



Clubhouse International

Creating Community: Changing the World of Mental Health

COVID-19 CRISIS: OUR RESILIENT CLUBHOUSE COMMUNITIES

We Are Not Alone

As our international Clubhouse community responds to the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Clubhouses are now adjusting to the reality of having to operate as ‘virtual’ Clubhouse communities. Clubhouse International has been in communication with our International Training Bases and with many Clubhouses around the world. We have been learning about how they are creating systems to ensure that their members still have the critical supports of belonging to a Clubhouse, even as they are not able to gather together in their Clubhouse buildings.

We have always said that Clubhouses are communities, rather than simply being mental health ‘programs.’ Now we are learning just how true this is. Clubhouse resiliency, innovation, passion and dedication have quickly led to an inspiring array of strategies and solutions to address the new reality. Members and staff may no longer be able to gather together inside their Clubhouse buildings, but they have shown that they will continue to support each other through this crisis. We are deeply moved and awed by the extraordinary level of care and connection that continues to hold Clubhouse communities together, despite the severe restrictions regarding physical togetherness.

Our Clubhouse building is closed. Our Clubhouse community is open.

Our international Clubhouse community should take a moment to reflect on this phenomenon. We should be aware that, as a Clubhouse community, we have succeeded in creating a network of human connectedness and unconditional support that is almost unheard of in today’s society. Even in the uncertainty and anxiety of these days, this is something we should all understand, and celebrate.

Rather than implementing ‘social distancing,’ as our governments have suggested to us, Clubhouse communities have chosen to implement a system of ‘physical distancing.’ And in spite of this physical distancing, we are finding creative ways to remain socially engaged with each other.

Below, you will find a compilation of suggestions for implementing a Virtual Clubhouse, gathered from many Clubhouses, coalitions, and our Training Bases. As it looks as if this situation may continue for some time, we will continue to update you with new strategies as we move ahead into this unknown terrain of this ‘new normal.’

It is also important to note that even amid all the anxiety and chaos of this moment, Clubhouses have identified some bright spots. Here are a few:

Clubhouse community is about getting to know one other as whole human beings. Our work-ordered day, Transitional Employment, and social program have established a framework in which staff and members develop multi-dimensional relationships. As we move into this new dimension of 'virtual' Clubhouse connectedness, we will have the opportunity to further deepen and broaden the ways in which we know each other as human beings.

With the temporary reduction of daily Clubhouse tasks until we are organized with a new kind of workday, staff and members can take advantage of the extra time we now have to engage in longer conversations than we might have had in a typical busy Clubhouse workday. Clubhouse relationships have the opportunity to grow stronger, deeper, and richer as a result of this pandemic.

The following is a compilation of strategies and suggestions from Clubhouses around the world, as they begin to operate as Clubhouse communities 'without walls.' These ideas are from Clubhouses with a wide range of different circumstances, in different countries, of varying sizes. Although not all of the ideas in this document will be relevant for all Clubhouses, we hope that your Clubhouse will be able to find some suggestions that will be helpful for the unique needs of your Clubhouse community.

We have organized this document loosely according to the overall headings of:

- Maintaining Community
- Staff Scheduling and Roles
- Space
- Reach-out
- House and Unit Meetings
- Virtual Clubhouse (Unit) Work
- Employment
- Social Media
- Food
- Community Supports
- Social and Wellness Program
- Clubhouse Funding
- Board/Advisory Board

MAINTAINING COMMUNITY

- Create small 'reach-out families' consisting of one staff and a small group of members. Ask that each member of each reach-out family contact each other person in the cluster on a daily basis (whether by phone, text, email, or any other form of communication).
- Reducing stress levels is an important way to boost our immune systems. Relaxed, daily conversations with members and staff can be helpful to one's overall health.
- Create a Clubhouse warm-line with established hours that all members know they can access. Consider expanding the hours of current warm-lines.

- Most Clubhouses are establishing once or twice daily tele-conference or video-conference calls for the whole community. This is a substitute for daily house meetings or unit meetings.
- Some Clubhouses are having Virtual Lunch together, where members and staff join via internet access or just uploading pictures of their lunch to the Clubhouse Facebook page.
- Share a recipe with the whole Clubhouse community so that once per week everyone cooks the same meal at home and eats together at the same time. Share pictures of everyone's version of the meal on the Clubhouse Facebook page or other social media.
- Schedule a Facebook live session for an hour a day, at a particular time.

STAFF SCHEDULING AND ROLES

- Clubhouse staff roles are shifting from mostly site-based and unit-based activities to virtual engagement and reach-out responsibilities. Staff job descriptions are changing to reflect the need to stay in touch with members while practicing physical distancing. This includes continuing to engage members in meaningful work and daily routines along with needed community support services.
- Clubhouses are finding that it is very important to maintain a daily schedule and structure. Staff should check in with each member to help them establish some kind of routine, and then help to provide the support for them to maintain that routine. Staff should develop dependable routines for their work and availability, so that everyone knows what they can count on from each other every day.
- Many Clubhouses are staggering staff schedules so that some of the staff are onsite each day, and others are working from home. Some Clubhouses are doing two shifts per day, with some staff coming into the Clubhouse for the morning and others in the afternoon. While at the Clubhouse staff are busy with activities such as fielding telephone calls from members and responding to their needs, reach out logs and other recordkeeping, organizing plans for virtual Clubhouse work, keeping track of member contact information, grab-and go meal preparation, etc.
- All staff join the teleconference or video morning meetings, whether they are working onsite or remotely. Some Clubhouses are also having staff initiate individual unit meetings by phone to coordinate supports for members and other specific unit work functions. Staff and members can organize and complete this work together in one-to-one or small group calls.
- Some Clubhouses have created a separate Zoom (or other virtual meeting program) account for each staff, to allow frequent and ongoing contact with members.
- All staff have one primary mission: reach out and engage. The plan is to reach out to every member, every day, unless a member communicates that he/she would prefer fewer contacts.

- All staff are responsible for tracking reach out and communicating emerging needs of members, and facilitating effective and appropriate responses.
- As you begin working ‘without walls,’ have staff call *all* active members and screen over the phone for symptoms, update emails, addresses, etc. Create a "script" to ensure that questions about food, transportation, meds, etc. are being asked. For those members that do not have working phone numbers, utilize their emergency contacts to make contact with the member.
- Active membership is divided up amongst staff and it is the responsibility of every staff to contact those on their list every day to check in.
- Additionally, staff can review the list of members who have become inactive in the last year and together with members can make reach-out calls/connections with all of them to check in on their health and wellbeing. Those who are interested should be welcomed back into active membership in the virtual Clubhouse effort.
- Make sure that all staff have home computers and good WIFI connectivity. The Clubhouse should have a good video-conference capability that can be used remotely.

SPACE

- If Clubhouses are preparing meals for delivery it is important to maintain at least six feet of physical distance from each other. Use masks and gloves if you have them. Wipe down and disinfect all surfaces, appliances, door handles, bathrooms, etc.
- Take advantage of having the building almost empty to get carpets cleaned, floors waxed, lighting repaired, etc.
- Avoid using the language stating that the Clubhouse is ‘closed.’ While the building may be closed, most Clubhouses are providing a wide array of services for their membership. It is important to articulate for members, families, other agencies, and funders, that the Clubhouse is indeed operating, albeit in a different fashion currently. Some Clubhouses have signs on the door stating that members can now access the virtual Clubhouse, providing phone and website contact information.

REACH OUT

- Create reach-out ‘clusters’ consisting of one staff and a group of members. Ask that each person in each cluster gets in touch with the other members of their reach out cluster every day. Some members do not want to be part of that – but many do.
- Develop a script or discussion outline for reach-out discussion to ensure that all the important topics are being considered (e.g. health and wellness, food security, money and budget, social connectedness, medication if applicable, appointments and schedules, safety, routines, etc.)

- Clubhouses are generally discouraging home visits, but will pre-arrange with members to drop packages of food/medication/essentials at the door. One Clubhouse calls this the ‘Clubhouse Door Dash.’
- If members are in need of mental health crisis services, the Clubhouse will coordinate with providers and ensure there is a response. Clubhouses are expanding their systems of providing crisis support (e.g. expanded hours of availability for warm-lines, extra means of contacting staff, systematic reviews of each member’s current situation, etc.)
- Ask each member for one positive thought or something good that has happened, each day, and post these on the Clubhouse webpage or Facebook page.
- Check in with members about the needs of their pets.

HOUSE and UNIT MEETINGS

- Schedule tele-conference or video-conference calls every day to retain a rhythm and daily Clubhouse schedule. For most Clubhouses, staff are required to participate and members are invited and encouraged. Many are using WEBEX or Zoom; some just using conference call capacity.
- Have a standing agenda, which might include: a general check-in; updates (government public health announcements, local resources available, news about Clubhouse members and staff, news from Clubhouse International, etc.), information about local food pantries, subsidies, etc.
- Meetings should be facilitated by members and staff and responsibilities for the agenda, notes and post meeting follow-up can be organized by members and staff together via email, telephone, Facetime, Skype, etc.). Virtual side-by-side methods of sharing work can be creatively developed.
- Purchase and distribute disposable phones, or if possible, tablets, for members without access, to ensure everyone can participate. Some members may need a little financial help to extend their available minutes and data usage on their phones.

One Clubhouse notes: “It is AWESOME to hear/see each person as they join into the call. Each new person entering the call is met with a booming ‘HI!’ which creates a powerful bond of community.”

VIRTUAL CLUBHOUSE (UNIT) WORK

- If members request it, the Clubhouse can deliver actual hard copy tasks to do from home. Other members can assume some online responsibility for social media, making videos, contact and supporting other members, etc.
- In one Clubhouse a very limited number of members are joining staff onsite to assist with crucial unit work (logging outreach, updating database. processing mail and invoices, painting projects, outreaching members, etc.)

- Some units are holding separate daily online unit meetings. Members can volunteer to help with preparing posts for social media and making contributions toward the newsletter.
- Projects that can be done remotely include: develop external newsletter, FB page, work collaboratively online, update the Clubhouse video, develop a welcome packet, develop a Clubhouse recipe book.
- Use Google docs to collaborate on creating newsletters, recipe books, compilations of members' experiences while in quarantine.
- Have a member or a small group of members be responsible for taking calls for other members in regard to ordering lunch, or food bank orders, or other daily requests, and then call in the orders to staff who can deliver or implement the order.
- A member or group of members can keep an updated list of places that deliver food or have take-out options.
- Members with cars can join a mobile fleet to help make deliveries of food and goods to other members.
- Members can make birthday cards for other members from home.
- Create a daily news show. Members can send brief (less than a minute) videos about how they are doing; tips on good movies or books; ideas for Clubhouse projects; etc. Videos can be sent to a staff and/or member with the ability to edit them together. These can be viewed on the Clubhouse Facebook or webpage on a daily basis.
- Organize a group to research and apply for newly available grants for responding to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Organize a research project to keep track of member contacts, crisis diversion, hospitalizations, meals delivered, on-line activities, goal plans adjusted or created, crisis line calls, etc. to make the case post crisis about the value of the Clubhouse community.

EMPLOYMENT

- It is important that Clubhouses remain connected to TE business partners, even if all TE jobs have been suspended at this time. Maintain strong relationships with employers in order to ensure a smooth return for members at the end of this crisis. Have a voice conversation with the employer to decide together the best way to manage TE/SE support during this time.
- Educate and inform members that have lost their incomes about stimulus packages and other assistance that might be available. Check with government unemployment benefits offices as some are expanding coverage to include laid off or furloughed part-time employees.
- Communicate information about potential employment options, such as Amazon Fulfillment Centers or other on-line retail organizations, to connect interested members with work income immediately.
- If members are laid off of their jobs, the Clubhouse should work with the member to contact benefits administrators to help members get back on their pensions/entitlements or apply for the first time.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- One staff (along with a small team of volunteer members) can monitor the Clubhouse Facebook page all day, responding to posts and keeping everyone informed about news and updates.
- Establish a private Facebook group to keep in contact with members during this stressful time.
- Create a link on the front page of your Clubhouse website to a page of information relating to the coronavirus. Update this page daily (or very frequently).
- Post your Clubhouse updates and relevant media regarding Coronavirus via Facebook and Instagram.
- Clubhouses are using Text Now (app), Facebook group pages and live chat, Instagram and Instagram Live, WhatsApp, Slack, etc. to remain in communication with each other.
- Zoom, Skype and WebEx are good for group video conferencing.
- Mail Chimp can be a helpful platform to send an email to all members at once. Mail Chimp allows the send to know how many have opened the email, which can be helpful information for the Clubhouse.
- Create a closed Facebook page just for your Clubhouse.

FOOD

- Some Clubhouses are making lunches at the Clubhouse and delivering to members. However, it is important to limit the number of food preparation people and practice physical distancing (at least 6 ft/2 meters).
- Gather information about all local food resources and food pantries in your community and communicate this information to members.
- If a member cannot get food, the Clubhouse should deliver food or ensure that food is available from another source.
- One Clubhouse is working with food pantries to deliver a weekly-monthly supply of groceries to members. The Clubhouse asks members to take a picture of their driver's licenses as ID for the food pantry, and then text them to staff at the Clubhouse who will print them up and send them to the food pantry. The Clubhouse is able to pick up 12 orders at a time and then deliver these directly to the members.
- Order food through the regular Clubhouse food suppliers and make up boxes of groceries to deliver to members.
- Some Clubhouses are making lunches and distributing them outside of the Clubhouse, in take-out boxes, to reduce physical proximity.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

- Clubhouses remain committed to ensuring that they continue to provide supports to members in regard to housing, medication, physical health, and other community support needs.
- Mobile banking: For members that use the Clubhouse member banks, Clubhouses are taking phone calls in the morning and then driving around to get signatures and distribute checks and money.
- Make sure that all members have access to a Clubhouse Hotline/Crisis line, and that it is always active and will be answered by a live person.

SOCIAL PROGRAM and WELLNESS PROGRAMMING

- Use Facebook Live, Zoom/Skype or other social media platform to share exercise classes including yoga classes and meditation groups.
- There are some excellent virtual tours of museums that Clubhouses can do 'together' online.
- Create virtual book, music or movie discussion groups

CLUBHOUSE FUNDING

- Clubhouses and Clubhouse coalitions are advocating with their local governments to establish funding mechanisms to cover new strategies of remote and virtual service provision.
- Some Clubhouses are finding that they will be able to bill for "community support" when making reach out calls to members. In the US, some states are allowing billing for longer phone calls with members; others allow Clubhouses to bill for dropping off food or meds without face-to-face interaction with a member.
- Write grants that focus on trying to obtain donations for laptops or iPads for members that do not have access to an electronic device.
- Rotary International and United Way might be good resources for obtaining grants for digital/virtual support services. Many cities and towns have Community Foundations that make funding available in times of crisis or great need.

BOARD OR ADVISORY BOARD ROLE

Clubhouses are asking their boards and advisory boards for specific assistance during this time. This includes:

- Raise funds to buy disposable phones, or tablets with internet connectivity, for members who do not have these devices. It will be crucial that all members can maintain communication during this period of isolation. Some members may have phones with very limited minutes available, so the board might be able to help fund purchasing additional minutes for these members.
- Raise funds to help members who have lost their income due to layoffs and need immediate financial assistance.
- Enlist the help of boards in advocating with government funders to ensure they know the Clubhouse work continues and that we are well positioned to provide ongoing support to members during this time of crisis. Make sure they have good data and understanding about how you have adjusted your work. If board members are helping with this advocacy it could help with getting government funders to continue and expand payments for Clubhouse services.

We are grateful to our Training Base Group and the other Clubhouses listed below for helping us develop this collection of ideas.

Alliance House, Utah, U.S.A.
 Fontenehuset i Oslo, Norway
 Fountain House, New York, U.S.A.
 Gateway, South Carolina, U.S.A.
 Genesis Club, Massachusetts, U.S.A
 Helsingin, Klubitalo, Helsinki, Finland
 Independence Center, Missouri, U.S.A.
 Mosaic Clubhouse, London, England
 Phoenix Clubhouse, Hong Kong, SAR PRC
 Progress Place, Toronto, Canada
 Stepping Stone Clubhouse, Brisbane, Australia
 Taiwha Fountain House, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Carriage House, Indiana, U.S.A.
 Clubhouse Maine, U.S.A
 Clubhouse Michigan, U.S.A.
 Potential Place, Canada
 Dandelion Clubhouse, People's Republic of China
 Hope Clubhouse, People's Republic of China
 B'More Clubhouse, Maryland, U.S.A.
 HERO House, Washington, U.S.A.