

Clubhouse Evening and Weekend Programs

We received information about social programming from several Clubhouses with strong Evening/Weekend Programs, all of which reflect a wide-ranging scope and show flexibility and creativity. At all of these Clubhouses, activities occur both within the Clubhouse and through excursions into the outside community.

One Clubhouse sums up its Evening and Weekend Program: “We play as hard as we work together...Like everything Clubhouse, it’s all about relationships.” Clubhouse evenings and weekends are for fun, but more than fun. Evening/Weekend activities are all-inclusive, reflecting the concern of Clubhouses for the whole of people’s lives and for relationships based on wholeness. The specific focus of the Work-Ordered Day is then balanced with Evening/Weekend activities which encompass a full range of interests, aspirations, enjoyments, and pleasures. Education and even work are included – the work of planning and conducting the activities.

In all of the strong social programs we reviewed, there are set times when the program operates (at least one evening and one weekend day or evening per week) but there is latitude to incorporate holiday celebrations, excursions, and community events at other times. However, it is very important to note that Clubhouse social/recreation programs are *always* scheduled outside of the work-ordered day, during evenings, weekends and holidays. Members are welcomed into the Clubhouse during the hours of the Evening/Weekend/Holiday Program whether or not they participate in organized activities. In most strong Clubhouses, food service during evenings and weekends enables members to obtain meals at normal mealtime hours. However, Food service should not become a predominant feature, displacing a focus on the wide scope of activities; and food service should be conducted by members and staff working together.

Staff schedules are arranged so that the staff working during the Work-Ordered Day also participate with members in the Evening/Weekend Program. Although some Clubhouses may utilize volunteers to help in operating the Evening/Weekend program, it is important that the regular staff also work in this program component as it fosters meaningful relationships and is a critical part of the generalist staff role. Directors should also take turns in the rotation of the Social program schedule. Evening/Weekend activities can be staffed through flex time, comp time, or by staff volunteering for particular events.

Evening/Weekend activities can range as follows:

- Activities at the Clubhouse can include board games, card games, chess, dancing, karaoke, crafts, pool, ping pong, bingo, and other activities of interest to members and staff.
- Employment and education supports can be extended from the day into the evening through dinner meetings, community support services for members working independently, tutoring, computer tutorials, and various classes of interest to members.

- Supports providing assistance to members with health and addiction issues can be conducted, such as substance abuse groups, weight watchers, smoking cessation groups, and exercise classes.
- Facilities at the Clubhouse can be available to members for personal use, such as computers, copy machines, exercise equipment, television, and laundry machines.
- Members and staff can participate in cultural activities held at the Clubhouse, such as dramatic productions, art groups, music and singing groups.
- Members and staff can become involved in sporting activities, both as participants and observers, through Clubhouse teams playing local community teams, attendance at community sporting events, and watching games on television.
- Members and staff can attend and/or participate in cultural, recreational, and other venues of interest in the community, such as concerts, dramatic productions, movies, malls for shopping, gyms, restaurants, bowling, and carnivals.
- Clubhouse excursions and trips can be conducted to parks, beaches, on hikes, and camping, as well as long-distance ventures made to national points of interest financed by Clubhouse fund raising efforts.
- Of special significance are holiday events celebrated in a manner congruent with each holiday, such as dinner at Thanksgiving, a party at New Year's, costumes at Halloween, or culturally relevant activities congruent with respective countries' holidays.

It is important that members and staff join together with spontaneous enthusiasm in suggesting and planning activities within an atmosphere of openness to new ideas, in order to avoid the program becoming stuck in repetitive routines. Planning can be done by a unit and/or through general Clubhouse meetings and committees. Information on activities can be given through Clubhouse publications, daily meetings, event boards, sign-up sheets, and reach-out calls.

Just as Clubhouses focus a lot of energy on their Work ordered day or Employment programs, so too should an effort be made to make a Clubhouse a place where interesting and exciting things are happening on the weekends and holidays. Why is it that sometimes one activity will have only 1-2 members attend while at other activities, there are large amounts of people joining in? It usually doesn't have to do with the activity as much as it does with the energy and enthusiasm that the staff and members involved in organizing the activity put into it. Putting up a sign up sheet is just not enough. Strong evening/weekend/ holiday programming needs attention and organization to it....and also a lot of fun!