Freedom Group
- Chapels three nights a week
- One-on-one life goal coaching
- Sunday Church attendance at Midwest Believers Church
- Weekly house group
- Daily Morning House Huddles
- Group Outings and Activities
- Other healing and spiritual courses (i.e. Genesis Group, Retreats, etc.)
- Complete the MAP booklet, identify 5 goals for the program, and establish new coping strategies with staff.

### Required Goals/Tasks:

- Daily personal devotionals (i.e. Reading the bible, studying scripture, prayer journals, one-on-one group studies, serving at church and in the community, scripture memorization, understanding spiritual disciplines, etc.)
- Weekly dinner prep for all house residents
- Daily chore and maintaining cleanliness of own room and space (such as cleaning own kitchen space after use)
- Start self-discovery and personal development tests etc. to understand God-given calling and career goals/gifts.
- Achieving personal life goals- dedicating *at a minimum 20 hours* a week in achieving goals (such as job applications and preparation, connecting and resorting broken relationships, maintaining healthy eating and physical activity patterns, working through emotional hardships, etc.)
- Learning new things related to goals
- Researching possible careers
- Planning/preparing for the future (applying for housing, obtaining documents, applying for community resources, etc.)

# Believe Phase 2

Heart & Soul

## **Main Goal**

The main purpose and goal of the *Believe* phase is to give residents the space and opportunity to identify core issues and begin processing through them. This phase emphasizes healing and accountability through required group sessions, chapel times, one-on-one goal coaching, and community involvement. This phase begins once you have completed the first 30 days. The Believe Phase 2 typically lasts the duration of “Ditch the Baggage” and/or “Freedom Group” typically about 3-4 months and upon completion of your phase review.

## **General Rules and Requirements**

### **Main differences and rules required:**

- Residents are only allowed to smoke alone, and off all pregnancy resource and MR property.
- Residents must submit a weekly schedule and reflection guide by Sunday at 9:00 pm under office door. Residents are now allowed to leave MR for scheduled appointments on their own as noted in their schedules. Residents must be back before 4pm.
- No personal phones are allowed. Residents will have a 1-hour time slot for phone calls every week.
- Residents *are allowed to* have guests during visiting hours at MR but are *not allowed* overnight visits.

### **Required programs:**

- Ditch the Baggage or Freedom Group
- Chapels three nights a week
- Quit smoking program
- One-on-one life coaching
- Sunday Church attendance at Midwest Believers Church
- Weekly house group
- Daily Morning House Huddles
- Financial Planning Class
- Group Outings and Activities
- Other healing and spiritual courses (i.e. Genesis Group, Retreats, etc.)

### Required Goals & Tasks:

- Daily personal devotionals (i.e. Reading the bible, studying scripture, prayer journals, one-on-one group studies, serving at church and in the community, scripture memorization, understanding spiritual disciplines, etc.)
- Weekly dinner prep for all house residents
- Daily chore and maintaining cleanliness of own room and space (such as cleaning own kitchen space after use)
- Self-discovery and personal development tests etc. to understand God-given calling and career goals/gifts.
- Achieving personal life goals- dedicating *at a minimum 20 hours* a week in achieving goals (such as job applications and preparation, connecting and resorting broken relationships, maintaining healthy eating and physical activity patterns, working through emotional hardships, etc.)
- Learning new things related to goals (informational interviews about careers, reading books and practicing new skills)
- Researching possible careers (personality tests to discover gifts and talents, shadowing career positions, learning steps for possible careers)

# Be Free Phase 3

## Main Goal

The main purpose and goal of the *Be Free* phase 3 is to encourage residents to take on more responsibility and to continue in sobriety/healthy living while working on developing life skills and implementing coping strategies to deal with core issues. This phase emphasizes responsibility and taking action through required group sessions, chapel times, one-on-one goal coaching, and community involvement. Residents will be asked to apply to jobs and consider life goals in the context of career planning, life dreams and passions, and personal development. This phase typically lasts about 3-6 months. Upon completion of these courses, the decision of the resident, and completing the phase review- residents will have the opportunity to apply to Phase 4 or apply for graduation (residing elsewhere) therefore entering into Phase 5.

## **General Rules and Requirements**

### Main differences and rules required:

- Residents must submit a weekly schedule and reflection guide by Sunday at 9:00 pm under office door. Residents *are allowed to* leave MR for scheduled appointments on their own as noted in their schedules. Residents must be back before 4pm unless they have work.
- Residents *are allowed to* have overnight off-site visitations with prior approval from staff that is requested in writing 48 hours in advance.
- Residents have the freedom to visit other churches (but must bring back a pamphlet) with the goal of establishing a consistent home church/membership once they graduate.
- Residents *are allowed to* replace MR chapels for other church related events
- Residents *are allowed to* start working part-time but must be present for mandatory programming, but **cannot** work full time.
- Residents will be given their phones, if a resident does not own a phone they are allowed more phone call time.

### Required programs:

- Freedom Group or Ditch the Baggage
- Chapels three nights a week
- One-on-one life coaching
- Sunday Church attendance at chosen church
- Weekly house group
- Daily Morning House Huddles
- Financial Planning Class
- Group Outings and Activities



- Other healing and spiritual courses (i.e. Genesis Group, Retreats, etc.)

Required Goals & Tasks:

- Daily personal devotionals (i.e. Reading the bible, studying scripture, prayer journals, one-on-one group studies, serving at church and in the community, scripture memorization, understanding spiritual disciplines, etc.)
- Weekly dinner prep for all house residents
- Daily chore and maintaining cleanliness of own room and space (such as cleaning own kitchen space after use)
- Attending elective programs such as Financial Wellness courses or Cooking Classes
- Achieving personal life goals- such as getting and working a job, connecting and resorting broken relationships, maintaining healthy eating and physical activity patterns, working through emotional hardships, testing new coping strategies etc.)
- Planning/preparing for the future (applying for housing, obtaining documents, applying for community resources, etc.)

# Become Phase 4

## Main Goal

The main purpose and goal of the optional *Become* phase 4 is to encourage residents to take full responsibility and leadership of their own lives in order to have the best tools and life skills to succeed in life after MR. This phase only accepts residents who:

- Have a part-time or full-time job
- Are committed to a home church
- Are highly motivated
- Engaged in the program
- Are committed to quit smoking

Phase 4 allows additional time to grow spiritually, plan for their future, gradually take on more financial responsibility for their own needs (rent and utilities), while also developing ministry and leadership skills and experience. Phase 4 can last up to 6 months, once residents take the steps necessary to prepare for life outside of MR (i.e., by leasing an apartment, maintaining steady income, sobriety, Christian community, achieving goals, etc.) residents will end their time at MR with a graduation ceremony. Then residents will enter Phase 5 upon graduation and move-out.

## **General Rules and Requirements**

### Main differences and rules required:

- Residents are required to rent a room and have a plan of how to make monthly payments.
  - If resident does not have stable work- rent is paid in increasing increments (1<sup>st</sup> month's rent is \$50, then \$50 is added each subsequent month: 2<sup>nd</sup> month = \$100, 3<sup>rd</sup> month = \$150, etc.)
  - If resident has stable job then rent is 30% of their income OR \$400 whichever is less.
- Residents *are allowed* to have overnight off-site visitations with prior approval from staff.
- Residents have the freedom to replace chapels with other obligations
- Residents are no longer required to attend morning huddles (unless required by staff).
- Residents are required to take on a leadership role within MR.
- Residents are *no longer allowed* to smoke during their residency at MR.
- All extracurricular activities and forced fun events are optional.

### Required programs:

- House meetings (will be excused for work only)

- Continuing healing and spiritual courses (i.e. AA, Celebrate Recovery, Genesis Group, Retreats, etc.)

Required Goals & Tasks:

- Daily personal devotionals (i.e. Reading the bible, studying scripture, prayer journals, one-on-one group studies, serving at church and in the community, scripture memorization, understanding spiritual disciplines, etc.)
- Weekly dinner prep for all house residents (will be excused if more than 7 residents at MR)
- Daily chore (will be excused if more than 7 residents at MR)
- Maintaining cleanliness of own room and space (such as cleaning own kitchen space after use)
- Achieving personal life goals- such as working a job, connecting and resorting broken relationships, maintaining healthy eating and physical activity patterns, working through emotional hardships, testing new coping strategies, learning about leadership. etc.)
- Rigorously planning/preparing for the future (applying for housing, obtaining documents, applying for community resources, etc.)
- One-on-one life coaching
- Sunday Church attendance at chosen church

# Beyond Phase 5

## **Main Goal**

The main purpose and goal of the *Beyond* phase 5 is to continue to provide support and encouragement to graduated MR residents. MR alumni are encouraged to maintain healthy relationships with MR residents and staff by meeting with a staff or trusted volunteer on a weekly basis for 1-2 months post move-out. This phase encourages continued MR involvement through leadership or a volunteer role at MR that is tailored to the individual. In phase 5 MR alumni are responsible for making their agenda and plan of involvement with MR. Phase 5 can last 1-2 months post move-out but MR alumni are allowed to continue volunteering with MR as long as they desire as long as they meet the general requirements for volunteering.

## **General Requirements**

- Continue meeting with staff or volunteer on a weekly basis 1-2 months post move-out.
- Create a personal accountability plan and get approved by MR staff
- Work on informing community outside of MR (family and friends) about accountability plan to have increased support.
- Continue involvement through leadership position or volunteer role.
- Continue regular church attendance, daily devotionals, and building up of Christian community by attending bible study and serving at a local church.
- Strive for desired career goals (i.e., applying to college or graduate school, getting new job that fulfills goals, becoming manager at current job, etc.).
- Strive and accomplish other life goals by taking the necessary steps in completing task.