Dear Clubhouse community,

Clubhouse International, Clubhouse Europe and Fountain House are coordinating efforts to monitor the status of the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) outbreak so we can share vital information with our community and will continue to do so over the coming weeks and months. We understand that this epidemic strikes directly at the heart of our model that is built on social connection, but we must make difficult decisions quickly, as the choices we make in the next week will have a significant impact on the speed and scale of spread of this virus, especially within our tightly knit and more vulnerable Clubhouse communities.

Social distancing is critical for curbing the pandemic. Most importantly, that means Clubhouses around the world _must_ prepare action plans for decreasing on-site programming, and possibly closing their physical locations to reduce the risk of transmission for members and the broader community.

The time to act is NOW. We do not want Clubhouses to be in a position where they are FORCED to close by their governments without a plan to remain connected and provide essential services to their members.

What is the potential impact on members from COVID-19?
Many if not most of our community members are at elevated risk of more severe symptoms and of complications from COVID-19 infection. That includes those over 60; members with chronic physical illnesses such as respiratory disease, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and autoimmune diseases, and active smokers are also at higher risk of developing more severe illness and complications. For everyone, the coronavirus epidemic and related coverage can increase anxiety and stress, and so focusing on wellbeing is important, including physical activity, healthy eating, and sleep.

What has been the impact on Clubhouses?
Global confirmed cases of COVID-19 now approach 150,000. The impact on Clubhouse programs that we know about, in China, South Korea and Italy have been significant – resulting in Clubhouse closures and reduced services that impact more than thousands of Clubhouse members.

What must Clubhouses do?
Clubhouses around the world are being asked to work with members and staff to devise action plans and communications to mitigate the risks that possible disruption of services can lead to.

Considerations that must be taken in all decision-making should include impacts on:
- Highest risk members
    - Age >60 and/or
    - Chronic respiratory illness (asthma, COPD, etc.)
    - Cardiovascular disease (heart disease, heart failure, history of stroke)

- o Diabetes
  - o Kidney disease
  - o Immune deficiency (autoimmune conditions, HIV, cancer)
- Access to basic needs, such as food and hygiene supplies for members
- Access to technology to ensure that members adequately stay connected without a physical gathering space
- Communications – how are members going to find out about changes to services and potential closures? (e.g. email, social media, phone trees, home visits, etc.)
- Mobile outreach - making sure to have precise physical addresses for all members. (e.g. not just P.O. boxes, streets or apartment complexes)
- Staffing – what will happen if essential staff become sick or are required to quarantine?

What are some practical examples of what Clubhouses are doing to communicate and reduce risk?
As an example, Fountain House has done the following:
- Created a COVID-19 Task Force of members and staff that connects multiple times a week.
- Create phased draw-down plan to reduce physical attendance at the Clubhouse and to increase 1:1 outreach and digital tools for connection; action plan created for Clubhouse closure and switch to virtual services
- Ensure that staff and peers doing 1:1 home visits, especially to high-risk members, have access to masks and gloves (PPE – personal protective equipment), maintain meal delivery (meals on wheels) and medication delivery and support.
- Disseminated communications to members and staff in a structured, weekly format (printed sheets following standard format, weekly meetings).
- Asked high-risk members to avoid attending the Clubhouse in-person, and have provided additional supports to remain connected, such as increased phone calls and digital outreach.
- Implemented daily sanitization schedule in line with WHO and CDC recommendations.
- Provided internal guidance for social practitioners to proactively screen members in units and throughout the Clubhouse to make sure they are staying healthy.
- Expanded PROACTIVE reach out calls and coordinated basic supplies (including food and hygiene items, if necessary) for members so they can self-quarantine safely and effectively.
- Required non-social practitioner staff to work from home or limit time in the clubhouse.
- Developed necessary protocols and action plans if residences need to be quarantined.
- Stopped all official Fountain House travel out of state, and have asked staff to limit personal travel.
- Engaged digital tech solutions to create a temporary virtual unit. "Virtual Fountain House" (Facebook, Slack, conference calls, etc.)

We are here to help and are a resource to the Clubhouse community. We will plan to share messages weekly. We have also created a helpdesk where you can reach out with any direct questions or support you might need for your Clubhouse response to COVID-19, including resources such as weekly message templates, please contact us at COVIDclubhouseintl@fountainhouse.org. We stand ready to help as much as possible.

Sincerely,

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What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some people may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Typically, it can be 5-6 days after exposure before symptoms appear, and illness usually lasts 2-3 weeks. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention. Unless it is a true emergency, please CALL your local health provider first, before presenting, as we predict our global healthcare systems will be under enormous strain during this pandemic.

How can I reduce the risk of exposure or transmission?
- Social distancing: reduce the number of contacts you have with people outside of your family. Keep a minimum 6 foot distance from people when interacting
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue, cloth or sleeve when sneezing or coughing — do not use your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds on all sides, or use an alcohol-based (minimum 70% alcohol) hand sanitizer if hand washing is unavailable.
- Do not touch your face or mouth with unwashed hands
- Do not share food, drink or eating utensils with others
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched items and surfaces, such as phones, computers, bathrooms and doorknobs.
- If you are a smoker, stop using or limit cigarettes and vaping.
- Stay home if you do not feel well, especially if you have a fever (>100.4F) or active cough, and seek medical care
- Keep healthy! Eat well, get sleep, minimize alcohol or substance intake, and exercise. Running and swimming are safe, but avoid crowded gym locker rooms

For the most up-to-date resources, information and guidance on the coronavirus epidemic, please consult the WHO
https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public