

What is the Schlupfhuus (Shelter home)?

The “Schlupfhuus” is an institution in the city of Zurich, open day and night to youngsters age 13 to 18. In the “Schlupfhuus”, we listen, advise and offer shelter. We provide the “Sorgentelefon” (telephone help-line) the “Beratungsstelle” (advice centre) and the “Krisenwohngruppe” (crisis residential centre). Children and youngsters can come to the “Schlupfhuus” with their personal problems without prior formalities or waiting, and it is free of charge.

The Schlupfhuus was founded in 1980, as a private independent association, exempt of any confessional or political allegiance. The city and the canton of Zurich as well as the Swiss confederation support and subsidise the “Schlupfhuus”. We also depend on donations. Since 1993, our institution has been recognised by the canton of Zurich as an advisory centre for young people in need.

The “Schlupfhuus-team” is a multicultural mix. All of the eight women and three men working there are professionally trained in social pedagogy, psychology or social work and are experienced advisers for children and youngsters.

Who consults the “Schlupfhuus”?

Children and youngsters who seek support from the “Schlupfhuus” often have similar problems. Regardless of their origin, most youngsters want to establish their independence as they grow up. Often in trying to make their mark, they face opposition from their parents. For instance, they want more individual freedom in their everyday life, demand more rights in determining personal and familial decisions and greater freedom in determining their future and so on. On the other hand, the parents would like to transmit their values and traditions to their children. Immigrant parents are afraid that their children will become too “Swiss” or succumb to other negative influences. This situation leads to repeated arguments and sometimes also to violence and can bring a whole family to permanent crisis. The youngsters thereafter may be confronted with school or employment problems, with relationship disorders, loss of hope or drug addiction. The deeper the crisis, the more difficult it becomes to find a solution in the family circle.

With the help and support of trained professionals, however, there is a chance of finding a solution to the problems of both the youngsters and their parents.

We, the staff of the “Schlupfhuus” view our job as providing support, and helping the children and youngsters to overcome problems. It is also important to us to understand the parents’ culture and their concerns, and search with them for realistic and sound solutions.

What does the “Schlupfhuus” offer?

The telephone help-line / 147 for children and youngsters

Children and youngsters can call the “Schlupfhuus-telephone help-line” by dialling 147 around the clock. If they wish, they can remain anonymous. The youngster’s problems will be discussed on the phone. They may just need to talk to someone who listens to them or they may need more substantial help and support.

Counselling centre

Youngsters as well as their parents or other persons involved in the issue, can come to the “Schlupfhuus” for free advice without a scheduled appointment. Counselling can be provided as a one off or over several sessions. This help is provided when a difficult situation cannot be sufficiently dealt with on the phone, or when several people would like to profit from the counselling. The advisor (man or woman) conducts individual and/or family discussions. She or he sets contacts with specific advisory boards or the governmental youth secretariat (Jugendsekretariat), if it is needed. He or she lends practical support for acute problems, for instance help in finding a job, or clarifying the youngsters living situation and other such problems.

Residential centre

The group residential centre offers living accommodation to 8 youngsters age 13 to 18 (for a maximum of 3 months) in the “Schlupfhuus”. A temporary stay in the “Schlupfhuus” may be advisable if the youngster does not get on at all with her/his parents or guardians and the situation creates psychological trauma and/or leads to physical violence. During this time, the “Schlupfhuus” provides individual guidance, and when required family discussions are also undertaken as part of the care regime. The aim of the sojourn is to relieve the pressure on the youngsters and their surroundings, to prevent further escalation of the conflict and to calm acute crisis situations. The relationship difficulties they have with family members are discussed, and solutions are sought together.

We only take in youngsters who come to the “Schlupfhuus” of their own free will. They must abide by the rules of the house and be motivated to come to terms with their personal problems.

Where do children and youngsters find the “Schlupfhuus”?

The “Schlupfhuus” is well known in schools and social institutions beyond the borders of the canton of Zurich. “Schlupfhuus” staff members talk about the institution to classes, as well as giving interviews to magazines, radio and television. The youngsters know about the “Schlupfhuus” mainly through friends, their teachers, instructors or supervisors. The “Schlupfhuus” considers itself as a prevention centre. The staff members want to help the youngsters find a sensible perspective for their future.