

Dear Clubhouse Friends and Colleagues,

As we all know, the ground is shifting under our feet, in massive tectonic movements. What was 'normal' for us and our Clubhouse communities only a few weeks ago, has almost instantaneously been dismantled by the rapid sweep of the coronavirus across the globe.

But – despite this unprecedented worldwide upheaval – we want to share with you the astonishing reality that the Clubhouse community has quickly mobilized. The physical distancing required to stop this virus poses real challenges to the traditional Clubhouse model – but together we have pivoted to a combination of virtual connection and direct outreach that keeps our membership connected – and is even breaking new boundaries. It is a testament to the power of this movement that the Clubhouse community is up and running, together.

As the leadership of our phenomenal worldwide Clubhouse community, we want to say THANK YOU. We are profoundly proud of the resiliency, creativity, passion, dedication, and unshakeable connectivity of our Clubhouse network across the world.

The heart and soul of our Clubhouse movement has always been in our relationships with each other - and as we all know - relationships transcend physical proximity. Our deepest values are anchored in our belief in the power of a genuine caring community to bring healing, hope and opportunity. In this 'new normal' of physical distancing, the resilient webs of care and authentic relatedness that have been woven among the members and staff of our Clubhouses, are continuing to bind us together in a strong community of powerful mutual support.

Within days of having to close our physical buildings, Clubhouses around the world rallied to quickly establish new structures to address our new circumstances. These include member and staff collaboration on: virtual and mobile connectivity; daily online meetings; food delivery; assistance with obtaining medicine and all other necessary community supports; assistance with employment and educational related concerns; production of newsletters and videos; reach out efforts; leadership of meetings; social programming; health and wellness goals and initiatives; and most other aspects of typical daily Clubhouse operation.

Collaborating on virtual connectivity and best practices for digital integration of the Clubhouse Model allowed us to quickly create "Virtual Clubhouse (Beta)". This virtual gathering space for members mimics much of the Clubhouse social practice, as well as provides information for members and staff about how to obtain support services. We are working together on a more designed version to launch in the next couple of weeks, and also working on training Clubhouses on the tools. And we're building for the future. Long term, after the coronavirus is over, Virtual Clubhouse will draw new membership worldwide as well as sustain membership,

by offering a way for people to connect with Clubhouses even when they cannot physically attend, or prefer a digital experience. It will, as well, connect Clubhouses with each other – creating a powerful global network that supports a global movement.

As we move forward into this uncharted territory, we encourage all Clubhouse members and staff to lean into the safety and support of their local Clubhouse community, their regional coalitions and/or neighboring Clubhouses, and the large international Clubhouse community. We are all in this together. As our founders understood more than 70 years ago: WE ARE NOT ALONE!

We hope to maintain ongoing connection with all of you as this crisis unfolds. We deeply appreciate your work, your care, your support, and your commitment to our extraordinary way of working together as local Clubhouse communities, and as a large international Clubhouse movement.

Take care of yourselves and one another,

Sincerely,

Wander Reitsma  
*Chair, Clubhouse Europe*

Ashwin Vasan, M.D., PhD  
*President and CEO, Fountain House*  
*Assistant Professor, Mailman School of Public Health and Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons at Columbia University*

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*Executive Director, Clubhouse International*

*Remember, the music is not in the piano.*  
*- Clement Mok*