

Download and Discuss: Clubhouse Practice of the Month

Selection of Members for Transitional Employment Positions

Members are selected for Transitional Employment (TE) jobs by Clubhouses and not by employers (Standard 22g). The crucial significance of this principle is that it allows members to bypass the competitive hiring process, which is geared to choosing the “best qualified” candidate, and where Clubhouse members tend to lose out. The challenge for Clubhouses in TE selection is to avoid reproducing the competitive hiring process within the Clubhouse, and instead to provide employment opportunities to those least likely to have such opportunities otherwise.

In most Clubhouses, at any one time, there are more members wanting TE jobs than there are jobs available. Immediately, therefore, Clubhouses are confronted with the issue of selection. The Standards state that TE is a “right of membership” (Standard 22) and that “the desire to work is the single most important factor” in TE selection (Standard 22a).

However, there are many factors that come up for consideration when Clubhouses try to assess a member’s ‘desire to work’ in the process of making TE selections. These factors include: the importance of Clubhouse relationships generated through participation in the Work-Ordered Day; the extent and longevity of participation in the Work-Ordered Day in demonstrating desire, in building capacities useful for success on TE, and in offering likelihood for continuing Clubhouse involvement and support while on TE; the maintenance of good relationships with employers; the significance of TE in relation to a member’s needs and goals; and the particular characteristics of TE jobs in relation to the capacities and tolerances of particular members. The complexity of the process is heightened by the fact that ‘desire to work’ is a subjective quality that, naturally, will be understood and evaluated differently by different people.

This very complexity seems to justify what we [have found](#) ~~believe~~ are the two fundamental principles of Clubhouse TE selection: **the importance of not having Clubhouse-wide procedures on TE selection where fixed criteria or decision-making processes have final authority; and the value of having selection done by Placement Managers.**

The absence of Clubhouse-wide procedures means not having decision-making committees, rules regarding the amount and length of Clubhouse participation, or formal evaluations of “job readiness.” Such policies tend to institute a kind of Clubhouse competitive hiring process. The factor of ‘desire to work’ tends to be minimized and TE opportunity restricted to the “best qualified.” The full consideration of complex factors is thwarted.

Placement Manager selection does not mean decision-making by a single individual. Usually Clubhouses have at least two people managing each placement, and it is important that these people receive guidance, support, and information from others in the Clubhouse. This practice enables Placement Managers to draw on their relationships with

members and their knowledge of job situations in making selections. They can gauge a member's desire to work, and weigh and balance other factors with a sensitivity and flexibility that fixed criteria and generalized procedures cannot match.

There are differences among strong Clubhouses with respect to the degree of importance given to Work-Ordered Day participation in making TE selections. The differences, however, are on a continuum, with all allowing for consideration of other factors. Best Clubhouse practice is to look first at a member's desire to work, although Clubhouses determine this in a variety of different ways. Giving the final selection decision to Placement Managers recognizes and affirms that these differences do exist. Placement Managers will evaluate 'desire' differently from one another, so that one Placement Manager will give a TE opportunity to a member when another Placement Manager would not. Having a systematic, fixed selection procedure would disallow this kind of healthy flexibility. The system of having Placement Managers have the bottom line selection decisions thus enables Clubhouse relationships to promote opportunity.