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Adding Daily Mobile Outreach to a Clubhouse Outreach Program:

One Clubhouse's Approach

At New Reflection House, in Tooele, Utah, daily mobile outreach has been an active part of our Clubhouse's outreach for a number of years. We have seen dramatic results when this type of reach out is conducted on a regular basis.

Standard #7 clearly illustrates the need, stating that "the Clubhouse provides an effective reach out system to members who are not attending, becoming isolated in the community or hospitalized." Certainly, reach out phone calls and mailing of cards is an important part of providing an effective reach out system. However, at New Reflection House we have found that fully addressing this Standard has meant the inclusion of daily mobile reach out.

Visiting members who are inactive, hospitalized, or isolating at home is a great way to show the members that they are wanted, needed, and appreciated at the program. Often, the member who receives this kind of visit will return to the program immediately or within a few days. Robbie, one of our members stated that "I really like it when the Clubhouse reaches out to me in person. It lets me know that they really care about me and that I am an important part of the unit, as they all come and visit me when I have not been there for a few days."

We have found that it works well for us to implement mobile outreach immediately after lunch. As with most Clubhouses, we have a one hour lunch break at New Reflection House. We have lunch at noon and begin our afternoon unit meetings at 1pm. Most people are finished eating by 12:30 and we begin cleaning up. However, while the rest of the Clubhouse is cleaning up, one unit will conduct a mobile outreach visit from 12:30 to 1pm. We rotate units, so each day a different unit does its mobile outreach. Our Director goes on mobile outreach visits with the Administration Unit every Thursday.

In the morning unit meeting, the staff and members will discuss which member of their unit is not attending, becoming isolated, at the hospital, or would benefit from a visit. Generally a reach out card is created for that member, and then the group delivers it in person when they do their mobile outreach visit in the afternoon.

In addition to reach out cards, we make 'activity magnets' that we bring along on mobile outreach visits. The clerical unit types up the next three months of Clubhouse activities, events, and holidays and mounts them on colorful card stock, roughly the size of a postcard. They then cut and attach magnets to the back of these. During a mobile outreach visit, these activity magnets are given to the members to place on their fridge so they are aware of all the happenings at the Clubhouse. These magnets are also placed in every members Clubhouse mailbox and mailed out to those the live further away. They have greatly enhanced our mobile reach out visits as they can be left at the members door (along with the homemade card) if the member is not at home.

Immediately after lunch, the unit staff and as many members as would like to from that particular unit pile into the Clubhouse vehicle and visit with the member(s) who had been identified at the morning meeting that day. Sometimes a unit is able to visit two or even three members in that half an hour, if they live near each other. Visiting a member who is in the hospital is also a powerful way to connect with someone when they need it the most. An important aspect of this is to build a relationship with the local hospital, so that they know and understand why this is important. There generally are certain rules and guidelines that need to be followed so educating the hospital about the Clubhouse, and the Clubhouse about the hospital guidelines, will help to expand your mobile outreach in this important area.

Often, the reach out team will bring lunch with them in a take out box to give the member some of the great Clubhouse lunches that the rest of the house enjoyed a few minutes earlier. If there is not enough extra lunch to take, some homemade cookies or dessert is taken instead of the meal.

We have found that it isn't necessary to make a long visit. The simple act of coming to someone's home and bringing homemade food and a reach out card, and the message that 'we care and hope you come back soon,' is a very powerful communication.

The reach out team returns to the Clubhouse by 1:00 pm. We have found that it is important that the reach out team is aware of travel time, and that they return to the Clubhouse on time. In order to

sustain a sense of urgency about the work of the Clubhouse, the unit meetings need to begin on time. Our mobile outreach adds to the urgency and level of activity in the Clubhouse, and the time restraints help us maintain a high level of energy.

Providing daily mobile outreach has been one of the most powerful tools that we have used to assist our members in their recovery. It shows each and every member that we care about them and that they are an important part of the unit community. Mobile outreach is also very effective with new members, as it quickly helps them understand how important they are to the Clubhouse and encourages them to get active in the work of their units.

For more information about New Reflection House's Mobile Outreach Program, call the Clubhouse at 435-882-4845.