

A place to belong.

The Clubhouse approach is based on members and staff working side by side to assist members in their individual recovery and in tandem they accomplish the collective goals of the Clubhouse:

- Develop work-related interests and skills
- Improve and expand their education
- Return to paid work in the community
- Participate in meaningful social experiences
- Connect with other community resources
- Cultivate and contribute their individual talents and gifts

“ Membership means belonging; and belonging to a community that unconditionally accepts and welcomes a member is the trigger that sets into motion the whole process of transformation of self-image and self-esteem that occurs in Clubhouses. Rather than being screened, assessed, diagnosed, and assigned to groups or tasks based on your so-called level of functioning or your ‘job readiness,’ the first experience of coming to the Clubhouse is one of simply being welcomed and accepted for who you are.

Once a member begins to let in that experience of simply being welcomed and accepted, the devastating feeling of being alone in a rejecting world – that seems to be such a hallmark of mental illness – begins to loosen its strangle hold. The warmth of belonging begins to seep in around the edges and starts to thaw that hard, frozen place of aloneness.

**Robby Vorspan, Staff Member
International Center for Clubhouse Development**

“ As a member of a Clubhouse, it is very important to me to know that the day is coming when I will be able to go anywhere in the world and find a Clubhouse...Members everywhere will be assured of getting the help they need and of being treated with respect for their individual talents.

**Jackie Peckoff, Member
Fountain House, New York, NY**

How can you help?

NAMI Austin is forming the Austin Clubhouse Development Committee consisting of clinicians, researchers, consumers, and business and community representatives. They will collaborate with business and legal consultants to establish the Austin Clubhouse for mental health consumers. The committee welcomes your ideas, enthusiastic support, and contribution of resources.

If you would like to help establish the Austin Clubhouse or would like more information, please contact:

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For more information about the Clubhouse Model of psychiatric rehabilitation or to locate one of the more than 145 clubhouses nationwide or many international clubhouses visit the International Center for Clubhouse Development website at www.iccd.org.

International Center for Clubhouse Development
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Open the door

To the Austin Clubhouse for
mental health consumers

What is a Clubhouse?

A clubhouse is an alternative approach to psychosocial rehabilitation. Clubhouses seek to remove the barriers of stigma, dependency, and isolation that prevent individuals with mental illness from fully participating in the life of the community.

Clubhouses recognize members' contributions to the community and provide opportunities for relationships based on friendship and mutual concerns. The Clubhouse community is organized around a "work-ordered day" and designed to help members – people living with serious mental illness – to rejoin the worlds of work, family, and friends.

Clubhouses can help fulfill the broken promise of deinstitutionalization: helping consumers lead socially satisfying and vocationally productive lives.

Who are the Clubhouse members?

Clubhouse members are men and women of all ages who work within the clubhouse to promote their recovery from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, or other serious mental illness.

Participation is entirely voluntary, with all services delivered by members and a "generalist" staff working collaboratively. In accord with the Standards for Clubhouse Programs, developed by the International Center for Clubhouse Development, responsibility for decision-making is shared, with members and staff participating in governance, policy-making, and the development of the Clubhouse.

“Initially, I didn't want to go to the Club. However, I knew I had to make the effort to help myself. I could not bear being alone all the time. I had been a people person and I needed people around me...I tried to study everything that was going on in the Clubhouse. Could I really trust these people, this process? I have the hardest time admitting I need help and can't do it all by myself. Gradually, though, I saw how this program worked for others.”

**Patricia Mace, Member
Grand Avenue Club, Milwaukee, WI**

Is every person with a mental illness accepted?

The Clubhouse has control over acceptance of new members. Candidates who pose a significant and current threat to the general safety of the Clubhouse community may be excluded from membership. Otherwise, persons are welcome regardless of their functional capacity.

What is a work-ordered day?

The work-ordered day – the eight-hour period Monday through Friday during which the business of the Clubhouse is done – is at the core of the Clubhouse experience.

Members and staff work together in an open and collegial environment to keep the Clubhouse functioning. They prepare daily meals, operate the switchboard, publish a newsletter, run the mailroom, and orient Clubhouse members and guests.

In the specially designed Transitional Employment Program members may strengthen their skills and confidence to prepare for entry or re-entry into competitive employment.

Is a Clubhouse a boarding house?

While a Clubhouse is to be established in a permanent space, members and staff do not stay in the clubhouse overnight. Members are assisted with finding safe, decent, and affordable housing.

What else is offered?

The Clubhouse offers help with employment, health and disability benefits, housing and independent living, advocacy, personal finances, education, recreation, and makes referrals to clinicians when necessary.

Because membership in a clubhouse never expires, members and staff provide consistent case management over time, often coordinating an array of publicly and privately funded medical and social services.

How is a Clubhouse different from existing resources in Austin?

Members find a place to belong at the Clubhouse. In the Clubhouse, members can begin to rebuild the careers and relationships that have been disrupted by disabling illness.

For some, the productive routine and welcoming community of the Clubhouse promote a degree of self-acceptance and belonging considered beyond their reach from the perspective of more conventional mental health rehabilitation.

In all cases, the Clubhouse focuses on members' strengths, talents, and abilities, giving them a venue to explore and celebrate their "well selves."

For more information on the Austin Clubhouse, contact Kelly Roten at kelly@namiaustin.org.