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# **CLUBHOUSE EMPLOYMENT MANUAL**

New York Work Exchange  
Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health Agencies, Inc.



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***“If I have a job, I have a chance.”***

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# INTRODUCTION

Employment continues to be an often expressed priority for people living with serious mental illness. The unemployment rate among this group of people is generally over 80%. Although past and current research indicates that with the right services and supports people with serious mental illness can be successfully employed, society continues to isolate, marginalize and often discriminate against them.

Clubhouse employment programs are some of the most successful vocational rehabilitation programs in today's community mental health systems. Because of the unique nature of the many integrated services provided by a clubhouse, it is able always to meet the members where they are in their life's journey.

This manual is designed to provide assistance in understanding and implementing a clubhouse based employment system.

# **Clubhouses: Communities Creating Opportunities for People with Mental Illness**

## ***What is a Clubhouse?***

A clubhouse is first and foremost a community of people. Much more than simply a program, or a social service, a clubhouse is most importantly a community of people who are working together toward a common goal.

A clubhouse is a community intentionally organized to support individuals living with the effects of mental illness. Through participation in a clubhouse people are given the opportunities to rejoin the worlds of friendships, family, important work, employment, education, and to access the services and supports they may individually need. A clubhouse is a restorative environment for people who have had their lives drastically disrupted, and need the support of others who believe that recovery from mental illness is possible for all.

## ***“Clubhouse”***

The descriptive name of “clubhouse” was taken from the original language that was used to communicate the work and vision of the first clubhouse, Fountain House in New York City, started in 1948. As the first community of its kind, Fountain House has served as the model for all subsequent clubhouses that have developed around the world. Fountain House began when former patients of a New York psychiatric hospital began to meet together informally, as a kind of “club.” It was organized to be a support system for people living with mental illness, rather than as a service or a treatment program. Communities around the world that have modeled themselves after Fountain House have embraced the term “clubhouse,” because it clearly communicates the message of membership and belonging. This message is at the very heart of the clubhouse way of working.

## ***Membership***

A clubhouse is a membership organization, and therefore the people who come and participate are its members. Membership in a clubhouse is open to anyone who has a history of mental illness. This idea of membership is fundamental to the clubhouse concept, as having membership in an organization means that an individual has both shared ownership and shared responsibility for the success of that organization. To have membership in an organization means to belong, to fit in somewhere, and to have a place where you are always welcome. For a person living with the effects of mental illness, these simple things cannot be taken for granted. In fact, the reality for most people with mental illness is that they have a constant sense of not fitting in, of isolation, and rejection. Mental illness has the devastating effect of separating people from others in society.

“Mental patient”, “client” “disabled”, “consumer,” “user” -- these are the terms with which people living with mental illness are accustomed to being defined. The rest of society, then, segregates them according to these labels, and wholly defines them by these images. The

person with mental illness, then, is seen as someone who needs something, who is primarily a burden that needs to be managed.

The clubhouse turns this all around. Here, a person who has struggled with mental illness is seen first as a valued participant, a colleague, and someone who has something to contribute to the rest of the group. Each person is a critical part of a community engaged in important work. A clubhouse is designed to be a place where a person with mental health problems is not a patient and is not defined by a disability label.

In a clubhouse program each member is given the message that he or she is welcome, wanted, needed and expected each day. The message that each member's involvement is an important contribution to the community is a message that is communicated throughout the clubhouse day. Staff and other members greet each person at the door of the clubhouse each morning, with a smile and words of welcome.

The daily work of the clubhouse community, too, is organized and carried out in a way that repeatedly delivers this message. This is not difficult, because in fact the work of the clubhouse *does* require the participation of the members. The design of a clubhouse engages members in every aspect of its operation, and there is always much more work than can be accomplished by the few employed staff. The skills, talents, and creative ideas and efforts of each member are needed and encouraged each day. Participation is voluntary but each member is always invited to participate in work which includes clerical duties, reception, food service, transportation management, outreach, maintenance, research, managing the employment and education programs, financial services, and much more.

Membership in a clubhouse community gives a person living with mental illness the opportunity to share in creating successes for the community. At the same time, he or she is getting the necessary help and support to achieve individual success and satisfaction.

## ***Values***

Clubhouse communities are built upon the belief that every member can sufficiently recover from the effects of mental illness to lead a personally satisfying life. Clubhouses are communities of people who are dedicated to one another's success -- no matter how long it takes or how difficult it is. The clubhouse concept is organized around a belief in the potential for productive contributions from everyone, even the member struggling with the most severe effects of mental illness. Clubhouse communities hold the conviction that work, and work-mediated relationships, are restorative and provide a firm foundation for growth and important individual achievement (Beard, Propst, Malamud, 1982). In the clubhouse world it is also a strongly held belief that normalized social and recreational opportunities are an important part of a person's path to recovery.

## ***Meaningful Relationships (the core ingredient)***

The clubhouse environment and structures are developed in a way to ensure that there is ample opportunity for human interaction and that there is more than enough work to do.

Clubhouse staffing levels are purposefully kept low to create a perpetual circumstance where the staff will genuinely need the members in order to accomplish their jobs. Members also need the staff and other members in order to complete the work, but even more importantly, the relationships that evolve through this work together are the key ingredient in clubhouse rehabilitation. (Vorspan, 1986). The clubhouse members and staff as a community are charged with prioritizing, organizing and accomplishing the tasks that are important to make the clubhouse a successful place for members to move forward in their lives.

Relationships between members and staff develop naturally as they work together side-by-side carrying out the daily duties of the clubhouse. All of the staff have generalists roles in the clubhouse and are involved in all of the clubhouse activities including the daily work duties, the evening social and recreational programs, the employment programs, reachout, supported education and community support responsibilities. Members and staff share the responsibility for the successful operation of the clubhouse. Working closely together each day members and staff learn of each other's strengths, talents and abilities. They also develop real and lasting friendships. Because the design of a clubhouse is much like a typical work or business environment, relationships develop in much the same way.

In a clubhouse the staff role is not to educate or treat the members. The staff is there to engage with members as colleagues in important work and to be encouraging and engaging with people who might not yet believe in themselves. Clubhouse staff are charged with being colleagues, workers, talent scouts and cheerleaders.

### ***The Basic Components of a Clubhouse***

#### **1. A Work Day**

The daily activity of a clubhouse is organized around a structured system known as the work-ordered day. The work-ordered day is an eight-hour period, typically Monday through Friday, which parallels the business hours of the working community where the clubhouse is located. Members and staff work side by side, as colleagues, to carry the work that is important to their community. All of the work in the clubhouse is for the clubhouse and not for any outside agency or business. There are no clinical therapies or treatment-oriented programs in the clubhouse. Members volunteer to participate, as they feel ready and according to their individual interests.

#### **2. The Employment Programs**

As a right of membership clubhouses provide members with opportunities to return to paid employment in integrated work settings through both Transitional Employment and Independent Employment programs. Transitional Employment is a highly structured program for members returning to work in community-based business and industry. Transitional Employment placements are at the employer's place of business, are part time (15-20 hours per week), and include a lot of on the job and off site support from clubhouse staff and other members.

These placements generally last from six to nine months. Members then can try another placement or move on to independent employment. This program is specifically designed as a vocational rehabilitation program where a member can

gain or re-gain the skills and confidence necessary to have a job while he or she is employed in a “real world” position. The only requirement from the member to participate in Transitional Employment is the expressed desire to work.

Independent employment is a program of the clubhouse through which members, when ready, are given help from the clubhouse to apply for and acquire a job of their own. The clubhouse then provides on-going support and encouragement for the members as long as they remain employed and request assistance. There is no on-site support at the place of business for members in independent employment. All of the support is at the clubhouse.

**3. The Evening, Weekend and Holiday Programs**

In addition to the work opportunities, clubhouses provide evening, weekend, and holiday social and recreational programming. Members and staff together organize structured and non-structured social activities. These activities are always scheduled outside of the work-ordered day. Holidays are celebrated on the day on which they fall. Activities are scheduled at the clubhouse and in the community.

**4. Community Support**

People living with mental illness often require a variety of social and medical services. Through the work day at the clubhouse members are given help accessing the best quality services in their community. Help is given to members in acquiring and keeping affordable and dignified housing, good mental health and general medical services, government disability benefits and any other services they may need. Members and staff from the clubhouse provide all of this support and assistance.

**5. Reach-out**

Part of the daily work of the clubhouse involves keeping track of all of the active members. When a member does not attend the clubhouse or is in the hospital a “reachout” telephone call or visit is made to the absent member. Each member is reminded that he or she is missed, and welcome and needed at the clubhouse. This process not only encourages members to participate but it is an early warning system for members who are experiencing difficulties and may need extra help.

**6. Education**

Many clubhouse members have had their education plans interrupted by mental illness. Some have not finished secondary school and others had their university experience disrupted. The clubhouse offers educational opportunities for members to complete or start certificate and degree programs at academic institutions and adult education programs. The clubhouse also utilizes the talents and skills of members and staff to provide educational opportunities in the clubhouse.

**7. Housing**

Safe, decent dignified housing is a right of all members. The clubhouse helps members to access quality housing. If there is none available for members the clubhouse seeks funding and creates its own housing program.

**8. Decision-making and Governance**

Decision-making and governance are an important part of the clubhouse work. Members and staff meet in open forums to discuss policy issues and future planning for the clubhouse.

Clubhouses also have an independent board of directors or advisory board that is charged with oversight management, fundraising, public relations and helping to develop employment opportunities for members.

### ***Summary***

Although Fountain House started more than fifty years ago and has been replicated more than four hundred times around the world, the clubhouse concept is still a radically different way of working in the field of community mental health. Most program models still focus on assessing a person's level of disability and limiting the expectations based on that assessment. Most use teaching or treatment as the vehicle for providing rehabilitation. In a clubhouse the expectations are high and mutual work, mutual relationships, and meaningful opportunities in the community are the vehicles of choice.

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# **Clubhouse Employment Programs: Brief Overview**

## **Transitional Employment (TE)**

A TE job is a time-limited opportunity, usually 6-9 months in duration. TE positions belong to the clubhouse. In TE the clubhouse develops and maintains a relationship with the employer and provides onsite training and support with back-up coverage.

## **Supported Employment (SE)**

An SE job is an employment opportunity that is not time-limited. The position belongs to the member. There is a competitive element to the interview process. In SE the clubhouse develops and maintains a relationship with the employer and assists with job site development and training. SE jobs may be full or part-time. The clubhouse does not provide absence coverage.

## **Independent Employment (IE)**

Independent employment positions may be full or part-time, and belong to the member, who has participated in a fully competitive interview process. The clubhouse does not commit to a formal relationship with the employer or provide absence coverage. The clubhouse assists with career development, job search and job choice should the member wish it.

## **Group Placement**

The clubhouse has a relationship with the employer, and the work and/or jobs are facilitated through the clubhouse. Group placements are distinguished from 'special projects' in that members make the commitment to keep the group schedule. Members may get support from the clubhouse both on and off-site. The clubhouse provides on-site staffing.

# TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

## Transitional Employment Development Best Practices

### *Executive Summary*

- Transitional Employment development at a clubhouse is everyone's concern.
- Transitional Employment development needs to be a daily priority.
- The best employers in town are the best employers for clubhouse members.
- When approaching an employer it is best to start at the top of the organization.
- At first contact ask for "permission to send a letter" rather than trying to describe the entire clubhouse and employment program to a busy person.
- With permission quickly send the letter describing the program right away. (See the sample letter in this manual.)
- Follow up quickly again to secure a meeting. This may take several calls.
- When a meeting is arranged it is best to send two people (never more than three).
- In the meeting briefly describe the clubhouse and address common issues about mental illness.
- Quickly overview the employment program and the supports in TE for both employers and members.
- Repeatedly let the potential employer know that you are looking for only one position.
- If the employer wants to discuss the possibility of interviewing the member prior to employment, it is a good idea to re-direct this idea towards a get to know you meeting or a trial workday.
- Don't expect a "yes" at the end of the first meeting. Instead suggest a next step in helping them to get to know the program better. At minimum ask for permission to send a thank you note. This creates a natural next contact.
- After the meeting quickly follow up with the thank you note. Use the note to both show your appreciation for the meeting and to re-state your goal of a single placement, which would be tremendously important for the members as well as the whole clubhouse.
- Be creative about ways to stay in "light contact" with the potential employer. Be persistent as it often takes a long time to develop the best TE's.

The clubhouse Transitional Employment Program is one of the most challenging vocational rehabilitation programs to develop and operate. It engages the staff, the members, the board and the friends of the clubhouse in multiple roles and requires

constant energy and attention. However, years of clubhouse experience indicate that all of this work is well worth it.

***Transitional Employment development at a clubhouse is everyone's concern.***

Transitional Employment (TE) development is much like finding one's own job. As in a personal job search, the development of TE jobs is always facilitated by having personal contacts and references. While the clubhouse will often have to make 'cold calls' to employers, if the targeted employer has been introduced to the clubhouse from a friend or business associate, the chance of getting the opportunity to present the program and secure a placement are greatly increased.

Therefore it is important that all of the people involved with the clubhouse and working for its success must be involved in TE development. Everyone - member, staff, board member, parent agency staff, and friends of the clubhouse - most likely knows someone who is a potential employer for the clubhouse. When the whole clubhouse community is part of the TE development process, there are many opportunities to access personal introductions and references. TE development should be discussed regularly and openly with the whole clubhouse community, so that everyone will experience it as their responsibility.

Board members can be particularly helpful. They are usually in a position to know and interact with more potential employers than the clubhouse staff or members. It is very important that board members know and understand how the TE program works and that helping with TE development is seen as a fundamental part of board membership.

A common mistake made by clubhouses is to assign TE development as the exclusive responsibility of one staff person or to hire an employment "specialist" or job developer to acquire placements. This is rarely successful. It is much more likely that the clubhouse will build a strong employment program if people at all levels of the organization have TE development as a priority.

***Transitional Employment Development needs to be a daily priority.***

The single largest barrier to developing a strong Transitional Employment program at the clubhouse is procrastination. Developing TE is difficult work and doing it is often pushed down or off the daily priority list at a clubhouse in favor of other important work.

If a TE program is to be successful, developing TE for the clubhouse should have the same priority as making sure the rent is paid or that there is enough money in the bank to make payroll that week. TE is a fundamental part of the Clubhouse Model. If there is not a TE program than there is not a clubhouse. Therefore it is necessary to schedule, plan and implement employment development activity every day at the clubhouse.

One effective strategy is to create an employment development committee. This committee has the work of securing employment placements for the clubhouse as its only purpose. At minimum the committee should include;

- staff who are heavily involved in employment
- the Clubhouse Director
- member leaders
- interested parent agency administrators
- well-connected members of the Board (both the clubhouse and parent agency)
- representatives of the community who may not have a formal connection with the clubhouse but who want to help with the employment mission.

The committee should meet regularly (at least once a month), and identify the employers with whom the clubhouse would most like to work. There should be action steps agreed upon and written down in the meeting notes. Members of the committee should be assigned to the action steps and report on progress at each meeting.

***The best employers in town are the best employers for clubhouse members.***

When considering which employers to approach about working with the clubhouse in the Transitional Employment Program a common mistake is to start with the question “Who is likely to want to work with us?” Transitional Employment is basically a business deal between the clubhouse and the employer. Transitional Employment is not charity for the disabled. It is a “pay for work done” relationship. It is also a good deal for employers. (See Wall Street Journal article later in this manual) TE offers important and valuable benefits to an employer, including the following.

- No hiring process is needed.
- New employee training is done by someone else (the clubhouse) at no cost to the employer.
- Guaranteed perfect attendance (staff cover member absences).
- Immediate response and resolution from the clubhouse to any problems with the employee up to and including termination from the job.
- The job is done to the employer’s satisfaction.
- There is no vacancy in the position between employees.
- Giving people with mental illness an opportunity is a valuable community service and can provide positive recognition for the employer.

When beginning a development process the most useful question to ask is “Who does the *clubhouse* most want to work with?” The most successful and attractive companies and organizations in town are likely to be the best employers. They are also most likely to provide the best quality jobs, a good rate of pay, the best references for a member’s resume and the best working environment to develop confidence and good work habits and skills.

A good way to select and prioritize potential employers is to have formal and informal discussions at the clubhouse about the best places to work. This can be done at house meetings, unit meetings, board meetings, employment dinners and casually during regular activities at the clubhouse. These discussions can also help identify who in the clubhouse community may have contacts and connections at the best companies.

Some of the types of companies that have been good employers for clubhouses over the years include law firms, advertising agencies, banks, newspapers, large retail chains, government offices and hotels.

The International Standards for Clubhouse Programs call for clubhouse TE systems to have a “... wide variety of job opportunities” (standard 22e). When thinking about potential employers it is important to plan for several different types of jobs. For example a good system might have clerical, food service, manual labor, and retail store positions available for clubhouse members.

***When approaching an employer it is best to start at the top of the organization.***

The best development approach is to start at the top of the organization by calling the office of the president, CEO, or managing partner. Although it is rare to actually get this person on the telephone, it is usually possible to speak directly with an assistant or secretary. This is a much better opportunity than trying to sell the idea in a voice mail message to the Human Resources Department.

Another reason for starting at the top is that a lower level staff person would probably need to bring the idea of working with the clubhouse to the senior staff person for approval anyway. It is much better for the clubhouse to present the program than to rely on someone else to give his or her interpretation of how TE works.

***At first contact ask for “permission to send a letter” rather than trying to describe the entire clubhouse and employment program to a busy person.***

When talking to the secretary or assistant to the CEO, it is helpful to state that the clubhouse is a local program for people with mental illness and that the program helps people return to work with an exceptionally well supported employment placement program. In this first conversation, the clubhouse should let the assistant know that it is looking for only one job placement with the company and would like the opportunity for someone from the clubhouse to discuss it with the appropriate person. However, it facilitates the process to simply begin the process by getting permission to send a letter describing the program. Experience has proven that companies almost always agree to this request. Instead of trying to describe the program to a busy person who will probably forget or confuse the details anyway, the clubhouse should send a letter that succinctly but accurately overviews the clubhouse, the Transitional Employment program and includes national and international references from other TE employers who have highly recognizable names (e.g. Marriott Corporation, Shearman and Sterling, Morgan Stanley, etc.).

During this first conversation, it is important to remember get the last name of the secretary or assistant, as this will then become the lead contact person at the company. With permission, this letter should be sent right away. Using the sample letter included in this manual, clubhouses can develop letters that fit of specifics of their clubhouse.

***Follow up quickly again to secure a meeting. This may take several calls.***

The next step is the follow-up to secure a meeting. This should be a call to the contact person established in the prior call, and simply be an inquiry as to whether the CEO has received, and read the letter. This can often take several telephone calls, for a variety of reasons (the CEO is away; hasn't gotten to the mail yet; etc.) However, even if this means that the clubhouse must have many contacts with the secretary or assistant, this can actually be beneficial. By the end he or she has often become the clubhouse's ally, steering the letter and enquiry, and ensuring that it gets a response. Clubhouse experience indicates that using this process is quite successful in facilitating development meetings. However, it is also not unusual for the company to convey that, although interested, they are not currently in a position to support this kind of program. This can still be a positive response. The clubhouse needs to keep an organized record of when to contact each company again.

***When a meeting is arranged it is best to send two people (never more than three)***

This point is somewhat self-explanatory. The reasons for sending at least two are that two people are more likely to cover all of the important points about the program and can correct for any mistakes made by the other. Also with two people, the chances are increased that the CEO or assigned staff person will 'connect with' at least one of them. Three people can sometimes work too but more than that is overwhelming and can be distracting or confusing in an important conversation.

The team should plan in advance which person will lead in each part of the presentation, but should also agree that if one person is presenting, short comments by the others are OK, which makes for a more free flowing, comfortable meeting.

***In the meeting briefly describe the clubhouse and address common issues about mental illness***

An effective way to start the discussion is with a short history of the clubhouse movement, and then an overview of the Clubhouse Directory, focusing on clubhouses around the world. It is important that they understand that this one clubhouse is not just a local program, but part of an impressive, worldwide movement. This can be followed by a brief overview of the clubhouse model, and some of the things that are being done in the local clubhouse. It is helpful to have a prepared list of some of the work that members contribute to, and a few special clubhouse highlights. It is a mistake, though, to try to explain too much or to take up too much time in this description.

It is sometimes also effective to speak briefly about the new generation of psychiatric medications, which have been effective for so many clubhouse members. People using these medications report that they are now much more focused, free of side effects, and

comfortable. Sometimes these short discussions will put to rest some of the imagined risks in the program.

***Quickly overview the supports in TE, for both employers and members.***

The clubhouse team should then give an overview of the supports for TE, for both members and employers. It is very helpful to have a paper or brochure with this information, both for future reference, or as a pass along for their colleagues. (See example later in this manual)

Again, the process is greatly facilitated if the clubhouse team repeatedly lets the potential employer know that they are looking for only one position. It is easy to be enthusiastic about all sorts of potential jobs within the company that may be discussed. However, it is important to stress that the clubhouse is only looking for one position. Talking about multiple positions, even if he or she brings it up, could cost the clubhouse its chance.

When discussing possible positions it is sometimes a good idea to “seed the thinking” of the employers by suggesting the types of work a member could do. One way to do this is with pictures of members working on TE at other companies and describing the jobs. Pictures of members working at the clubhouse are also helpful.

***If the employer wants to discuss the possibility of interviewing the member prior to employment, it is a good idea to re-direct this idea towards a get-to-know-you meeting or a trial workday.***

An issue that often comes up in the discussion is whether or not the employer will be able to interview or screen the members who will work in the placement. The clubhouse team might suggest a get-to-know-you meeting instead of a competitive interview. They might also suggest a trial workday, with employment back dated if the member proceeds through personnel.

Another common issue brought up by the employer is whether they would be able to hire permanently members that they like. The clubhouse team can enthusiastically note that it is not uncommon for employers to be so pleased with the work of clubhouse members that they do want them to stay. However, it is important to stress from the outset that the clubhouse’s greatest need is for time-limited TE positions, which give many members the opportunity to work the job.

***Don’t expect a “yes” at the end of the first meeting.***

Employers rarely end this meeting with a firm agreement to begin TE. The clubhouse team can end the meeting by suggesting a possible next step to help the company learn more about the clubhouse TE program. One strong strategy is to suggest a visit to an existing employer (rather than a visit to the clubhouse), where they can meet a working member, and talk with business people who support the program. At the end of the meeting, it is useful to exchange

business cards, and especially to get employer's email address. Sending a thank you letter by email is a good way to maintain contact.

***After the meeting quickly follow up with the thank you note.***

The thank you note should express appreciation for the meeting, re-state the goal of a single placement, and convey how important that opportunity would be to the members of the clubhouse. If development becomes an extended process, as is often the case, the clubhouse should find creative ways to stay in light contact. Some might include a note about some special clubhouse development, any newspaper articles about the program, or even a special employment-focused edition of the clubhouse newsletter.

TE Development can take a long time, and it is important to be persistent in maintaining contact with each employer. Fountain House's Dow Jones placement, which has been a valuable placement and reference for a long time, took two years to develop. For the many, many members who have benefited from this opportunity, it was well worth the wait.

# **Transitional Employment: Placement Management Practices**

## **Placement Management Configuration**

There is considerable disparity in clubhouse practice regarding how placement management systems should be structured. The weakest alternative is to rely totally on one or a few vocational specialists in a referral system. This practice loses much of the benefits of clubhouse-based TE, as it does not utilize the important relationships that are developed through side-by-side clubhouse work. The practice, though, is not uncommon, because of the pressure to write grants for much needed vocational funding that include specific staff lines. In reality, enlightened funding sources should be able to appreciate that four staff doing TE twenty-five percent of their time will accomplish at least as much as one staff spending all of his or her time on TE business.

For more serious programs following the Clubhouse Standards, with the entire day program staff acting as placement managers, a common placement staffing configuration is a lead/back-up system. One placement manager is assigned primary responsibility for a given slot or group of slots with one employer. "Back-up" staff learn the job, and are available for training and coverage when the lead person is unavailable. The perception is that having a designated leader creates needed consistency for both employers and members. A lead/back-up system, however, is usually not as strong a configuration as placement management partnerships- in which two staff shares full placement responsibility.

The partnership concept follows from the following clear clubhouse goals: broadening active staff responsibility for TE; enhancing the importance of significant relationships between staff and member in TE; increasing the effectiveness of decision-making about placement practices; creating the scheduling flexibility necessary to include more staff; and consistently meeting our commitments to employers.

One of the risks of a lead/back-up system is that many back-up placement managers do not become invested in the successful maintenance of the placement. Back-up staff as a group do not develop nearly the sense of ownership that lead staff do, some having other lead responsibilities of their own, and others only involved in backing-up a slot or two.

Partnerships, on the other hand, share primary responsibility, including decision-making, on-site work, and problem solving. Given a large number of players leadership will naturally emerge, but responsibility is shared. The ideal arrangement is a fifty-fifty split of the workload, balanced out over time, but with considerable flexibility to reflect member and program needs.

Placement management partnerships greatly increase the chance of depending on significant member/staff relationships in making placement starts. This creates the many positive dynamics, unique to clubhouse-based TE, that goes beyond placing members with high employment interest and "readiness," to actively encouraging hesitant members to try placements. In the partnership model, there are two fully invested staff members saying to the members with whom they work: "Take a chance on this job and we can work on it together."

As will be discussed, there are many reasons to support working members through the day program, rather than by means of frequent visits to the TE site. With managers having very little first hand knowledge of how the member is faring on the job, it is all too easy for placement managers to miss or misread sometimes subtle employer messages, or to read things into a comment or look that are not there. Having two equally involved and knowledgeable placement partners allows them to compare notes, improve their perceptions, devise strategies to further their goals, and best respond to the employer's needs.

Staff scheduling flexibility is facilitated to a degree by a lead/back-up system, but not to the extent of placement partnerships. Besides having two equally knowledgeable people who can cover for each other's vacation, sick or compensatory time, partnerships provide better flexibility to balance out the many other competing demands of clubhouse work. Placement partners can even share half shifts for training or coverage if situational needs dictate.

A final important question regarding placement partnerships is whether they cost more staff time than other alternatives. In one sense they are slightly more costly, but in others, substantially less so. If placement management partners split a shift there is just as much staff time spent training or covering, but transportation time to and from the site will obviously be doubled. The clear advantages gained in effective decision making, member and employer support, trading on significant member/staff relationships, and scheduling flexibility, however, more than make up the difference. Clubhouses using another placement management configuration but interested in the possibilities of the partnership system, might experimentally try changing a few of their placements to see where the experience might lead.

### **Member Placement Management**

Many clubhouse programs have experimented with member placement management, and the consistent message is that it is hard to establish, and hard to sustain. When it works, however, it is a tremendous contribution to the clubhouse community and is experienced as a great achievement by the member who has taken on this difficult role.

The possibilities for member placement management to come apart, however, are numerous. The members are volunteers, and their situations change frequently, so that what worked this month or year may not work the next. Members quit placement management for many good reasons, such as to take a placement of their own, to go to school, or to work full-time. A recurrence of acute mental (or physical) illness can also interrupt the process. Nor do all of the people who have been willing to try it have the force of personality, or the teaching and communication skills necessary to make it work. The same holds true for staff, of course. But if staff can't learn to effectively manage placements, they are in the wrong job and should leave.

Exploitation also becomes a risk. Clubhouse staff are overloaded by design, and it is all too easy to compare schedules between staff and member partners and conclude that much more than 50 percent of the time, the member half of the team is freer to do the on-site work.

As in other areas of members' lives, equality and acceptance are hard to achieve--from their peers, families, employers, and sometimes, even staff. Member placement managers sometimes get messages from members in training such as: "You can't tell me what to do,

you're only a member yourself.” Or an employer might report to the member placement manager, “John is doing fine, no problems,” just before calling the staff partner with a major complaint. If a solution to this serious issue is possible, and perhaps it isn't in every case, it is going to come through perseverance by the member and a serious, conscious, educational effort by the staff. It is not enough to just sell the idea of member placement management partnerships to employers. It is also our responsibility to educate them about the 50/50 partnership, about shared responsibility, and about shared leadership.

There is another way besides educating the employer and the member who is starting the placement, however, to value and vest the member placement manager partners. It is through partner managers' communication and shared decision-making. They have to talk to each other, particularly during placement starts. If the member is struggling with the role, the staff partner should touch base perhaps even more frequently than with another staff partner.

So, although member placement management is harder and it comes apart more easily, when it works, it is clearly worth it.

## **Transitional Employment: Pre-Start Issues and Practices**

### **Screening**

One of the best opportunities for negotiating a sustainable placement comes through screening a proposed job in advance. The development staff can do screening, but it is also a good opportunity to introduce future placement managers so that they become involved early on in the set-up process, and invested in the placement's success.

It is tempting to accept a company manager's job description as accurate and complete. In reality, however, side-by-side work with the employee currently doing the job often brings out additional duties or challenges not included in the initial verbal or written job description. At the point where an employer invites the clubhouse to screen the job, they have essentially said 'yes' to the program. By withholding agreement until someone from the clubhouse has physically tried a job, it sometimes becomes possible to exempt or trade off specific duties that would cut member accessibility or create extended training requirements, and thus make the job unsustainable as an ongoing placement. Waiting to say 'yes' can also enhance the clubhouse's credibility, as employers see that the clubhouse is professionally seeking a good job match.

This practice clearly gives the employer the message that the clubhouse is not interested in taking on a job that it cannot do well. The negotiation process over new placement duties also helps clarify with employers the TE goal of securing a job that many members will be able to do over the years, and gives the clubhouse some protection from future changes in placement duties.

### **Staff Training**

Again, it is tempting to shortcut the process of having placement management staff fully master new job duties before introducing a member employee. Too often staff stumble along in teaching a new job, barely ahead of the member in training, because they didn't take the time to develop competency before starting a member. Full staff mastery of the job is also

important in terms of clubhouse credibility, and strengthens the relationship with the employer.

### **Developing Training Material**

It is rare that employers have organized training materials to assist new employees. Even the occasional company job description is often outdated, or leaves out many significant details. The most common employer training strategy is a minimum of one-on-one assistance, with instructions to ask questions along the way. This often is not the best way for clubhouse members to learn the job. It is extremely beneficial, therefore, to use the pre-start period of staff mastery of a placement to develop training materials. The many advantages to this plan include:

- an opportunity for staff to more thoroughly organize and negotiate the details of a job;
- a higher level of staff mastery of placement duties, as they struggle to clarify details;
- reduced training time, with commensurate advantages for staffing, as well as a more normalized start for members;
- an opportunity to identify the full name, and thus initiate positive relations with, every employee who significantly relates to the position;
- higher confidence for members in the competency of placement managers as an ongoing resource for placement details and adjustment issues;
- consistency in teaching job details by several placement managers;
- a positive impression by employers for the professionalism and seriousness of our training effort;
- higher confidence for the member that even when training is ended, they have written information on the job should they forget key details;
- facilitation of future staff coverage should both placement managers be absent;
- the efficiency of using training materials for many future starts.

A key tool for developing effective training materials is a computer. Succinct, clear and useful job details are seldom achieved in a first draft. Developing written (and graphic) materials using a computer provides the chance to refine ideas, as well as ease in printing updated copies. Clubhouses that do not have access to computers can submit grant applications to either State VR or OMH agencies for a computer, printer and software for

training material development. These proposals are attractive and often funded, because they have the benefit of being useful for both educational and vocational goals. Or, computer hardware and software can be added to a broader employment grant proposal. The potential for member contributions to develop, update, print and bind training aids further adds to the attraction for funding sources.

Placement training materials must be easy to update, reproduce, and use, and in a form that is relatively durable. Having computer-based training materials meets the first two requirements. The most useful and efficient placement training materials are printed on 3x5” cards and bound by unit members into books with plastic pockets, obtainable in any office supply store. Some clubhouses bind these materials using a Velabinder, purchased under a special grant application (education and employment) to State VR agencies. Such “detail cards” fit in shirt pockets and are (relatively) indestructible.

The example on the right shows the cover sheet of a detail card, which identifies general job information such as names of supervisors and co-workers, telephone numbers and addresses, and contact information for placement managers. Names are particularly helpful since job start anxieties are common and establishing positive relationships is a challenge which is, for both members and placement managers, significantly helped by learning people’s names early on. Additional detail card pages will vary in the amount of information they contain, depending on the complexity of the job and the degree to which it lends itself to written and graphic clarification. However, it is important not to detail too much written information. It tends to be harder to update, can hide key information, and is less likely to be used. Training material is a supplement, not a substitute for training.

Other possibilities for detail card information include paydays and procedures, public transportation routes, work and break schedules, delivery routes, and office seating arrangements. Besides assisting with initial learning, the member is also relieved of the concern that he or she will forget details after placement managers end training.

Developing effective training materials for TE is an investment in time and energy. Those realities are definitely limiting factors in staff’s often-pressured jobs. Clubhouses that

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spend the time to develop and update training materials find that it much more than pays back the effort, particularly in reduced training time, increased member confidence, and strengthened employer relations.

## **Member Selection**

This is a difficult, sometimes controversial issue in the clubhouse movement. Probably not a single clubhouse worldwide has enough placements on an ongoing basis to meet the vocational interests and needs of all of its members. Although some clubhouses may approach that point with seasonal surges in placement availability, on a year round basis, it is much more difficult. When placing members, therefore, there will be issues of consistency and fairness, inclusiveness, forgiveness of failure, and the appropriateness of the job match. The following are some of the alternatives that have been tried by different clubhouses.

### **A Senior Staff Decides**

Executive or Program Director, TE Coordinator or whomever, this is a process where some higher authority decides which member gets which placement. It is a system that is fraught with problems. In a substantial TE system, no authority figure will even approach knowing all of the jobs, and thus reasonable job matches, reflecting the subtleties of duties and employer relations, will too often be missed. Even with the most thoughtful and experienced decision maker, favoritism can too easily at least appear to develop. Sometimes placement managers conclude that members they don't believe make sense for a job is being forced upon them. In its extreme, this can lead to staff subverting the member's opportunity.

### **Decision by Committee**

All of the problems noted above regarding decision by authority apply, although more participants and input are appropriately built into the system. An additional problem, however, is that it is too easy to end up exerting a destructive influence, on the member and the whole clubhouse, as a result of covert disagreement among the committee members -- too much politics.

### **First -Come, First -Served**

This system has the attraction of being more equal, and that is certainly a goal that carries weight in clubhouse ethics. However, this approach doesn't work very well operationally. An example of first-come, first-served would be the use of a chronological list of members who have indicated their interest in a placement, with the person who has waited the longest being given the first opportunity to accept the next available opening, and staying at the top of the list until getting a job. This strategy reflects the view of TE among many non-clubhouse writers that all placements are simple, unattractive (usually only implied), and able to be done by anyone with a willingness to work. Clearly, this is not the case.

In fact, diversified clubhouse TE systems offer placement opportunities in a wide range of sophistication of duties, settings, pay, and even prerequisite skills - including some typing or computer literacy. There is also a broad range in the level of responsibility to be found in most placement systems with a dozen slots or more. It makes no sense for someone close to full-time, independent employment and ready for a complex Office Assistant placement to tie up a very high access, hard to find slot sorting proxies nine hours a week in a fully staffed group placement, because he or she wants immediate income. Nor does it make sense for a

struggling member who actually needs that fully staffed group placement and its supports to take the Office Assistant position because he or she wants the higher wages, and came up first on the list.

Inclusiveness in TE selection is also an evolving process and ongoing challenge with employers, and is seldom fully achieved early in the relationship. Employer's perceptions of the appropriateness of our placement selections evolve over time. They are much more likely to accept our taking chances on people with more severe vocational problems and thus a higher early-off rate, if we take seriously our commitments for training, coverage and problem solving. TE is very much an earned relationship, built on trust.

### **Final Decision by Placement Managers**

Although this alternative does have problems, it also has a number of attractions. Problems include some seemingly inevitable favoritism and a disparity in placement management interest in the challenge of taking on untested, previously failed, or otherwise struggling members. Hopefully, staff will also grow with their TE experience, and in fact, this often does seem to be the case.

The positive aspects of final selection by placement managers are many. Having the final selection decision gives placement managers the chance to work with members with whom they have significant relationships, most usually in their unit, but from other relationships as well. Trading on relationships helps managers to see beyond the members' obvious disabilities, to appreciate their strengths, and believe in their courage in trying. Those match-ups can be surprisingly successful, and often open the way for more daring choices than authority figures or committees are likely to make. An important difference is that placement managers are then much more vested in successful outcomes. Members are also more likely to take a chance on work with placement managers with whom they have a significant relationship, and do better with them as partners on the placement attempt.

Over the years, clubhouses have struggled with the ethical and operational problems of placement selection. It is clear, though, that a variety of factors have to be taken into consideration. These factors include: support from the managers working with the member in the unit; how long the member has been waiting for a placement; the importance of making sure new members can enter the system; and repeated chances for members who have had placements before but aren't presently working. It sometimes means supporting members who are doing well and want to keep working, who have a goal of independent employment. But it also means advocating for those who are slow to get needed opportunities. An up to date list, by unit, of members interested in a placement is a good way to make sure a placement opening review gives everyone a chance to be considered. When a clubhouse has an employment unit, unit members should be responsible for keeping the list. But when the system is working at its best, there must also be a mechanism for pursuing members who are too frightened or insecure to even put their name on the list.

Placement manager selection cannot be done in a vacuum. There should always be the possibility for all sorts of trading on relationships between staff and member leaders, with the potential for placement change plans to develop that involve a domino effect of sensibly matched placements for three or more people. It can also become a process of consensus, with broad agreement that some slots need to be reserved for more disabled members, or wide agreement that a certain placement would be a singularly good match for someone with

a special need. It is important that all placement managers talk to each other, check on possibilities, explore ideas and try to figure out ways to make it work, to do it better. Anyone (staff and members) can have input and advocate, but those with the most influence are the placement managers who are doing it, who significantly add to their workday with their placement loads. They have the most influence, ultimately, to say yes or no to a given member on the placements they manage.

Although this system does not always result in the strongest placement matches, most of them will be good and the process works well in a clubhouse culture. In this system, there is no authority figure deciding on the TE futures of every member. Of course there is the possibility of misuse, but the openness of the process keeps it strong.

### **Advance "Looks"**

There are a number of ways to help members decide whether or not to take a given placement, or, if the placement manager is actively trying to recruit them, to encourage their consideration. The first is obviously to get a job description from placement managers. Going through detail cards can help that process, as can looking at pictures of other members and supervisors at the placement site, giving them a clearer idea of the work environment and the people involved. Another good practice is for them to discuss the job with members currently working on the placement, or even with members who have recently had the job. Those steps lead naturally to an advance, on-site "look" at the placement.

Even for members who are ready to take the job without seeing it, encouraging them to defer making a decision until they visit the site makes sense.

An advance "look" at a placement is going to help resolve both the member's unwarranted fears as well as their sometimes unrealistic expectations. If traveling by public transportation, as members are not earning money for a site visit, the clubhouse should pay their carfare (as it does for staff). Generally, a half hour to an hour at the placement site is sufficient. Members should be introduced to the people with whom they would work, given an overall sense of the job, and a tour of the work area. If there is lifting to be done, a trial effort can help resolve fears or clarify expectations.

This is an excellent time to engage the member who is currently working on the placement to share in describing the job. If it is an issue with an individual member, it is important to discuss company rules regarding smoking, and when and where it can be done. It is important, though, not to take two or more members together on a deciding site visit. Having several members on this visit obviously sets them up to at least feel as if they are competing with each other for the job, which is antithetical to the whole concept and ethics of TE. Although there is legitimate concern about the efficient uses of staff time, in this instance it is better to make two or more site visits separately.

## **Transitional Employment: Working with the Personnel Department at the TE Site**

### **Relationship**

Since clubhouse-based TE requires that the members be on-the-books employees of their companies, relations with Personnel become critical to the successful maintenance of a placement. With the clubhouse's commitment to absence coverage, and the sometimes-frequent need to take one member off the job and put another one on, extended delays in personnel processing can in itself make TE so staff intensive (and expensive) that it becomes unsustainable. For long term, high access TE, it is no exaggeration to state that the clubhouse must have a friendly, responsive Personnel connection to make it work. Some Personnel Departments work well with the clubhouse from the beginning, but most require some education about the program and its goals. For these, placement managers must invest the time to post Personnel Reps on member progress, problems, placement changes, and processing needs and details. Even when Personnel relations are solid and the placement slots are relatively stable, ten-minute briefings every month or so is a good practice.

### **Processing**

In the best of all worlds, with infinite staffing resources, it could be argued that having members undergo a full Personnel processing would be the ideal, as it represents the normal way of entering employment and thus adds to the vocational experience. However, a normal Personnel processing demands close accounting of both employment and residential history, coupled with a formal interview, which can be restrictively difficult for many members and is generally unnecessary. TE is designed to be forgiving, a fresh start, so that past employment problems or gaps don't really matter, are in fact a given, and generally needn't even be listed on applications. Many clubhouse members have been homeless, or because of periods of acute illness, cannot always remember when or where they lived in the past. Because the members are part-time workers, most company benefits don't apply, and extensive personnel information on non-applicable benefits can be confusing.

Not all TE employers (i.e. some banks and the government) will allow expedited personnel processing, but where it is possible, even if it has to be introduced to the company in a gradual manner, it is preferable. Filling out applications, tax and I-9 forms can take an hour (and sometimes much more), and an hour of staff time is substantial. If the Personnel Department will allow these forms to be filled out in the clubhouse, members still get the experience of completing them, but the placement manager will be free to attend to other unit work while still being available to assist with the forms when necessary. Some employers will even waive applications altogether, requiring only tax and I-9 forms, a reflection of their understanding of the clubhouse's prerogative to choose who will be given an opportunity to try a job, irrespective of past employment success or failure.

### **Interviewing**

To a degree, interviewing can be a valuable, normalized part of the employment experience. Where Human Resource policy requires a formal interview, the principal concern is that it not be competitive, so that a member would not be denied employment based on a poor interview. Placement managers need to help new personnel representatives understand that members will have substantial gaps in their employment history, that a part of those periods may be time spent in psychiatric hospitals, and that those experiences are often painful to talk

about. Thus clubhouses ask for more of a “get to know you” interview, focusing more on a person’s present activities, such as his or her unit involvement, recent (listed) placements, or perhaps clubhouse housing. Where such interviews are required, the member should decide whether he or she wishes a placement manager to be present.

It does occasionally happen that following an interview, Personnel will reject a member. Most frequently this happens because the member had very disheveled or dirty clothing, or poor hygiene. This is clearly the error of the placement manager, who has not sufficiently prepared a member who doesn’t understand the expectations of the system. If the rejection is based on an interviewer’s perception of the member as not being ready to do the job, it is worthwhile to speak privately with the interviewer about the issue of the member’s need for a chance to try, with the possibility of failure, as a part of the rehabilitation process. The credibility of this argument is, of course, closely related to how effectively the clubhouse meets its commitments for training, coverage, and problem solving, thus taking responsibility for unsuccessful placement starts.

Obviously, the clubhouse doesn’t always win. Not every placement works out from the Personnel or Management end, but a serious effort to resolve employer related issues will often be successful over time. Clubhouses work to develop the best placement opportunities they can. This often involves a struggle to educate the employer and Personnel departments, and sometimes it simply doesn’t work. It is part of the process of building a quality, inclusive TE placement system.

### **Medical**

Some TE employers have medical exams as a part of their normal hiring process, which they expect clubhouse members, as on-the-books employees, to undergo. Medicals inevitably include a request to provide a list of medications the individual is taking, which is appropriate, since side effects can affect work performance. Clubhouses run into conflict, however, when the employer wants a diagnosis for the member’s psychiatric illness. The member might choose to share that information (but shouldn’t have to), but it would be a breach of professional ethics for placement managers to do so. It is a given that all employment referrals by the clubhouse are persons with severe and persistent mental illness. That information, along with a list of medications, should suffice. If the request is persistent, a face-to-face meeting with the employer’s human resources and medical staff, and the clubhouse’s placement staff and senior management, will usually resolve the issue in favor of the clubhouse.

### **Drug Screening**

Drug screening is not a very frequent practice among employers. But some employers do choose to screen all employees, in which case clubhouses should comply. The placement manager’s responsibility is to inform members in advance of the drugs that are being tested for and the consequences if they are found positive—embarrassment and termination.

### **Record Checks**

Again, employers who require finger printing and a record check are in the minority, but some categories of employers are mandated to do so by the government, and others choose to

check for their own reasons. Examples of the former include banks and the securities industry. Members need to understand that what is generally being sought is any prior instance of dishonesty or theft. It is possible to approach an employer in advance with a member's minor or long past legal problem and request that it be waived. It is also possible, though a lengthy process, to get a record "sealed" by the court, so that it no longer limits a member's vocational options. Occasionally, despite our best efforts, a "rap sheet" will turn up several months after a TE start, and the person will usually be immediately terminated. Unless clubhouses are consistently at fault in not screening in advance, employers are used to this occasional occurrence and it shouldn't seriously damage the TE relationship.

### **Polygraphs**

Although more of a new placement development issue, it is interesting to note in the context of Personnel that clubhouses have encountered employers who required all new employees to undergo polygraph testing. It is probably best to decline such placements, as this would be unduly stressful for clubhouse members. At best, it would significantly limit the number of members interested in such a placement to the degree that it would be unsustainable as a TE.

### **Payroll**

Because payroll processing times vary considerably among employers, placement managers should convey to members a clear idea of when they can expect their first pay check, and what period it will cover. The perception that companies "hold back" a certain amount of pay can create considerable anxiety or resentment, so repeated reviews of pay periods and practices can help resolve potential problems.

Members who have recently started a placement can also experience financial problems with delays in receiving their first check. Going to work costs money, in extra carfare, lunch and clothing expenses. It is also discouraging to be working and still be broke. Once members have started some clubhouses offer 'bridge loans,' helping members with a portion of the pay they will be receiving, with the understanding that the full balance will be settled with the first check. Although there may be occasional repayment problems, the financial reflection of someone's new employment status promotes member confidence and stability, and placement management and member relations.

## **Transitional Employment: Placement Starts**

### **First Day Training**

A good first day strategy is to tell members that they shouldn't expect themselves to learn anything that day, except to simply gain a general orientation. This type of approach takes the pressure off and provides a chance to simply celebrate the things that are learned.

Of course, different members are going to learn at different paces. One of the strong features of clubhouse-based TE is the chance for a placement manager to manage a placement for years. Over time, managers develop useful strategies for the most effective ways to teach the job. Over time, placement managers develop a good sense of where the member is in the process of learning the job, for problem anticipation, and for opportunities to acknowledge the members' accomplishments. Having started many members on the same job, the placement manager sees the process more clearly.

## Day Two and On

It helps to pick out pieces of the job to emphasize, if the job lends itself to it. It is useful to focus on the parts of the job that most of the members who have done the job learned first. Placement managers should turn over leadership as soon as the member understands a piece of the job, and encourage independent work on those parts by the second or third day. Details that are not often seen can be saved for the end of training, when the member has a clearer picture of the whole job.

There are almost always ‘job-start’ anxieties for the members, including the fear that the intended training time won’t be enough for them to learn all they need. Placement managers should respond to these common fears by offering to stay as long as it takes the member to learn the job. Often, taking the pressure off helps members to actually learn faster. After providing this kind of extra support for a while, it is time for a clear but gentle discussion of the need for them to work on getting the job down, so they can work independently.

It is important for the placement co-managers to have daily connections when training a new member, comparing notes on what’s been learned, mistakes to watch for, details yet to be taught.

Different members have different needs regarding a training schedule split between the two placement managers, but it is preferable when both placement managers have some share in training whenever possible. This arrangement sets up the relationship so that both of the managers have a sense of the member’s vocational strengths and struggles, are both perceived as having authority, and are both seen as resource people. Training is the clubhouse’s most intense connection with the employee’s supervisors as well, so shared training establishes both co-managers as responsible players, and helps both re-familiarize themselves with the nuts and bolts of the job. Splitting shifts between placement management partners can often work well for the member. Each co-manager brings a somewhat different perspective to the training experience, emphasizing different adjustment strategies, and a different way of seeing the work world. It is part of the benefit of generalist clubhouse staffing that the members benefit from the unique perspectives of so many different placement managers throughout their TE experiences.

Every experienced placement manager has also struggled with the ethical problem of the exceptionally slow learner. Sometimes both co-managers have been willing to take a chance on someone who clearly has significant vocational issues, but once into training it appears to be hopeless, with no learning apparent. The little bit they seem to get is lost the next day, or hour, or five minutes later. It is important to look back to the member’s prior TE history to see what he or she succeeded at; to share concerns with the co-manager and other supervisory staff, and see if they have any ideas. There isn’t any rule of thumb, except perhaps that the first three or four days aren’t much of a test. Into week two the co-managers might discuss calling the attempt off. As often as not, it seems, the member then gets some little piece down, so the co-managers agree to keep going. It is at times like these when placement manager partnerships count the most. If the member does, in the end, succeed, it is a wonderful victory for everyone involved.

There is another type of start that experienced placement managers will recognize: the member who doesn't take the job seriously. This member generally tends to be a faster learner, so placement managers may feel less patience with this kind of attitude. Although it may be tempting to call off the less than whole-hearted attempt, there are tactics that can be helpful. For instance, not too long into the training process, this type of member is likely to want to get rid of the placement manager and be on his or her own. The managers can simply reply that they will be glad to comply, and will leave the member on his or her own as soon as it is clear that the job is being done well.

For all starts, a training style that goes beyond "coaching" and "shadowing" to more actively taking part in the work of the department seems to work better. Clubhouse placement managers should be strong role models for a serious work ethic, and not afraid to lift or clean up or get their hands dirty. As training progresses and the member is working more and more independently, there is a risk of the placement manager appearing to have too much free time, to be working significantly less than the member on the job. Rather than taking extended breaks, reading the newspaper, or having long, non-business conversations with other employees, the placement manager can attend to other specified placement duties. Or, managers can bring along paperwork from the clubhouse. If the placement manager has to leave to accomplish other TE business while the member is working solo, it is important to explain what the business is, so that the member doesn't read it as just extended breaks that he or she doesn't share.

If the placement managers decide to end training, and yet are still anxious about how the member will do, they may be separating too early. It is easy for placement managers to develop a mind set about how long a particular placement takes to train. It takes what it takes, with each individual. It is usually better to err on the side of too much training than too little.

## **Absence Coverage**

No clubhouse staff worker wants to have to drop everything in order to cover a placement absence. Although there are often other solutions available, there are some very good reasons why placement managers should sometimes cover absences themselves.

First, the case needs to be made for why absence coverage should be a part of the TE package at all. Is it giving away more than necessary? And what do clubhouses get out of it? The following is a list of some of the reasons that clubhouse-based TE offers coverage.

- Perhaps the most important reason is that it allows clubhouses to be much more inclusive in the selection of members to work on TE jobs. Taking the burden off of the employer by covering absences justifies the clubhouse's right to give people with significant vocational problems a chance to try work. It provides the ability to sustain a "miss" rate (members who do not complete the TE) of 50% or more, and to keep that up year after year without losing TE slots. No matter who is on the placement, the job always gets done. No other programs of vocational rehabilitation make that commitment, and as a result none are able to be as inclusive.

- Effective placement coverage justifies placement expansion. All clubhouses need more placements, certainly good ones, and existing employers are one of the best places to get them. Serious training and coverage are the beginning of the path to get there.
- As a group, absenteeism is one of the members' major vocational problems. It is critical that members be confronted about the reasons that they are missing work, because it can be so significant to their working future. When staff is inconvenienced by having to cover an absence, a genuine conversation with the member about absences becomes inevitable.
- Without coverage, TE agreements will survive for a while. Clubhouses can occasionally accept an employer's statement that they can make it through the day without coverage. But consistently opting out of coverage seldom makes for a sustainable relationship. Without absence coverage, what remains is the Job Coach Model's dilemma of only placing the strongest workers, which defeats the purpose of clubhouse TE.

Of course the problem is not only *whether* clubhouses should cover TE, but *how* they can cover. With the extraordinarily ambitious vision of the opportunities and services that clubhouse programs want to provide, and the tight constraints for program staff funding, it is enormously difficult to find the time and energy to meet that commitment. Clubhouses have developed a variety of solutions. One of the most common coverage solutions is a designated fill-in system. This is one of several paid member solutions that must be part of coverage for every large placement system. The idea is to train and put through personnel an additional member for each placement, who is then available for paid absence coverage. Often that member will then become the next person to take the slot.

All paid member solutions are attractive, but the operational experience with designated fill-ins is mixed. Most members who are ready for this responsibility would prefer to have their own current placement, and it would be wrong to exclude them from consideration for a different vacancy because we need them as designated fill-ins somewhere else. Also, members (like staff) are not always willing to drop what they are doing to respond to short notice absences. With some complex jobs, evolving duties make effective, intermittent coverage difficult if not impossible. Managers and Personnel Departments also vary in their willingness to have additional members on the books who may work only infrequently or not at all. This is an especially difficult arrangement for employers such as banks, who must go through expensive record checks and drugs screening procedures. Still, it works with some placements and some members. When possible to establish a designated fill-in system, then, it is a legitimate and useful practice, but needs to be managed with care, and seldom approaches a major answer to coverage needs.

Another paid member solution is to solicit the help of a member on one half of a placement to work a double shift to cover for the other person. This method is attractive, as it fosters mutually supportive partnerships, with members building a debt between them for future reciprocal coverage. It is also the easiest solution for employers, and lets members earn extra

money and develop stamina for future full-time work. Of course mutual coverage requires that the clubhouse has both halves (or thirds) of the same job, which, although not always immediately achievable, becomes an important TE development goal. This arrangement facilitates cost effective staffing, and thus a larger placement system.

Encouraging members to consider trading shifts is another solution too often overlooked by new placement managers. Members often have more than normal need for medical, benefits, and psychiatric appointments, but with the help of placement partners, can sometimes change their hours and still make it work. This is a particularly attractive solution as members can still earn their pay, while at the same time taking responsibility for meeting a commitment to a job. Placement managers should also consider some consciousness raising with member's doctors, therapist, or Social Security representatives about the seriousness of the clubhouse's coverage commitment and the limits of staffing, and the consequent need for them to set appointments at times that allow the member to work.

Less organized, but similar to the designated fill-in solution, is the practice of having members who have done a placement in the past return to cover an absence of one or more days. For most employers, expeditious personnel processing can be done, although there is some expense. It is important to be aware of how different employers react to each of these solutions.

When there is no logical coverage option that can be paid by the employer, such as in the above examples, it is worth considering paying qualified members through the clubhouse. It does occur that a situational need for program staffing might justify this solution, and clubhouse management should consider a budget line to make possible this occasional choice.

A final coverage solution relates to the flexible nature of some placements. Filing, as an example, doesn't always have to be done during normal hours. Needed appointments can sometimes be accommodated by a change of work hours, or legitimate absences made up over the following few days. Even placement managers, when their coverage is essential, on some placements can flex the hours to best accommodate their many other program commitments.

The great majority of the time, then, paid member solutions are ideal. However, when staff do have to cover, it represents an opportunity to move forward in a number of ways. Coverage helps to re familiarize staff with the job, catch up on changes, and reminds them of the pressures the members are under every day. Coverage allows staff to touch base in a more natural way with supervisors and co-workers, have a briefing meeting with Personnel, and allows them to further develop relations with (and education of) other company employees. Staff coverage demonstrates serious concern for the business needs of the department; it invests the member's job with dignity. In addition, staff deepen their relationships with members by making reasonable absences possible. And most important, staff absence coverage adds to the employer's perception that the clubhouse has earned the right to decide who will be placed, to take chances on members -- to do rehabilitation.

Placement managers, however, are human, so the best of intentions and practices will never be perfect, and there will be times when there simply isn't a coverage possibility. Placement managers can both be on vacation, or one is in an Emergency Room with a member in

trouble, and the other is assigned to work in the evening program. These are the times that the clubhouse needs a good track record, when the credibility of past coverage performance allows for a rare exception to the coverage commitment. The critical element is a mind set about the importance of coverage, and a serious concern for the clubhouse's reputation with employers for reliably meeting the commitment.

## **Transitional Employment: Relationships with On-Site Employer Managers**

TE employer managers each have their own unique personalities and styles, and it takes experience and effort to build relationships that will work for the clubhouse and the members on the job. For the most part, clubhouses seem to find that employer managers are generally helpful and that they are invested in the success of the TE program and the member on the job. However, as with all relationships, sometimes there are problems.

One of the most challenging types of employer supervisors is the one who wants to significantly change TE. This effort may range from using the members as flex-time employees to cover for non-TE absences, asking to have members terminated for relatively minor reasons, substantially changing the job without consultation, or insisting that members be kept long beyond six months even when there is a good next step ready for them in the wings. Sometimes members will support such changes, making the situation even more difficult. In such ways, the occasional employer manager, usually new to TE, will try to treat the clubhouse as just another temp agency, which it clearly is not.

The flextime employee issue may be difficult to challenge if the member's day program involvement is minimal. Sometimes, though, a member will say that he or she doesn't want to work overtime, but is afraid to say no. In this instance, it can be helpful to remind the manager that the members have considerably greater than normal medical expenses, that the company does not pay any medical benefits for TE, and that substantial overtime can endanger their benefits and medical coverage.

Requests that members be terminated for what seem to be minor problems is of course a judgment issue, in part resting on the manager's personnel practices for other non-TE departmental employees. Members on Transitional Employment, though, are on-the-books employees of the company, not temp agency employees who can be let go with a phone call. If the clubhouse negotiates with the manager to give the member another chance (or chances) to rectify a problem, then the burden is clearly on the clubhouse to help expeditiously solve it, or to bring the issue within acceptable limits. Sometimes seemingly minor complaints are in fact a reflection of other adjustment issues like poor relations with co-workers or management, so the clubhouse may need to counsel the member about other ways to be successful as well. Clubhouses should not be too quick to take the step of ending a TE with such a manager, but clearly a placement "opportunity" that is only accessible to members without significant vocational problems is of little use for long term TE.

Substantial changes in job duties are not all that infrequent in TE, or in business in general. Clubhouses have the least influence over the structure of placements, of course, when

training is minimized and absence coverage nonexistent. Some changes in duties are reasonable and should be accommodated, but the risk for clubhouses in TE is that changes make the job considerably less accessible to members who could have previously done it. Special meetings with the employer manager around the issue are sometimes called for, focusing on the long-term sustainability of the TE relationship. It may become necessary to say “no” to the placement. Sometimes, though, it can be helpful to give the proposed changes a try, as the process of education and struggle can give the clubhouse more future leverage in establishing duties that can work.

Experienced placement managers will also recognize the active member who seeks to learn and take on more responsibility, in itself an admirable vocational asset. Rather than hold the member back, the placement manager can make an agreement with the employer manager for the member to learn additional duties, but to bring the placement back to its base duties for the next member starting. The placement manager may also have concerns that this member’s enthusiasm for more responsibility may not last, so speaking with the employer manager about that from the beginning can later strengthen the management alliance.

Rarely, clubhouses encounter an employer manager who insists that the company wants to keep the current member on the placement. The member on the job may have contributed to the problem, by building a broad perception among other employees that the clubhouse is treating him or her unfairly, by limiting the placement to six months. In some cases the placement management effort has been minimal, so that expectations have never been sufficiently clarified with the employer manager. Where the placement managers are performing well, however, they should meet with the member, discuss the clubhouse’s considerable staffing and development investment to make TE opportunities possible for many members, and try to work out an agreed upon plan for a next step that makes sense. Sometimes the employer manager’s request to keep a member on the job can turn into an opportunity to further educate them about TE goals and practices.

The great majority of employer managers are involved in TE because they want to make it work. Today more than ever, it seems that many business people have given up on the government’s ability to ever solve society’s problems, and are looking for a way to make a contribution beyond just charity. Many of them, then, are very open to the ‘win/win’ relationship of clubhouse-based TE. As far as how to manage TE, however, how to work with the members, and what are the features of mental illness to which they will need to be sensitive, most of them will openly admit to total ignorance. They will be looking to the clubhouse placement managers for assistance in these matters.

A common fear among new employers is that they will do something, or not do something, that will cause psychological damage to the members. It usually takes some one-on-one education to help them see that the members can take supervision, and when necessary criticism, if it is balanced and specific. Placement managers should suggest to the managers that they balance out a problem issue by also noting the things that they feel the member is doing well.

The best vocational experience is the most normal. Supervision by a good boss is the ideal way to learn how to be successful in the world of work. Sometimes, the employer manager prefers to speak with the placement manager, rather than the member. Although there will always be times when this will happen, it can confuse the relationship between the member

and the employer manager, and the relationship between the placement manager and the member.

There is sometimes a disturbing tendency among some placement managers to give the least support to the most disabled members. The assumption that 'no news is good news' is not an appropriate one in this situation. It is not fair to the member or the employment manager or supervisor, nor does it foster future TE inclusiveness for more disabled members. If the clubhouse takes a chance on a person with major problems, which in itself is fine, placement managers owe it to both the member and the employer to give special attention to how that member is doing. That includes extra phone and site visit check-ins, more frequent day program contact with the member, and closer contact with the member's unit.

Part of the problem with maintaining good employer relations is placement manager's guilty feelings. Being very busy working in a clubhouse, it is easy not to prioritize making contact with the employer. After weeks, or even months without a phone call or site visit, it becomes easy to continue to put it off, fearing that it will be an uncomfortable contact. Placement managers have to make these regular check-ins part of their schedule, so that this does not happen. Part of the clubhouse/employer agreement includes support for employers. TE developers commit to more than just training and arranging coverage.

Although it can be tempting for clubhouse placement managers to become embroiled in the office politics of employer management, it is always a mistake.

The bottom line for all effective employer management relations is how well clubhouses meet their basic TE commitments. If clubhouses take the needs of the employer's business seriously, particularly with effective training and absence coverage, the employer will be much more forgiving of an occasional error or lapse of good judgment. If clubhouse managers treat the employer supervisors with the respect due the boss, and work as serious employees when training or covering, then they will most often defer to clubhouse leadership in the important program issues.

## **Transitional Employment: TE To Independent Employment with TE Employers**

Over the years, there have been many hundreds of clubhouse members who, despite all of their fears and vocational struggles, have discovered that they can fit in with quality employers and be credited for good work. A good number will arrive at the decision that they want their own jobs. In a surprising number of instances, members will also conclude that a given TE employer is the place where they will be most happy (perhaps the only place), and thus, understandably, wish to seek permanent employment with that company. Sometimes, employers themselves press the clubhouse to hire members independently. Over time, the worldwide clubhouse community has come to a consensus that both members and employers should be discouraged from taking that step. This is a complex, emotionally charged issue, and deserves exploration and justification.

### **Consistency and Fairness**

One important goal of TE is to build vocational confidence. When a member is being told that he or she is doing a good job, but is not offered a permanent position when other members are, otherwise positive experiences can become disappointing and negative. In the clubhouse community, everyone should have the same opportunities and restrictions as everyone else.

### **Issues with Mixing TE and IE at the Same Company**

For decades at Fountain House, the first clubhouse (and for many years the only clubhouse), the major vehicle for developing independent employment was through the existing TE employer network. These were full-time, independent jobs, developed after a member had completed a successful TE at the company. For these jobs, Fountain House neither trained the member nor covered absences, though they did provide some crisis supports. What occurred, with a number of major employers, was that as members began working full-time, in many cases work adjustment or psychiatric problems developed, which were not easily resolved. Used to the considerable clubhouse supports associated with TE, employers would request the clubhouse's help. Often, then, members would view this approach as interference in what was in truth their own job. When the clubhouse couldn't expeditiously help resolve problems, employers were sometimes left with the painful, months-long process of termination, or with accepting less than adequate performance. These companies often then soured on the relationship with Fountain House, and in many cases, ended their TE program. Companies with long experience with clubhouse TE programs usually come to the conclusion that they prefer not to hire members directly from TE.

### **Member Interests**

If one goal of vocational rehabilitation is helping the members become as vocationally competent as possible, then the capstone step of the process is for people to discover that they can interview competitively and get their own job. Going directly from TE to "independent" employment with the same employer circumvents this experience. People have less freedom to change jobs in the future, because they have not gone through the process of acquiring a job without being "placed." Not having struggled to get an independent job, members often appreciate it less, and are less likely to make the changes necessary to be successful. Interviewing is hard for everyone, but having gone through the process makes it somewhat less intimidating.

As 'normalizing' as TE is, its operations mean that there is an ongoing spotlight on where the members come from, on their psychiatric history. Staff placement managers come and go, training, covering and visiting placement sites to check in with members and supervisors. Company awareness of the TE program grows as jobs are added. Moving straight from this TE system into independent employment in the same company often significantly detracts from the "independence" of the independent job. Despite the member's talents and contributions to the company, he or she will most likely always be known as the person with the psychiatric history. This can obviously contribute to stigmatization of the member, and even to preventing the member from being promoted to a job with greater responsibilities.

Less frequently, but often enough to note, independently employed members at a company may give the message to other employees that they don't like a new member being placed on

a TE, that this person did such and such at the clubhouse, or has had unsuccessful prior placements. This insider's information contradicts the "fresh chance" ethics of non-competitive TE placements.

### **Compromise**

If members wishing to go full-time with TE employers were only an occasional event, any restriction would seem unnecessary or unreasonable. In actual fact, though, at clubhouses around the world the issue arises regularly. In reality, clubhouses are not in a position to tell members that they cannot accept independent jobs at the place of their TE placements. Members are citizens, and the employers by and large are representatives of free enterprise. The clubhouse can make the argument that it is not in the TE program's best interest, in the member's personal vocational interest, nor in the employer's best interest. But clubhouse TE programs can only offer arguments and opinions, based on experience.

Many clubhouses have come to a compromise solution. The clubhouse requests that rather than going straight from TE to IE in the same company, that members (with clubhouse assistance if needed) go through the competitive interviewing process, and get a job separate from the clubhouse TE employers. Then, six months or so down the road, having established their ability to work independently, they are welcome to reapply to the company where they had worked a TE. This compromise solution seems to mitigate most of the compelling reasons not to have members move directly from TE to IE in the same company.

In truth, companies are going to sometimes fall in love with members, and members are going to feel the same about TE employers. Sometimes the company will listen to the clubhouse argument and go ahead and hire the member anyway. Beyond sharing the clubhouse's past experience and concerns, there is nothing the clubhouse can or should do. However, it is very important for clubhouses to openly and clearly express the clubhouse policy about this issue to all concerned, early on in the process. When employers are new to TE, the development team should clarify the clubhouse's stance on this issue. Members should be made aware of the issue and the clubhouse response to it. It is important for clubhouses to make their opinion heard on this issue, because the failure to do so has the potential to weaken vocational outcomes for members.

## **A Brief Description of a Transitional Employment Relationship between a Clubhouse and an Employer**

- Clubhouse staff learn the entry-level job in advance of the placement start.
- A member goes through the employer's personnel process as an hourly employee, but as a part-time worker, does not require a benefits package.
- The clubhouse takes responsibility to train starting members, adding to productivity, until all parties (member, staff and supervisors) agree that the member is ready to work independently.
- Members are encouraged to return to the clubhouse for the balance of the day, to maintain this important support system and to help them build the stamina for future independent work.
- The clubhouse guarantees absence coverage, either with the help of members already working on the other half of the job, or when necessary, by one of the program staff.
- If a member is not able to perform the job, he or she is expeditiously replaced by a new member.
- Placements usually last from six to nine months, at which point the working member moves on to a new TE, independent work, or school, and another member is then trained for the job.

The goals of TE are to help members gain work experience, build confidence, establish current references, and to thereby put them in a stronger position to fully rejoin society through paid work.

# **TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT: A “TRANSITION” INTO INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT**

At its best, Transitional Employment is a middle-ground process. It helps members move towards independence. An important part of independence is a job of one's own. Transitional Employment assists members in preparation for independent employment by:

- building vocational confidence by helping members discover and expand their ability to function successfully in various work settings, improve their work endurance, enhance existing vocational skills, and gain experience in successfully starting new jobs;
- helping members overcome unsuccessful vocational habits in such areas as punctuality, attendance, hygiene, getting along with co-workers, and accepting supervision;
- helping members explore a variety of real-world work environments and job options, therefore enhancing meaningful and realistic work choices;
- giving members current, confirmable work references;
- positioning members for full-time employment because, by currently working on a Transitional Employment placement, members are better protected from having to settle for less than their desired vocational goal because “ any job is better than no job;”
- making interviewing for independent employment easier because confidence in one's ability to work is higher, anxiety is lower, and one has current employment to discuss.

# CLUBHOUSE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

While the International Clubhouse Standards for Transitional Employment are clearly detailed in outlining the specific components of a TE program, the Standards for Supported and Independent Employment are more general in nature.

Standard # 23 says, “The clubhouse assists and supports members to secure, sustain and subsequently, to better their employment.”

Standard #24 says, “Members who are working independently continue to have available all clubhouse supports and opportunities including advocacy for entitlements, and assistance with housing, clinical, legal, financial and personal issues, as well as participation in evening and weekend programs.”

In order to define and clarify what Supported Employment is, it is necessary to distinguish between Supported Employment and Transitional Employment:

- Supported Employment is not time-limited. Transitional Employment has a specific beginning and ending while SE does not. A member may work on an SE for as long as he/she is satisfied with the job and the employer is satisfied with the worker’s performance.
- The Supported Employment position belongs to the member. In Transitional Employment, the position belongs to the clubhouse.
- There is a competitive element to the interview process. In Transitional Employment, the employer may desire a “get to know you” type of meeting with the prospective TE worker but it is not a situation in which the member is competing potentially against people outside of the clubhouse for the position. In Supported Employment, there are usually other people competing for the same job.
- In Supported Employment, the clubhouse may develop and train a member on the job, but there is no absence coverage as there is in Transitional Employment.
- Supported Employment jobs may be full or part-time. Transitional jobs are part-time only.
- In Supported Employment, the type, range and duration of supports for members may differ from job to job and may eventually cease. In Transitional Employment, staff involvement at the job always includes job training, coaching, ongoing, regularly scheduled site visits, and absence coverage.

In Supported Employment (SE) there is an agreement between the employer, the member and the clubhouse that the staff will support both the member and the employer in this relationship. Although the job belongs to the member, the employer is awarding the position based on the idea that the member can do the work and that he or she will have help from the

clubhouse. The employer can, and usually does in the early days of employment, communicate with the clubhouse staff person regarding any performance concerns. The wages should be equal to similar positions as the expectation of work performance is the same as other employees. The agreement is that the clubhouse staff will provide support as long as the member is working in the position. In the event the member and employer decide these supports are not necessary, the staff person may cease contact but this can be re-activated by the employer or member if requested.

The support may change over time. For example, at the beginning of the job the worker may need on-site support. After the member has learned the job, support may take the form of a regular catch up over lunch breaks. Support for members in supported employment is different for every member.

In most arrangements, clubhouse staff provides support for the employer by helping on-site with the orientation and training for the member on the job. They make visits to the job site to encourage and assist the member on a regular basis at first, and eventually on an as needed basis. Having regular contact (visit or telephone) with the employer to discuss the member's performance and the employer's level of satisfaction help to maintain this consistency of support.

Another feature of Supported Employment is in job development. If an employer has a position but doesn't have a clear job description or details worked out, the clubhouse staff person can help. By working the position him or herself, the staff person can help ascertain how long it takes to complete certain tasks, how to make the job more efficient and productive, and how to make sure the responsibilities of the job aren't too demanding for the employee.

While there is no absence coverage on Supported Employment jobs, the employer has the extra benefit that the clubhouse is providing additional supports that another employee would not have. For example, the clubhouse is in a position to help a member take care of certain personal obligations, such as picking up a prescription, and as a result the member may be able to return to work more quickly than another employee without this kind of support.

There are other benefits for companies to hire members in supported employment. Businesses have become increasingly aware of their role and prominence in the communities in which they operate. Plainly speaking, it is good business to be a good partner in the community - whether through allowing community organizations do fundraising car washes in their parking lots, to hiring people with disabilities, or to participating as Advisory Board members or on a Board of Directors with community organizations. Clubhouses in turn, offer productive, motivated and enthusiastic members who are eager for an employment opportunity. In addition, many clubhouses host recognition or awards banquets, and draw other media attention to employers in the community who participate in these programs. A win-win opportunity exists for many businesses to work in these partnerships with clubhouses. Some of these include the Marriott Corporation, Wal-Mart, Barnes & Noble and the Wall Street Journal.

# INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT

Independent Employment for a member at a clubhouse is just what it sounds like. It is a position that belongs totally to the member, who does not receive any on-site assistance from the clubhouse. These positions may be full or part-time. The member has undergone a fully competitive interview process. The clubhouse does not commit to a formal relationship with the employer or provide absence coverage.

The generalist staffing pattern in the clubhouse is extremely beneficial as staff are able to maintain significant relationships with members working independently, as opposed to passing them onto vocational specialists. It is common for many independently employed members to want periodic telephone contact, which provides an opportunity to simply connect again with the clubhouse or work through day-to-day issues. Generalist clubhouse staff have had the experience of working with members in the day program and in Transitional Employment, so they are well to provide meaningful counseling and support as these members move on into independent employment. In addition, as clubhouse staff share the responsibility for evening and weekend hours at the clubhouse (including employment dinners), it gives them a good opportunity to be regularly available to working members.

## **Disclosure**

Independent Employment differs from clubhouse Supported Employment in that, with Independent Employment; it is really up to the member whether or not to disclose a history of mental illness. The clubhouse can provide guidance and support in this regard, although the ultimate decision will always be the member's.

For many members this is a difficult decision. On one hand, a member may feel that it is not necessary to disclose to a potential employer that they have a mental illness. Laws vary as far as whether it is necessary to disclose this, and there are nuances and interpretations to the wording of the laws. Generally the decision will be about whether the member's mental illness may affect the ability to perform the duties of the job. Thus, the member applying for the job may decide not to disclose the illness as it may not have any bearing on his or her ability to complete the duties of the job. For many members the decision not to disclose comes down to that fact. Many members feel strongly about wanting to be judged simply on how they do the job as an employee, not as an employee with a mental illness. Members deal with stigma on a regular basis, and a new job can present a rare opportunity in which no one needs to know anything about their mental illness.

Some members, though, may feel it is best to be up front about this information. For these members, it is a relief to just get it on the table and hopefully out of the way. Even if there doesn't seem to be any specific work task that would be an area of concern, some members would rather have the peace of mind that comes from having been open and honest about the question. Each situation is best handled on an individualized basis. If the decision is to disclose, the member still needs to decide whether to do this before getting a job, during an interview, or after starting work. Clubhouses should be well versed on this topic, and have access to current literature and legal information. The general issue of disclosure can often be a great discussion for employment dinners.

# **CLUBHOUSE SUPPORTS FOR SUPPORTED AND INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT**

## **Transition Issues**

For most members who move onto full time Independent Employment, there can be some anxiety in the discontinuing of medical benefits and disability income from government providers. The transition from government services providing these supports to the member's employer providing them may be eased through clubhouse assistance in this regard.

Reporting income to these agencies is essential, to avoid a later penalty. Specific dates should be carefully recorded, including the date the government benefits stopped and the date of the first paycheck and the onset of employer paid medical insurance. It is important to keep a paper trail, including copies of checks, and letters to government agencies informing them of this change. Both the member and clubhouse should keep a copy of this documentation, if the member feels this would be helpful. Government agencies can make mistakes in determining stop dates and if this occurs, the documentation kept by the member and/or clubhouse can help significantly if a problem arises.

Many members who live in subsidized housing may also have a change in their rent when they begin independent employment, as rent is often predicated on a percentage of their income. Again, it is important to do this homework ahead of time so that the member is well informed of potential changes and has adequate means to pay the rent if income significantly changes. The rules for housing vary from country to country and state to state, and the individual clubhouse should keep these rules readily accessible within the clubhouse. Clubhouses that have established a liaison with their local housing agencies can be a strong resource in this situation.

For a member who may have initially worked a twelve-hour Transitional Employment job, moved up to a twenty-hour Supported Employment position, and then obtained a full time independent job, there can be a feeling of isolation as the separation from the clubhouse increases. As a new employee, the member may not have established relationships with other employees. The new work schedule may be such that it is no longer possible to participate in the areas of the clubhouses that previously were so important to the member. Meaningful relationships may be missing at this point, so it is vitally important that the clubhouse offers supports after hours and on weekends. While experiencing this transition, it is critical that members can still access the clubhouse and the people whom they know well.

The continued involvement of members in the clubhouse when they work independently is solely up to the member. Part of going to work independently is making new relationships with co-workers, making new friends, and enjoying the self-satisfaction of a career that is meaningful. If the member chooses to have the clubhouse as an ongoing support, this is available. Clubhouses are sometimes criticized for being an enclave, and for creating a dependency that keeps members connected to a clubhouse but not integrated back into society. However, just as Rotarians maintain their membership in an organization of people with common interests, so do clubhouse members maintain their affiliation with a clubhouse. Clubhouses encourage social integration; however, they also recognize the importance of the

meaningful relationships that helped the member to gain the confidence to seek out independent employment in the first place. In the clubhouse there is encouragement to go out into the world -- predicated upon a support network of friends, and membership in an organization structured to make this a reality.

### **Clubhouse Supports**

Clubhouse support for Supported and Independent employment takes many forms. The clubhouse community is significantly involved with each member, both in accessing and maintaining supported/independent employment. The clubhouse will engage in discussions with interested members to help them identify their job preferences, and then work extensively with them to seek a job that matches their interests, skills and abilities. Clubhouse support should include developing individual plans with members, to establish employment goals and identify the actions needed to achieve them.

Clubhouses around the world are continually developing organized approaches to meet the growing needs of members seeking supported/independent employment, and to assist members already working. Some helpful clubhouse practices include:

- The clubhouse staff/members will assist members to examine their prior TE experiences as a way to help identify a future employment path. These discussions should center on what the member liked or did not like about the job, along with feedback from the placement manager about what the member excelled at, and job-related issues that might be especially challenging.
- Establish an Employment Unit or add an Employment component to an already existing unit. Lists of specific employment related items needs to be created or added to the list of items that are completed on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. This identifies employment as a priority by the clubhouse and creates a forum for talking about jobs everyday in the clubhouse. (See “Developing Employment Work Units” section of this manual.)
- Post classified ads on an Employment or Job Board in the work unit area that is associated with employment.
- Request that local vocational related agencies fax the clubhouse job openings that they receive from employers. Ask existing large TE employers to fax the clubhouse their respective job openings and post these on the Job Board. Having companies and agencies do this provides the unit with meaningful employment related work, and gives members a competitive edge in staying apprised of current openings at companies within their community.
- Help members complete job applications in a professional manner.
- Help members complete resumes or update them. Clubhouses may also post a sample resume on their Job Board to help generate interest of members and give a concrete sample of what a good resume should look like.

- Assist members in analyzing the amount of their disability checks and how this will be affected if they accept a job at a determined wage. Analysis of this should include medical coverage benefits. These vary from country to country and state to state.
- Analysis of work incentives available through government benefit offices should be completed with members interested in a particular job. For example, in the United States, PASS (Plan to Achieve Self-Support) Plans or IRWE (Impairment Related Work Expenses) should be thoroughly researched to ascertain if these incentives are available. These vary from country to country.
- If there is interest in a job that the member needs additional education to obtain, the clubhouse should work with the member to identify steps to be taken in pursuit of this educational program. (Clubhouses have organized efforts to address the educational needs and goals of their members.)
- Discussions regarding various aspects of employment such as punctuality, transportation, proper dress, and interviewing should occur regularly within the clubhouse.
- The clubhouse may consider setting up a video camera so that members can practice their interviewing skills and watch themselves on tape, in order to develop their abilities to successfully complete job interviews.
- Clubhouses should set up a system to assist members to report their income to benefits agencies. If members can do this independently, this is encouraged. But often, this can be somewhat intimidating - or too easily forgotten - when a member is learning a new job. Having a system in place to help members report income is therefore an important function for the clubhouse. An example would be having the Employment Unit pre-type the addresses of benefits agencies on envelopes so that members can come into the unit, Xerox their paycheck, and put a copy in an envelope that is ready to be mailed.
- A regularly scheduled dinner that focuses on employment is helpful to members seeking jobs as well as to those members who are already working. Listening to the success stories of others, or challenges that other members that have gone through, can be very inspiring. This also provides members who are working and unable to attend during regular hours an opportunity to socialize with members in the evening.
- A regularly scheduled Social Program is important for every clubhouse, for all its members. However, when members are working, the separation from the supports of the clubhouse can be very difficult. Social programs that operate evenings, weekends and holidays help to bridge that gap and provide employed members an opportunity to re-engage with friends from the clubhouse.
- Facilitate a “job club” where members who are looking for work meet to develop vocational skills. Members and staff could facilitate the group.
- One way that clubhouse staff provide support for members is by making sure their transportation needs are met. This may include initially traveling on the bus or

subway with the member to the job to ascertain if there are any other concerns or difficulties. It also is helpful to know how long of a walk it is for the member to get to the bus stop and from the bus stop to the workplace. It can be very discouraging to find a good match for a job for a member only to find out a week after he/she starts that there is a very long walk from the bus stop to the workplace and that the member is tired out before the day even begins.

## **CLUBHOUSE-BASED GROUP PLACEMENTS: Current Standards-based Considerations**

As Standards-based clubhouses seek to expand and refine their employment systems, there is growing recognition of the usefulness of group placements to create employment opportunities that are especially accessible to starting members, as well as those experiencing difficulty sustaining individual placements. There are, however, Standards-based issues about this unique clubhouse employment opportunity as group placements can raise issues related to abbreviated hours and days of operation, as well as direct pay.

In general, group placements are characterized by a relatively unified task, full on-site staffing, and productivity judged for the group rather than the individual. The staff role is one of helping to set up the work, quality assurance, problem-solving and adding to productivity. That structure and support potentially make group placements the highest access opportunity in community-based vocational rehabilitation.

Clubhouses are finding that useful group placements are not easy to identify or develop. Not uncommonly they are seasonal projects lasting from a few days to a few months, or are performed less frequently than the normal 15-20 hours a week of Standards-based TE. The Standards do, however, provide for such opportunities. The language of Standard 20f is that placements are "...generally 15 to 20 hours per week," which the ICCD Faculty for Clubhouse Development interprets as requiring that at least half (preferably, significantly more) of an overall placement system is within that range.

One significant criteria in distinguishing between seasonal group placements and potentially useful, but non-TE "special projects," is whether working members are asked to make a commitment to a predictable schedule, rather than being recruited to work on a daily basis – a commitment to a schedule being an important feature of typical employment. No matter how long a seasonal group TE lasts, however, it would be true that weekly hours approaching or exceeding the 15 hour level would provide the strongest vocational experience.

The issue of direct pay, though, is more difficult. In gaining experience with group TE, some clubhouses have taken on group work that they believe could not have been developed without compromising on members receiving individual paychecks from the employer (Standard 20d). In part, that reflects the expense for employers of carrying many members as on-the-books employees, as well as competition from businesses that provide processing for a temporary, or even an ongoing group labor force. Standard 20d is clear in stating that, "Members are paid...directly by the employer." That requirement is consistent with the clear intent of the Standards to make TE the most normalized work experience possible.

Even if compromise is deemed necessary to start a group placement, clubhouses should persistently work to convert the relationship to one of individual, direct pay. One interim possibility, however, would be for a clubhouse to arrange pay through an intermediary organization, such as an auspice agency or, preferably, an even more removed organization specifically structured to process pay. The Standards are very clear that it would not be

acceptable clubhouse practice to require members to arrange for their own withholding and tax payments as “independent contractors,” or to have the clubhouse pay members directly. Central to the issue of the acceptability of lower hours and days, and, when absolutely necessary, compromise on direct pay, is whether clubhouses use such placements to serve the employment needs of members who are new to employment or, most importantly, members who without the special supports of group placements, have not been able to work successfully in the individual TE system. Without that selection focus, on-site staffing becomes an unnecessarily expensive clubhouse subsidy, and potentially stigmatizing to working members.

Carefully structured and focused Group Placements can become one important means by which clubhouses fulfill the requirement of the Standards for placements “...as a right of membership...” (Standard 20); in making “The desire to work...[being] the most important factor determining placement opportunity” (Standard 20a); for work opportunities that “...continue to be available regardless of ...failure in previous placements” (Standard 20b); and for a placement system that is “...drawn from a wide variety of job opportunities.” (Standard 20e).

## DEVELOPMENT OF ‘EMPLOYMENT UNITS’

New clubhouses often quickly want to set up as many work units as they can think of in an effort to meet the various needs of its members. The mistake in this thinking is that often, the quality of units suffers in favor of quantity of units. Having many work units, but without enough staff and the meaningful work to sustain such a unit, is a mistake. It is far better to develop fewer units, with combined tasks and roles and a lot of meaningful work, than it is to spread out too thin.

For example, many clubhouses combine their Clerical unit with Employment and Education types of activities. It is a natural fit for many clubhouses, because Employment and Education work often requires typing, gathering statistics, developing forms, record-keeping, developing information materials and phone/fax work. This parallels many of the activities in clubhouse clerical work, so combining these functions works well for many clubhouses.

So, when is it appropriate to develop a separate Employment and/or Education Unit? A useful rule of thumb is based on Standard #18<sup>1</sup> of the International Standards for Clubhouse Programs: Develop new units when there is enough meaningful work to sustain the work-ordered day and when there are a minimum of two staff that can be assigned to this unit on a regular basis. For new or small clubhouses, there simply may not be enough employment or education-related work to sustain a full work-ordered day. There are many strong, certified clubhouses that do not have separate Employment Units and yet exceed ICCD Employment Guidelines in helping their members obtain TE, SE and IE jobs.

Clubhouses that do have separate, successful Employment Units, do so as a result of need. Due to the volume of employment-related activity that is generated in a clubhouse, this function can require its own space and the attention of its own unit group of members and staff. The development of a separate, successful Employment Unit almost always comes about because of the need resulting from the natural growth of the clubhouse. Clubhouses rarely need a separate Employment Unit when they are new or young, and establishing one at an early stage is often a mistake. All units require sufficient staffing, but for Employment Units this is even more critical. Employment staff, even more than other clubhouse staff, spend a good deal of their time outside of the clubhouse - developing employment opportunities, etc. If most or all of the staff of one unit are regularly out of the building, the activity in the unit will begin to slow, and in some cases it will stop altogether. The creation of a separate Employment Unit should be dictated by one thing: need.

Clubhouses that have Employment Units often combine it with Education, as both areas are focused on members’ career development. Employment Units have daily, weekly and monthly activities - just as other units. Employment Units for the most part encompass all three employment programs – TE, SE and IE -unless the clubhouse is quite large.

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<sup>1</sup> “The clubhouse is organized into one or more work units, each of which has sufficient staff, members and meaningful work to sustain a full and engaging work-ordered day.....”

Some ideas for the work of an Employment Unit may include:

- Track the money earned by members monthly and annually, noting the dollars paid in taxes.
- Track the number of days members sustain employment, and figure out the averages. Job tenure can be measured for both TE and SE/IE positions.
- Track the number of days members provided support to other members on TE, as well as days that staff placement managers spend in supporting members in training and coverage.
- Track the number of hours spent in job development.
- Generate a regular feature for the clubhouse newspaper that features Education & Employment news.
- Create a detailed display board of the clubhouse employment system showing all the members who are working, their start dates and perhaps job titles and company names. This has many important clubhouse functions. For example, a member may be slightly interested in a job. Seeing the job board, with the name of the existing member on the placement and a short description of the job, wages, hours, and placement manager can help answer their questions and generate further interest. Job boards work much better than just having this information in file cabinets. They also create an image of what the clubhouse is about so that when tours are given, the concept of employment is always present.
- Collect statistics for all members' work activity and report back to the clubhouse via display boards and articles in the clubhouse newspaper. Information collected could include number of members working per month, wages earned, hours worked, start and stop dates.

## SUMMARY

Having some money in your pocket, a sense of self-confidence, and the feeling of being somebody who has a contribution to make in the world are all important ingredients of a successful life - not just for clubhouse members but for all human beings. For far too many clubhouse members, the stigma that is prevalent in society and other barriers in their lives have contributed to an enormous loss of human potential. According to the World Health Organization, 450 million people worldwide are affected by mental, behavioral, or neurological problems. "Most middle and low-income countries devote less than 1% of their health expenditures to mental health, which means that mental health policies, legislation, community care facilities, and treatments for the mentally ill are dismally short of resources." (World Health Organization, Basic Facts about Mental Illness)

ICCD Clubhouses devote 100% of their resources to helping members in their recovery. Clubhouses help members realize their potential, and assisting them with achieving their employment goals is an essential aspect of this process.

The International Standards that ICCD clubhouses aspire to are indeed challenging. It can be common for newer clubhouses to put employment on the back-burner because there are other areas of the clubhouse that need attention. Clubhouses will have a myriad of reasons to slow up on this development. However, despite the obstacles and challenges, for new or already established clubhouses, rather there should be just as much a sense of urgency about employment as there is about getting lunch out on a daily basis. How clubhouses do this can vary, but the most important concept is that they do, indeed, do it.

We hope that this manual is helpful to your clubhouse in developing its employment program. ICCD training bases are also tremendously valuable resources for training in the area of employment development for clubhouses. International Seminars, regional conferences and local ICCD certified clubhouses are additional resources for networking, and learning cutting edge practices. The ICCD website at [www.iccd.org](http://www.iccd.org) has a library of resource articles related to clubhouse employment. Finally, the ICCD certification process can provide clubhouses with specific recommendations and detailed suggestions aimed at strengthening the individual clubhouse's employment efforts.

## **EMPLOYMENT RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- “When a Good Deed Can Be a Good Deal” reprinted from the Wall Street Journal Article about Transitional Employment
- Sample Employment Development Letter
- Sample E-mails for TE Development
- Sample TE Employer Reference Letter
- ICCD Faculty Guidelines for Clubhouse Employment

# Reprinted From THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## When a Good Deed Can Be a Good Deal

Monday, July 9, 1990

Kathleen Orzech, vice president of personnel at First American Bank in New York, was having problems with the employees on the first rung of her company's ladder. "I wasn't having trouble finding entry-level employees. But I was having problems with their quality and attitude. There aren't many people willing to be dues-payers," Ms. Orzech says. The answer to Ms. Orzech's problem was offered by John Ingram, an old associate who heads an executive search firm. This certainly wasn't an executive-level search, but Mr. Ingram had become involved in an employment program designed specifically to bring enthusiastic entry-level employees to corporations at reduced costs.

Ms. Orzech was skeptical when Mr. Ingram asked that she take part in this program, which places mentally ill people in part-time "transitional" jobs. She hadn't even heard of the organization sponsoring it: Fountain House, a 42-year-old independent, nonprofit organization aimed at rehabilitating New Yorkers who have spent time in mental hospitals. This was three years ago. Today, Ms. Orzech is a leading booster of the Fountain House clubhouse's Transitional Employment Program. "You can't beat it," she says. "There's a work ethic. The program prepares them well." Ms. Orzech's enthusiasm for the program has led her to chair the Fountain House Employers Advisory Council, whose 16 employer-members are charged with trying to expand the employer base, which has shrunk some of late due to corporate layoffs. She also has impressed her bosses with the cost savings offered by Fountain House.

Employers that hire Fountain House participants are spared the expense of providing them with such costly company-mandated benefits as medical insurance, pension contributions, profit-sharing and vacation days. And although Fountain House participants stay only about six months at a job, employers are spared the expense of retraining, since all training is done by Fountain House staff placement managers (there are 57 in all who share responsibility for managing the system). Additionally, all absences are covered by Fountain House members or staffers.

Ms. Orzech says the first Fountain House employees had to be "forced down the throat of the mailroom supervisor." But then another job opened up three

months later, the same supervisor asked for a Fountain House member to fill the slot. The bank now has four outdoor messengers, an office assistant and a porter from Fountain House. "They are just part of us now, not any different from anyone else," Ms. Orzech says.

Katherine Kenworthy, head of technical services at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, the large law firm, is one of the newest members of the cheering section.

Cravath took its first Fountain House member, Jerry, in December of last year. "He was a model worker: never late, never absent, never complained," says Ms. Kenworthy. "And he is so smart and would quietly help out even when not asked to. We wish we could have kept Jerry, but that isn't the arrangement." Now the firm has two new fountain House members and Ms. Kenworthy is "very happy with them."

The Cravath employees' duties are varied. They work in the library sorting in-coming mail, shelving, and gluing pockets in books. They cover the firm's 13 floors, hand-delivering rush orders of articles, printouts and books, and man the conveyor belts that deliver information that can take a slower route. "They are always looking for things to do. They never chitchat, and there is no goofing off," she says in the tone of someone who has seen a lot of both in her time. "They are highly motivated and appreciate the opportunity. I highly recommend the program."

The Transitional Employment Program, developed in 1957, is the linchpin of Fountain House's vocational rehabilitation program. Members are paid market-rate wages (from minimum wage to \$10 an hour) by 31 New York employers. These vary from big law firms, media companies, ad agencies, and banks to the Bronx Zoo, the Natural Resources Defense Council, a nursing home and a hardware store.

Once trained, the members work side-by-side with employees hired the old-fashioned way in such jobs as mailroom clerk, indoor messenger, outdoor messenger, plant-care worker, news assistant (at this newspaper) and office assistant. Last year, Fountain House members earned nearly \$585,000 at 168 transitional placements.

And if an employee doesn't work out? Some members do fail in a transitional employment placement, but it is a relatively painless experience both for members and employers. Fountain House workers are assured that they will be given as many opportunities as they need to try again and succeed, and employers know that help is just a phone call away. A Fountain House staff manager quickly

Barbara Phillips

comes in and takes the member out. And if a replacement worker cannot be quickly found, the staff manager does the job

"I've tried other agencies (that place handicapped workers)," says Charlotte Pentek, director of corporate office services at Continental Insurance, "and it doesn't work without the support system." Twenty-one Fountain House members have gone through Continental's mail/shipping area and five through the legal department since July 1987.

A relatively new program for companies needing help with tedious, seasonal work is Fountain House's Enclave Program. Started two years ago, it is targeted at more severely disabled members or those not ready for more traditional transitional employment placements. Members work in supervised groups, doing such things as tagging goods at Hoffritz, sorting proxies at Prudential-Bache and stuffing envelopes at Columbia University.

When members are ready to move on to full-time employment, Fountain House staffers in the Full-Time Employment Program help them. Last year, about 50 members got independent jobs through the full-time program, a triumph announced by the ringing of a bell in the clubhouse. One "graduate" is quoted in the 1988-89 Fountain House Report: "As I was growing up, doctors, teachers, and even some members of my family thought I wouldn't work full time because of my illness. If you hear that for a long enough period of time, you start to believe it... After (The Fountain House Transitional Employment Program), I started my full-time job, and now I'm working my fifth year on the job."

The transitional employment strategy is belatedly catching on across North America. Some of the clubhouses with the largest transitional employment programs (there now are about 150) are Beach House in Virginia Beach, Va.; Gateway House in Greenville, S.C.; Genesis Club in Worcester, Mass.; The Green Door in Washington, D.C.; Independence Center in St. Louis; Lakeside House in Richmond, Va.; Laurel House in Stamford, Conn.; New Frontier Center in Everett, Wash.; Progress Place in Toronto; The Club in New Brunswick, N.J., and Vail Place in Minneapolis. There even is a Fountain House in Malmo, Sweden, the first clubhouse in Western Europe to provide transitional employment.

In a time when the phrase "mentally ill" seems linked in the public mind with "homeless" and "helpless," that is good news indeed. Hiring the mentally ill can be both a good deed and a good deal.

*Ms. Phillips in an assistant editorial features editor at the Journal.*

# SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT LETTER

March 10, 2003  
Mary Steward  
President and Publisher  
The Des Moines Register  
715 Locust Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Fax: 515 284 8042

Dear Ms. Steward,

I am writing to introduce our program, called Rainbow Center, in Des Moines. Rainbow Center is a program following the Clubhouse Model that has been successfully implemented in 29 countries around the world. The special component of the program we wish to inform you of is Transitional Employment. Our hope is to interest you or someone on your staff in a meeting to explore establishing one part-time Transitional Employment position for Rainbow Center.

A few notes will put clubhouses in perspective. The model was founded in 1948 in New York to serve people with mental illness. Clubhouses are communities in which members (program participants) work side-by-side with staff on the important work of the program, from word processing to food service to housekeeping and a great deal more. Clubhouse supports are comprehensive, working to ensure members have quality housing, access to medical services, recreational programming, education, and so on. As their confidence grows, many members become interested in employment.

The unique supports of clubhouse Transitional Employment (TE) for both members and employers ensure that it is, as the Wall Street Journal wrote, "A good deed that is also a good deal." A brief description of a clubhouse TE relationship is as follows:

- Clubhouse staff learns the entry-level job in advance.
- A member goes through the employer's personnel process as an hourly employee, but as a part-time worker, does not require a benefits package.
- The clubhouse takes responsibility to train starting members, adding to productivity, until all parties (member, staff and supervisors) agree that the member is ready to work independently.
- Members are encouraged to return to the clubhouse for the balance of the day, to maintain this important support system and to help them build the stamina for future independent work.
- The clubhouse guarantees absence coverage, either with the help of members already working on the other half of the job, or when necessary, by one of the program staff.
- If a member is not able to perform the job, he or she is expeditiously replaced by a new member.

- Placements usually last from six to nine months, at which point the working member moves on to a new TE, independent work, or school, and another member is then trained for the job.

The goals of TE are to help members gain work experience, build confidence, establish current references, and to thereby put them in a stronger position to fully rejoin society through paid work.

As references, Fountain House in New York has for 20 years had placements with the Wall Street Journal (which also does TE in NJ, London and Tokyo), the Museum of Modern Art, Newsweek Magazine, D'Arcy in advertising, and Morgan Stanley (both NY and Hong Kong). Other organizations in your industry involved in TE include the New York Post, the Village Voice, Sydsvenskan (the South Swedish Daily), and the Milwaukee Sentinel. Additional international organizations involved in TE include Tokyo Electric Power, Telstra in Australia, CNBC in London, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow, to name just a few.

As mentioned, our hope is to meet with you or someone on your staff to present the program in more detail. I will check back later this week to see if a meeting is possible. Thank you for your time in reviewing this letter, and for your interest in the many fine men and women of Rainbow Center.

Very truly yours,

Linda Oleson-King  
Director, Rainbow Center

## SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT E-MAILS

Dear Mayor Johnson and Mr. Brush:

Both Bill and I are very appreciative of your generosity in time and interest during our meeting to discuss a Transitional Employment placement for Rose House with the city of Tacoma. It was obvious to us that both of you understood the importance of the work we are doing, as well as how it could work as a positive business arrangement with the city. Although one part-time position is a comparatively narrow goal, the city would be an excellent employer for members, and a great reference for Rose House in further development in the private sector.

So thank you for the excellent meeting, and particularly for your interest in the many fine men and women in the Rose House community.

Sincerely yours,

---

Dear Carol,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with Carla and me yesterday morning. We are excited and hopeful about the opportunities we discussed regarding the Capitol Clubhouse Transitional Employment Program. Your willingness to work with the members and staff of the Capitol Clubhouse is encouraging not only for our future relationship with the Olympian, but also for our ability to foster relationships with other strong employers. One part-time position with the Olympian will help the participants who work there, and will help us in our efforts to obtain other part-time opportunities for many others who are ready and eager to gain work experience.

I will be in contact with you within the week to answer any further questions and to offer any assistance with your department managers. Please feel free to call me at the Capitol Clubhouse (356-2386) or on my cell phone (234-5678).

Thank you again for an informative and encouraging meeting. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Sincerely,

Lee Storm  
Director  
Capitol Clubhouse

# **SAMPLE EMPLOYER REFERENCE LETTER**

## **DOW JONES**

**James A. Scaduto  
Vice President, Human Resources  
Dow Jones & Company  
100 Liberty Street  
New York, New York 10288**

**March 6, 2001**

**I understand that your company is going to meet with representatives X Clubhouse about their Transitional Employment Program. The clubhouse director indicated that you might be interested in hearing how the Transitional Employment Program has worked at Dow Jones.**

**The Fountain House Transitional Employment Program was initiated at Dow Jones in 1983 and has been very successful. It has grown to 14 part-time jobs that rotate with different workers each year. The program is well supported at Dow Jones; indeed, it has become ingrained as part of the culture in many operating units (including the news departments for both The Wall Street Journal and Barron's). We find the Fountain House members to be dedicated, hard working and very effective workers.**

**If you or someone on your staff are ever in the New York area, we would be more than happy to let you visit our office and view the program first-hand. Feel free to contact me at 212-222-2222.**

**I hope that you give serious consideration to this fine program. We certainly have found it worthwhile over the past 17 years.**

**Very truly yours,**

**James A. Scaduto**

## The Faculty for Clubhouse Development Certification Employment Guidelines

The Faculty does not intend to measure employment only as a one-time look at members currently working. Rather, the Faculty seeks to understand a clubhouse's local, regional and national economic situation, to consider benefits disincentives to members working, and to give fair consideration to a clubhouse's employment history, particularly over the prior 12 months. The overall goal of the guidelines is therefore to encourage strong employment programming through the use of ambitious but achievable measures.

**Transitional Employment (TE)** -- the Faculty seeks a minimum of 25% of Average Work-ordered Day Attendance (ADA) on Standards-consistent placements, i.e., direct pay, employers place of business, prevailing wage, diversity of placements and employers, etc.

For TE, the Faculty interprets the term "generally" in Standard 22f to mean that over half of a clubhouse's placements will fall within the range of 15-20 hours of work per week. The Faculty hopes that placements with fewer hours of work per week will remain at vocationally significant hours.

The Faculty recognizes that local and even national circumstances can make it significantly more difficult for clubhouses to fully achieve the 25% TE measure.

Such circumstances may include prolonged economic recession, unusually high local unemployment, or the recent loss of placements due to negative business conditions. In national states or provinces where benefits restrictions unusually discourage members working, the ICCD has negotiated compromise guidelines or phased in achievement of the guidelines, to more fairly reflect the challenges faced by member clubhouses.

The Faculty also gives recognition and consideration to clubhouses that attract an unusually high percentage of active members on a daily basis, i.e. over 50%. Likewise, evidence of a strong, ongoing employment development effort is given consideration in assessing a clubhouse's overall employment program.

**Supported and Independent Employment (SE/IE)** --- the Faculty seeks a minimum of 15% of ADA on time-unlimited jobs, half of which have been secured in the past 12 months, and half of which are 15 hours a week or more.

For SE/IE guidelines, the Faculty seeks to establish that a clubhouse has a substantial, organized effort to help members secure and sustain jobs without time limits. The Faculty recognizes that not all members sustain such employment, and encourages clubhouses undergoing certification to document all SE/IE activity, particularly over the prior 12 months.

(revised Feb., 2003)

*This manual is a combination of previously written articles, papers, and speeches, and materials prepared specifically for inclusion here. The manual has been edited by Robby Vorspan, ICCD Editor of Publications, and includes contributions by many individuals.*