

The Self Study:

Tips on Involving the Whole Clubhouse in a Successful and Invigorating Self Study Process

Since the early days of certification, one of the most important components of the certification process has been the creation of a Clubhouse “Self Study.” Before the certification team ever visits the Clubhouse, the Self Study process gives the Clubhouse community an opportunity to take time out of its busy schedule to gather together in an effort to take a close-up look at how it is doing. It is a time for the Clubhouse members and staff to review and celebrate its many achievements, as well as a time for it to take a look at the things it would like to do better.

Clubhouses that have gone through ICCD certification very often report that one of the most helpful aspects of the ICCD certification process is the Self Study.

The ICCD has always given Clubhouses a great deal of latitude about how to go about the process of putting together a useful, comprehensive, and insightful Self Study. Over the years, though, we have learned from Clubhouses that there are some specific ways to go about the Self Study process that will increase the probability that it will be a positive experience for the entire Clubhouse as well as a useful tool for the certification team to learn about you and your strengths and weaknesses.

1. **Draw the entire Clubhouse into the project**
Involving the whole Clubhouse community in the process of self-evaluation through the Self Study seems to have a lasting effect on the sense of ownership and investment that is felt by the members and staff.
2. **As a director, don’t complete the self study single-handedly.**
Nothing better cements the feeling of being ‘needed, wanted, and expected’ than being a part of this process of self-reflection and decision. This is true for members, staff, board or advisory board members, and anyone else important to the Clubhouse.
3. **Give yourself lots of time to complete the Self-Study**
Most Clubhouses have found that the more time they give themselves to fully engage in this enriching community process, the more helpful it will be to the Clubhouse - and then to the Faculty team.
4. **Use the form the ICCD sends you.**
This is basically the same format that the ICCD Faculty team will be using during the certification visit, and it is enormously helpful for them to have your responses to the same questions that they will be looking at during their visit.
5. **Some practical ideas include:**
 - Form several committees to work on the Self Study; some Clubhouses have a different committee for each category of the Standards. The most successful Self Studies are usually a combination of smaller committees to work on aspects of the report, as well as whole house meetings to discuss the work of these committees.
 - Have small Clubhouse teams do ‘mini-certification’ cross-reviews of areas of the Clubhouse with which those people are not ordinarily involved. A member/staff team from the Clerical Unit, for example, might spend a day or two in the Kitchen Unit.

- If your Clubhouse is part of a coalition, it can also be very useful to do these kinds of ‘cross-reviews’ with teams from another Clubhouse in your coalition. This is particularly helpful because a team from another Clubhouse is more likely to be able to look at your Clubhouse objectively, and with fresh eyes.
 - Another helpful approach is for the Clubhouse to have a committee that does an initial survey of strong sister Clubhouses, to learn about the things that have been most helpful during their Self Study processes. This committee can come back to the whole house with a proposal for how to organize the Self Study, which can then be reviewed and adjusted based on the consensus of the larger group.
 - If you have a prior certification report, make good use of it for the Self Study. It is a good idea to have copies of the previous certification available throughout the Clubhouse so that everyone knows what previously was recommended, and can have time to think about the Clubhouse’s progress toward these goals.
6. **Get your Self Study back to the ICCD and your two Faculty consultants at least two weeks before the certification visit, and preferably earlier.**
This will make the certification visit a much fuller and richer experience for your Clubhouse community.
7. **Contact your certification team early.**
As soon as you learn who will be the Faculty member and staff on your certification team, the Clubhouse should begin to make use of them. Any issues or questions that arise during the self-study process can be brought to your Faculty team.

Remember, the Self Study is not only a tool for imparting information to the ICCD Faculty. Even more importantly, it is a golden opportunity for the Clubhouse community to come together and work closely with one another to understand the Clubhouse’s greatest strengths, and the areas that YOU want to make even stronger. Make the most of this wonderful opportunity!