

Clubhouse Reach Out

We know of the many ways that participation at a Clubhouse enriches the lives of members. Many of these benefits depend, however, on members coming to the Clubhouse. Thus, reach out to members who are not coming is a crucial link in enabling people to access the benefits of Clubhouse life. Yet reach out can easily be neglected or become haphazard, as people at the Clubhouse are not met face to face with the needs, abilities, and aspirations of those who are absent. Amid the hustle and bustle of Clubhouse life those who are absent can sometimes be forgotten. To be effective, reach out needs to be encouraging, welcoming, and also systematic.

The ICCD requested and received information from several Clubhouses with thorough reach out programs, including Imatran Klubitalo in Finland, Stepping Stone Clubhouse in Australia, and Waipahu Aloha Clubhouse in Hawaii. Following is a summary of basic principles and procedures as reported by these Clubhouses.

- Reach out is conducted in a manner congruent with the voluntary nature of Clubhouse participation. The purpose of reach out is explained to new members and to the Clubhouse as a whole on an ongoing basis. Then members are asked if and how they would like to be contacted when for some reason they do not come to the Clubhouse. A record is kept of these preferences.
- Reach out is done by phone calls, mail, E-mail, facebook, text messaging, and home and hospital visits, according to need and the expressed preferences of members receiving the reach out contacts.
- Reach out is conducted primarily by units and is part of the daily work of each unit, with members and staff of the unit responsible for reach out to members of that unit.
- Visual displays and regular review of needs for reach out enable efforts to be comprehensive, with no one falling through the cracks and forgotten. At Imatran Klubitalo, for example, each unit keeps a white board with the names of all active members of that unit. Each afternoon, the members and staff present in the unit review the names and make reach out contact with those not present and not accounted for.
- As much as possible, reach out visits, mailings, and phone calls are made to members in hospitals to maintain contact and to encourage a return to the Clubhouse upon discharge.
- For members who are working or going to school and can't regularly come into the Clubhouse, reach out via calls or visiting them in the community becomes an extension of the Clubhouse for these members.
- Records are kept of all reach out efforts in such a way that successive contacts and outcomes for each member can be reviewed.
- Clubhouse wide forums are held to raise awareness and understanding of reach out, such as a weekly "happy hour" at Stepping Stone and a monthly reach out meeting at Imatran comprised of representatives from each unit.
- Reach out is bolstered by mailings, phone calls and celebrations in recognition of birthdays, holidays, and special Clubhouse events.

- Many Clubhouses have reach out binders in each unit, with a page for each member of the unit. Each page includes a picture of the member so that whoever is making the reach out call can envision the person he/she is calling and attach a face to the name. Each page has space for recording the outcome of reach out efforts each time a call or visit is made.

A goal for a Clubhouse reach out program is expressed by Imatran “By implementing our reach out system no member has ‘disappeared’ from us.”

Indeed, a strong reach out program deepens and strengthens Clubhouse relationships which are a pillar of any ICCD Clubhouse.