

## THE “CLUBHOUSE” MODEL

*The Fountain House clubhouse is a place for people with serious mental illnesses to form friendships, offer and seek support, and learn new skills—without judgment or fees. Since the first clubhouse was launched 75 years ago in New York City, hundreds more have been established around the world, creating nurturing communities shaped by the individuals who benefit from them.*

### OVERVIEW

- ▶ Fountain House was founded by people with serious mental illness looking for a community of their own and continues to be oriented toward self-direction and autonomy.
- ▶ Membership is open to anyone over age 18 with a serious mental illness. Members pay nothing and can choose to participate in whatever way they like.
- ▶ Fountain House’s treatment approach is a holistic model called “social practice,” now in use at clubhouses worldwide. It brings together an intentional community of people with serious mental illness and trained professionals to aid the learning and practicing of emotional, cognitive, and social skills. The approach directly addresses the loneliness and isolation that affects many people living with serious mental illness. Loneliness is known [to increase an array of health risks](#).
- ▶ Activity in Fountain House and other clubhouses is organized around the “work-ordered day,” in which members and staff work side-by-side on the daily operations of the clubhouse.
- ▶ Members can choose to participate in every aspect of work, including preparing meals, keeping the house clean, serving on the board of directors, organizing affinity groups and social events, participating in community outreach, and collecting data for research. By participating in work that is valued by the community, members derive pride and satisfaction, which can play an important role in recovery.
- ▶ Fountain House services include an employment resource center, housing support, and outreach to people experiencing homelessness, substance use disorders, and criminal justice involvement.
- ▶ Today more than 300 locally managed clubhouses, in nearly 40 states and 30 countries, have joined forces to strengthen and expand the clubhouse model through [Clubhouse International](#).
- ▶ Most clubhouses are funded through a combination of state and local grants, contracts, and philanthropy.

### IMPACT

- ▶ Fountain House clubhouse members are 60 percent more likely to be employed compared to others who live with serious mental illness in New York. Source: Fountain House.
- ▶ A [2017 NYU study](#) found that Fountain House members had lower Medicaid expenses than nonmembers; the difference was most dramatic for those with the highest needs.
- ▶ A [2018 review](#) of randomized clinical trials found that clubhouses promoted employment, reduced hospitalization, and improved quality of life for people with serious mental illness.

### TAKE ACTION

- ▶ Start a clubhouse: [Clubhouse International](#) provides full-immersion training programs for groups seeking to open a new clubhouse in their community. According to the organization, 80 percent of groups that go through its training programs go on to open a clubhouse.
- ▶ Advocate for clubhouses: Expansion of clubhouse programs requires more consistent and comprehensive funding streams. The standard “fee for service” health care funding model is poorly suited to the clubhouse approach. State, local, and private funding sources can fill some gaps, but they often cover only specific elements of the clubhouse experience.
- ▶ Learn more: Visit [Clubhouse International](#) and [Fountain House](#) online to learn more.