



LOOKING AHEAD: IMAGINING THE CLUBHOUSE OF TOMORROW

Anita Brix, Clubhouse International

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Leif Oldert, Alliance House, Utah

Deanna Tymofichuk, Alliance House, Utah

Anita introducing Maria:

This is Maria Agnieszka Christiansen. She is a member from Fontaenehuset Frederikshavn, Denmark. Maria received her training as a General Practitioner (Doctor) and has been a member in the house since March of this year. The Clubhouse in Frederikshavn is 5 years old. It is a small Clubhouse with 20 to 25 daily attendance and 3.5 staff members. Maria works in the maintenance unit and was recently very active with accreditation work. Fontaenehuset Frederikshavn achieved 3 years accreditation this summer.

Maria introducing Anita:

This is Anita Brix Lambaek. Until 30th September this year Anita was the Director in the Clubhouse where I am a member, Fontaenehuset Frederikshavn. Now, she is working for Clubhouse International, as the European Program Officer. She has been a board member in the Danish Coalition since 2011 and has worked with the Clubhouse Model the last 8.5 years.

Leif introducing Deanna:

This is Deanna Tymofichuk. Deanna has been a member with Alliance House for four years. Deanna has been involved in all units of the Clubhouse and primarily works in our Business Unit. She is a huge resource for us as she has 20 years experience as a CPA (Certified Public Accountant).

Deanna introducing Leif:

Leif Oldert is the Executive Director of Alliance House. Alliance House is located in Salt Lake City, Utah, was started 28 years ago and is a Clubhouse International training base. Leif has been in the Clubhouse world for about 7 years. He worked 6 years with the Stepping Stone Clubhouse in Brisbane, Australia. He brings this welcomed experience to Alliance House, where he began working Dec. 2014.

Leif:

Introduction

What is the future of Clubhouse International?

How can Clubhouse shape the future? For example, mental health systems and policy reform. What could the future look like if Clubhouse was expansive enough to influence our society, business models and practices, federal funding structures, hospitals, emergency response teams and so on? How can we accomplish this?

Think of one Clubhouse acting alone in the big wide world of not-for-profits, trying to raise money, prove the evidence base of its practices, cost-effectiveness and impact on adults with a history of mental illness...Then think of multiple Clubhouses spread across a state, banding together to share best-practices, stories, & outcomes; developing a Coalition which can unify their voice and advocate for improved mental health policies and funding...Then think of several states, with several Clubhouses, each with strong Coalitions, joining together to impact policy reform, introduce new housing, education, employment models and partnerships...

Now think of countries from around the world, all sharing best practices. Practices such as successful medical, mental health, pension and benefits models from each corner of the globe, to mix and match and design the ultimate new world of mental health reform, medication advancements, care, and choice...think if all of these were housed under one unified body. Imagine the impact this global body could have...if we dared to dream.

Maria:

Dreaming is dangerous, but so is radical thinking...Funny thing is, the Clubhouse community is based on a history of radical thinking. Ahead of its time, the Clubhouse movement began challenging social norms and the labels placed upon individuals with a mental illness. How can we continue growing this radical practice, saving lives, and spreading genuine opportunities?

Deanna:

What could the future look like if each Clubhouse acted as though it were representing Clubhouse International, not just itself? What if all of us attempted to think like Joel, Jack, Robby and all of the Clubhouse International staff?

What if we operated in a way that expected the same from our organizations that we expect from our members? We constantly talk about shattering the glass ceilings of stigma, breaking the limitations and labels placed on individuals with a mental illness. We demand more, we believe...we believe that everyone who walks through our doors can achieve their personal best, we expect the best, and because we do, because we believe, people achieve the best.

Anita:

What could the future look like if we apply this same philosophy to our Clubhouses?...Believing, expecting better and more of better, and never settling for second best. Not that we do, but in order to strive for the future and push the evolution of our movement, we may need to encourage a paradigm shift. We may need to return to our radical roots and challenge how we view ourselves as not-for-profits or charities. In order to continue uniting and growing as a global organization, we may need to shed the labels and limitations sometimes placed on the sector we work in.

Maria:

Let's consider an example:

What if every single Starbucks around the world operated alone, disconnected from the expansive corporate structure of standardized systems, services, look, feel, brand, and so on? They wouldn't be what they are. They would all be independent little coffee shops, wouldn't they? Now...there is nothing wrong with that, is there. However, in the world of business, they are out to make as much money as possible, so growing a franchise as big as possible is one of the best ways to become number one.

What is the major difference between us, as an international organization, and a massive for profit corporation? Other than our fundamental mission and vision being different from the corporate world, should our expectations of ourselves be any different?

We often speak of every community needing and deserving a Clubhouse. What if we had the same approach as Starbucks, except the major difference is our mission is not to make money; our mission is to save and restore lives. What if we speak "their" language for a minute. We may not be a for profit corporation, but we do have shareholders: our members. We may not be publicly traded on the stock exchange, but we still pay dividends to our shareholders, in the form of community, purpose, dignity, respect, equality, housing, education, and employment.

Think what the future could look like if we liberated ourselves from the limitations and labels placed on not-for-profits? What if we looked at ourselves as though we are a Starbucks, Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft, or Apple?

Leif:

We will only ever achieve the best opportunities for our members, the best chance at creating reform, and the most recognition for changing the world of mental health, by acting as one.

By acting as one unified body, we share results and outcomes. By sharing results and outcomes we are able to access better funding. By accessing better funding we are able to grow our Clubhouses. By growing our Clubhouses we are able to impact more lives and create more opportunities. More growth and more opportunities equal greater visibility and recognized branding. Increases in branding recognition and visibility turns into increased employment partnerships and corporate sponsorships. Increases in partnerships and sponsorships means more flourishing Clubhouses and more lives saved. More lives saved changes the world of mental health. It also simply changes the world.

Anita:

In the Clubhouse world we have discussed how to tackle the challenge of Clubhouse being "The Best kept secret." Wouldn't it be better if we remove those last two words to make us simply, "The Best."

What if we viewed ourselves as the best?

Deanna:

We'd be leaders in the mental health community. We can be a household name. Clubhouse would be googled daily by millions seeking our organization. Social Media Applications could be made available for all of our resources. We could collect, share and use data on a worldwide accessible basis.

All of this would lead to increased partnerships and sponsorships, which means more flourishing Clubhouses and more lives saved. More lives saved changes the world of mental health.

Maria:

We consider ourselves as among the best environmental treatments in psychiatry. The Clubhouse Model is perfect for that sort of rehabilitation. It says in our standards that we are rehabilitation not treatment minded institutions, but those definitions cross over each other here, so in my opinion it wouldn't be against our standards.

Leif:

Now...we would like to invite you to dream of the future for the Clubhouse community with us. Join us on the fantastic "WHAT IF" journey.

Anita:

What if every country had a Clubhouse? What if every city?

What would the world of mental health begin to look like?

Deanna:

The world of mental health would be dominated by recovery and not by medication. And stigma – would there be stigma?...It would decrease because the mystery of Clubhouse would be eliminated by the maximization of participation, reaching all communities; there would not be a secret aura about the community regarding people with mental illness. The members would integrate into each community and the public would accept the abilities and talents that those with mental illness are able to contribute.

Deanna:

What if the Clubhouse model was recognized as an evidence-based practice in every country around the world, not just United States and Finland?

Leif:

This would drastically impact every facet of Clubhouse opportunities. The international evidence base recognition would impact our visibility, funding opportunities, and our ability to reach and support more members. It would help build upon our reputation and acknowledgment amongst medical and clinical practitioners, thus increasing referral pathways. Policy makers and decision makers would take our movement more seriously as we become a larger advocacy body. This, in turn, would reduce stigma and convince decision makers to fund Clubhouse in their community.

Anita:

What if every Clubhouse was the best community resource center in every city and town?

Deanna:

We'd provide needed Clubhouse opportunities to every city and town. Growing the best relationships with other mental health organizations, medical facilities and government agencies. We could provide more members more employment, education, housing, and social opportunities.

We have Clubhouses that have achieved a 40% decrease in hospitalization and 30% decrease in incarceration after 60 days of membership.

In a typical Clubhouse 20% of members become employed, double the national average of 10% for those with severe and persistent mental illness. Wouldn't it be great to double those numbers! This may be radical, but maybe we would begin to see an impact not only on national economies, but the global economy!?

Maria:

That would give the approximately 1.7 billion people living with mental illness worldwide access to a Clubhouse and we would grow by 17,000%.

Leif: **What if**, by growing our movement we are able to change the entire dialogue surrounding mental illness...rather than viewing the experience as "suffering", what if the conversation becomes as normal as discussing asthma or diabetes? Often times when people discuss cancer, it is said that an individual is "battling" cancer, instead of "suffering from"... in a similar way, we need to change the way society views mental illness, not as a weakness but as a condition for which recovery is expected.

Maria:

What if we viewed ourselves as the best housing partner, the best education partner, the best employment partner?

Deanna:

We would reduce homelessness, we would reach all those experiencing homelessness and mental illness and provide avenues for them to access available entitlements and services such as housing. We would bring more housing resources within our Clubhouse reach and make them available to all of our Clubhouse members. Our networking contacts would include communication with all the available community housing resources, such as other not-for-profits, government, public and private entities.

Anita:

As the best partner, we will provide access to every educational resource and support our members in achieving their educational goals. In some countries this may mean creating scholarships, in other countries this may be a Supported Education program in the Clubhouse and broader community. Or, it may be as simple as transportation assistance and becoming comfortable with navigating the public system.

Education and tutoring partnership programs could grow between sister Clubhouses, utilizing technology and online tools to connect those studying and those willing to tutor and train.

What if Clubhouse was an area of study within universities?

Leif:

With our international evidence base, increased employment partnerships and opportunities will present themselves. Increased partnerships translate into additional exposure to mental health dialogues in the workplace. This allows Clubhouse to become a "training program" for businesses. Not only are we providing employment opportunities to our members, we are providing educational opportunities for the broader community to understand mental health and how to care for employee's mental health in the workplace.

Due to our success with supporting members to gain employment we will be able to successfully build relationships with employment placement agencies seeking to provide us with opportunities for our community. We could become the

largest employment model by successfully supporting members to return to work or gain employment when they have been told they would never be able to work.

Maria:

What if, due to our International evidence base recognition Clubhouses around the world, we didn't have to scratch for funding anymore? What if funders came to us!?

Anita:

LIFE WOULD BE MUCH EASIER FOR CLUBHOUSES!

This would change our focus from surviving to growing and improving the quality of our practices. This, in turn, will promote development and would make New Clubhouse Development so much easier, allowing us to expand Clubhouses in developing countries.

With secure and consistent funding, the economic barriers to achieving accreditation would no longer exist. The focus would be on how to build stronger Clubhouses, removing the pressure and insecurity brought on by insufficient or intermittent funding.

Deanna:

What if communities that lack mental health programs had access to a Clubhouse? How would this begin to shape the creation of clinical practices?

Leif:

How could Clubhouses become a tool to educate communities, introduce countries to clinical and pharmacological practices that help support the belief that recovery is possible.

This is something for all of us to discover as a community.

Leif:

What if Clubhouse International was the leading voice for mental health reform?

Anita:

As a leading global mental health advocate, the Clubhouse movement would be able to share best practices and system reforms from around the world. This would allow us to lobby local governments to consider successful system reform and proven outcomes.

Deanna:

What if Clubhouse was a household name such as the World Health Organization, Doctors Without Borders, or Red Cross?

Anita:

We could reach so many people from all avenues; hospital stays, other mental health organizations, government agencies, and really anyone from anywhere.

We would truly become community resource centers, not only for individuals with a history of mental illness, but for their families and friends. We would be a community resource for everyone.

Maria:

As any organization continues to grow it requires more and more organizing and standardization to help facilitate continuity of practice. One of the great aspects of our global community is the uniqueness each different Clubhouse brings to the movement. While the 36 standards help us facilitate our continuity of practice, they have also given us over 330 unique Clubhouses in 34 countries.

As we move forward, let's take the positives out of corporate practices while preserving the unique culture of innovation and service innate to the Clubhouse movement.

Anita:

What if we can end stigma?

Deanna:

What if you could be a part of a movement that makes this a reality worldwide?

Leif:

What if... What is your what if? (share your 'what if' via the Clubhouse International World Seminar app)