

## **Clubhouse Practice of the Month**

### **The Clubhouse Afternoon – A time of Opportunity**

Lunch has been served, the dishes have been washed, the clubhouse has been cleaned, and it is 1:30. Some clerical and administrative tasks and perhaps a few projects that have been scheduled for the afternoon remain. Some members may need assistance regarding individual issues. Sometimes there is preparation for an evening event. Yet often it seems that the bulk of the work of the day has been concluded. Many members leave, and staff search for ways to influence more members to stay.

This situation reflects the fact that the work-ordered day generally first develops around “in your face” needs – serving lunch, meeting deadlines, cleaning, assisting members with housing and financial issues, etc. Clubhouse mornings tend to be devoted to meeting needs of this sort. Yet long-term experience has shown that the aspirations and well-being of clubhouses entail a wide range of additional enterprises. The afternoon provides opportunity to engage in work that may not have such immediate urgency but is nonetheless vital to clubhouse communities.

Fundamental to engaging members and staff in afternoon work are unit meetings at the beginning of each afternoon. At these meetings, the accomplishments of the morning can be reviewed and volunteers enlisted for tasks still unfinished. Afternoon work projects can then be detailed and volunteers engaged for these activities. Following are afternoon work projects that clubhouses have found beneficial.

Certain activities are particularly advantageous and needed during the afternoons.

- Reach-out calls, cards, and visits.
- Correlated with reach-out, the tabulating of attendance for the day in mid-afternoon so that reach-out can be done subsequently, taking account of people absent for that day.
- Tabulating money taken in for food service and other sales with corresponding bookkeeping, banking.
- Food service for the afternoon and in preparation for evening events.
- Preparation of meals for members to buy and take home, giving them a ready-made supper.
- Help with set-up for Board of Director’s Meetings that occur in late afternoons.
- For clubhouses with Thrift stores, arrange donation pick-ups.
- End of day cleaning, organizing recycling activities.

The afternoon provides a special opportunity for enabling members and staff to think ahead, to connect today with tomorrow, and to make commitments for tomorrow. Preparations for tomorrow can include:

- Engaging volunteers for tomorrow’s activities.
- Menu planning
- Shopping for food, maintenance, and clerical supplies.
- Food service preparation , including baking.
- Setting tables for breakfast.
- Preparation of a flyer or bulletin announcing tomorrow’s activities which will then be available as people enter the clubhouse the next morning.
- Washing and ironing tablecloths, napkins, etc.

In addition, the afternoon can include projects with longer range, future significance, raising the sights of members and staff and enabling clubhouse communities to work together to actualize visions of upcoming weeks and months and the progression of lifetimes. Such projects entail:

- Planning and preparation of materials for advocacy, fund raising, and public relations and to enhance members' opportunities for employment and education.
- Visits to employers, schools, and community organizations.
- Visits to hospitals, clinics, and homeless shelters to enhance awareness of clubhouse opportunities.
- Review Action Plan objectives/progress if a group has gone to Clubhouse training recently.
- Policy and house meetings.
- Culture Training – discuss the Clubhouse Standards from a philosophical as well as a practical viewpoint.
- Planning for specific clubhouse projects, such as the newspaper, TE and Independent Employment, garden development, and nutrition in food service.
- Survey and analysis of all unit and clubhouse work activities so as to broaden involvement.
- Review suggestions/recommendations from most recent certification report.
- Analysis of clubhouse budget, income, and expenditures so as to promote involvement of members and staff in fiscal planning and responsibilities.
- Major upkeep and renovation projects, such as painting, cleaning refrigerators, and establishing and overhauling gardens.
- Goal planning and record keeping for members, both individually and in groups.
- Assistance to members regarding education and employment, such as through tutoring, applications to colleges, resume preparation, and job development.

Other projects that clubhouses have found useful for afternoon work:

- Preparation of statistics for Medicaid billing, education, and employment.
- Member bank operation.
- Mailing and mail pick-ups and delivery.
- Monthly newsletter.
- Thrift Shop development and operation.
- Translating of clubhouse materials from other languages.
- Updating the visuals inside the clubhouse – photos, job boards, maps, Standards

Engaging members in afternoon work requires, first of all, commitment, energy, and enthusiasm from the director and other staff. Staff must take the lead in transmitting the significance and value of these projects so that members will undertake their own participation and leadership. Structures must be set up that will clarify and foster participation. The vision of all in the clubhouse must be raised to see not only immediate needs but also the aspirations of individuals and communities for continuity and growth.