

Jesse Besser Museum Outreach to the Alpena Sunrise Centre

The Alpena Sunrise Centre can support residents' recovery and protect them from relapse by providing more activities and interests that provide meaning to their lives in addition to their therapy. It's important for recovering addicts/alcoholics to be involved in things that they enjoy, make them feel needed, or add meaning to their lives. When their lives are filled with rewarding activities and a sense of purpose, addiction will lose its appeal. Recovery can be fun and engaging with weekly outings to movies, parks or museums and recreational activities. This gives them an opportunity to experience fun activities while learning sobriety.

While under active addiction, reaching a high is perhaps the only fun an addict needs. As a result, many recovery addicts find themselves bored once the high is removed from their days. Sobriety doesn't necessarily mean that their lives have suddenly become boring. Transitioning from addiction to sobriety can take a long time, but the end result is worth it. Filling a recovering addict's time with fun, healthy activities can make the road to recovery seem all the more rewarding.

Even when residents have resolved underlying issues related to their drug/alcohol use, they will, at times, continue to experience stress, loneliness, frustration, anger, shame, anxiety, and hopelessness. These emotions are all a normal part of life. Finding ways to address these feelings as they arise is an essential component to their treatment and recovery.

There are healthier ways to keep stress levels in check than relapsing. Residents can learn to manage their problems without falling back on their addiction. When they're confident in their ability to quickly de-stress, facing strong feelings isn't as intimidating or overwhelming. Nobody says that being sober is going to be easy. However, that doesn't mean it has to be a totally miserable experience. It is a steep learning curve, but there is so much to do out there other than go back to using.

Visiting the Jesse Besser Museum would be an enriching experience for our residents. Observing art, whether it is through paintings, taxidermy, sculptures or photographs, can improve mental health and well-being. Science exhibits such as the planetarium can promote a better scientific understanding and help in making better, more informed choices during their recovery. Connecting the past with the present and future, with exhibits such as the Peoples of Lakes and Forests - Michigan Tribes of the 1700s, the Avenue of Shops, or the LaFarge Fossil Park can help residents to connect with their past and better understand the present and their future. The concept of learning as a life-long undertaking can be promoted as a way to fulfillment as opposed to going back to their former way of life.

Residents would be required to complete the following assignment based on their experience at the museum:

Jesse Besser Museum Day Worksheet

Name _____

Checklist of Exhibits: There is plenty of time to enjoy and learn about art, history, and science while you are here! Use this checklist and the museum brochure to make sure you have visited each exhibit.

_____ Native American Gallery

_____ Avenue of Shops

_____ Foucault Pendulum

_____ Herbarium collection

_____ Taxidermy - Animals and Fishes

_____ Planetarium

_____ Trelfa and Wilson Galleries of Art

_____ Apollo 11: Many Inspired Steps

The following are some questions to help you reflect on your museum experience and your journey to recovery. Use complete sentences - you should have at least 3 to 5 for each item.

What did you learn from your museum experience that can be helpful in your recovery?

If you were bringing a fellow recovering addict/alcoholic friend to the museum, what work(s) or exhibits would you share with them and why?

What was your favorite exhibit/art work and why?

Learning about our past helps make the present and the future more understandable. If you were a creating an exhibit on your life - past, present, and future, how would you start? What artifacts would you put in it? What lessons would you try to tell? (Use back of page if you need more room)