



## NEW CLUBHOUSE DEVELOPMENT PLENARY Haabersti Klubimaja's Journey to Become a Clubhouse

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Our Clubhouse, Haabersti Klubimaja was established, with collaboration from Progress Place in Canada, in March 1996. Prior to that, it was a day treatment and social program for people coming out of the Tallinn Psychiatric Hospital and it was called The Haabersti Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre. In September 1996 the Haabersti Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre was converted to a Clubhouse. Everything about Clubhouse was completely new for us. At that time, we didn't know anything about other Clubhouses or about Clubhouse International. So we started, with 10 members and two staff members, to learn the Standards, and to get introduced to other Clubhouses in Canada and Finland. We started to find our place.

We translated the Standards into the Estonian language. We began to have discussions about the Standards at least once a month. Every time we discussed a new Standard, the question arose: What is the meaning of this Standard, or why is it so?

Between 1998-2000 we had good times in our Clubhouse in the rather poor society of Estonia, as we received a lot of funding from the Estonian Open Foundation. We had a chance to go to some Clubhouse seminars in Europe and Worldwide: Rendsburg, Germany in the year 2000, to Reykjavik, Iceland in 2001, Malmö, Sweden in 2004 and to Milwaukee in the United States in 2007.

In the year 2000, Tallinn Mental Health Center (TMHC) was established and Haabersti Klubimaja became a part of it. Tallinn Mental Health Center has 7 departments - our Clubhouse is one of them - has been, and still is, a leading and exemplary mental health service provider in Tallinn city.

In 2007, however, things changed. We had a different funding source, as we started to provide state mental health services. It was a big change in TMHC and also in our Clubhouse, because a lot of paperwork and state regulations were now required. In our Clubhouse, we were required to have one to one conversations with compulsory goal planning for members. Clubhouse staff members had to write reports about members' participation and action plan implementation. They started to call members 'clients.' Although staff and member relationships were friendly, we were having staff only meetings and the focus was not 'side by side' work, but staff were supposed to teach and educate members about life skills and health matters. Clubhouse staff members started to become group leaders and counsellors, instead of colleagues and co-workers.

In 2016 Clubhouse International sent an announcement that said that in order to be a Clubhouse, we had to be accredited. We scheduled an Accreditation visit, and started to complete the self-study. We were rather optimistic, mainly because the staff felt like we were good professionals, and we had awards and certificates to prove that. We really had no idea that our program was not operating as a Clubhouse culture.

So, our first Accreditation visit was quite shocking for us! We thought we were doing great! But as it is with all difficulties in life, we learned a lot from it. Right after the Accreditation visit, we started to change everything we could. We eliminated the staff only meetings; we started to be open on holidays; we removed groups from our daily schedule, and most importantly: we stopped calling members clients.

Well, at least we tried to. Some of our staff members were so used to it, that it took them almost two years to get used to this small and at the same so big change. And some never got used to it. We did a whole bunch of other changes in our every day work as well. We started to visit other Clubhouses. We wrote a project grant and got

funding to go to Clubhouse training and to a Clubhouse leadership seminar. And bit by bit, we started to feel ourselves more confident as being a Clubhouse.

The hardest part for us was to understand: What do we DO in the work ordered day, if we don't have group activities and counselling conversations with members? For some staff members it was hard and confusing, even after the Clubhouse training. Because of this, most of our staff has changed during this last year. Now we have a director, who has worked in Clubhouse four and a half years, one staff member who has worked in the Clubhouse for 13 years; and 5 staff members who have only been working in the Clubhouse less than a year.

When staff started to change, we started to have our own in-house Clubhouse training groups. We gathered together once a week and read Clubhouse articles and had a discussion about them. We still do this, and it has helped us a lot to understand how Clubhouses work.

When Sander- our oldest new staff member :) was new in the Clubhouse, he was immediately fascinated by the idea we discussed in these training groups, that everyone was supposed to operate as equals in the Clubhouse. Sanders said: "But the more I looked around our Clubhouse, the more I could see that it wasn't quite so in the Haabersti Clubhouse. Many of our staff members chose to hold onto their 'authority' and simply assigned each member a specific task without considering whether or not that member was willing to do so. As I interacted a lot with members at the time, I knew that we had a problem. In a Clubhouse, an employee cannot work unless he or she can cooperate and embrace the culture of equality.

I believe that the recent rapid development of our Clubhouse is based on our director's continuity, and the new team that is made up of staff who do not always focus on the obstacles in everything, but have a belief in what our Clubhouse can become. We now focus on how we are equal, and we work side-by-side around the table, or at meetings or events, and so on. We approach each other as equal partners. Team spirit has increased a lot over the last year and if the staff feels good about being at work, then the members do not want to go anywhere else either. A Clubhouse staff team must not be comprised of people who spend the day watching the clock to see when it is finally time to go home! Clubhouse staff have to feel and know that they are part of this community, made up of the members and staff together."

Our Clubhouse is 23 years old and as we have said, we have had different periods in our history. At the moment we are grateful that we have members who have been with us since the beginning and that we have new members coming as well. Some of our members couldn't describe the difference between how we used to be back then when we had more group activities and counsellor- client relationships, and how we are now. But most of us do feel the fresh energy and new community spirit. When I asked about it, our members said things like: "Our Clubhouse is more open now, information about what is going on is clear and visible." "It's easy to get information about everything going on here." "I don't know what it is, but the Clubhouse is significantly different than it used to be." "There are more new members are coming to our Clubhouse."

Our Clubhouse has come a very long way in a short time.

When we had our first Accreditation visit in 2016, we got a one-year Accreditation outcome and our report was full of recommendations about how we could change our culture and practice to become a genuine Clubhouse community. It was a lot! But we had the mentorship of our Faculty team, the Helsinki Training Base, and Anita Lambaek and others from Clubhouse International, who worked steadily with us to turn our Clubhouse into a true Clubhouse community. We are delighted and excited to report to you today that our recent Accreditation visit, after several years of hard work, resulted in a three-year Accreditation! We feel as though we have succeeded in becoming a true part of this wonderful, inspiring, embracing and restorative worldwide Clubhouse community. Thank you all!