

STAFF HIRING, EVALUATION, SUPERVISION, RETENTION, TRAINING & ORIENTATION

What (if any) is the basic premise that Clubhouses need to look for when hiring and training a new staff person? (The desire to want to help others within the Clubhouse framework)

There can often be key concerns that need to be addressed with new staff. The Clubhouse supervisors, staff and members can often try to articulate and demonstrate the roles and responsibilities for a new staff person. But what if all the structure, information and modeling are not helping?

Wherever possible any difficulties should be resolved at the professional level in a spirit of partnership.

It is important to note that problems may not occur in the first few months of tenure but often become more evident as employment continues.

Things to be mindful of when taking on a prospective staff member:

1. Being part of the Clubhouse community i.e. eating lunch with the Clubhouse
2. Participation in meetings – having more important things to do
3. Disengagement from unit – relationships are suffering
4. Engage with staff only on a humanistic basis whilst taking a more generic/clinical approach to members – using psychiatric models and trying to integrate within the Clubhouse
5. Have own space and equipment that is not shared
6. Have own agenda
7. Believe themselves to be specialists – counterproductive to relationships and staff dynamics
8. Not demonstrate equality
9. Over enthusiasm
10. Socialization
11. Cathartic therapy – often time's new staff may feel that they have been on their own journey of recovery and they need to drive this as a model of rehabilitation.
12. Communication
13. Role modeling – smoking, appearance, values, conflict.

What can we do to ensure that we offer appropriate opportunities for development without compromising the Clubhouse community?

Use your contracts – if in doubt develop a 3 month conditional/unconditional contract. Much can be articulated in this type of contract including goals, supervision, etc. with the offer of a lengthier contract upon the attainment of an expected standard.

Some conditions could be that the new staff must engage and demonstrate their competencies within the work unit; take meetings with members they have developed a relationship with; get car license; no TEP's until there is confidence that they will work to the model of support and connection expected.

Regular supervision – we like to do weekly catch-up's with new staff and also discuss performance with the staff and members who either work in the unit or have started to form relationships with said new staff. It is useful in these sessions to also discuss future professional and personal development opportunities so as to offer some inspiration and motivation.

At the end of the 3 months we would initiate an appraisal system that would take the form of myself as a direct supervisor submitting an appraisal, possibly a senior staff who has worked the unit, 2 member evaluations – one will be selected by the new staff and another will be a member of my choosing who has had some engagement and worked alongside them in the unit. I would also request that the staff person also provide an appraisal on how they believe they are progressing. This would ensure that we are able to evaluate progression and development involving a representation from all stakeholders as well as ensure objectivity in appraisals.

Ensure full documentation of all supervision sessions and any incidents to date. If they involved a member or staff then try to encourage them to also do a report. I find it is useful to provide at the end of every session a list of goals for the new staff to work towards but remember to offset with any positive events that have occurred or skills developed or demonstrated. This gives the staff feedback within a positive structure. Try to develop a timeframe around goals.

Maintain regular observation – if you are unable to then brief the staff interview and development team on what to look for – use staff check lists.

Do a supervision session that includes members on the Clubhouse standards and the principles of psycho-social rehabilitation. Give concrete examples of how this needs to occur throughout the work ordered day.

Discuss articles in the staff induction manual and ask for feedback. If a training base – ensure new staff attend discussions if possible.

If there are still concerns and it is realized that the staff person in question will never be able to work competently within the Clubhouse model then it may be that they will never be Clubhouse material at this point in time of their life. At Stepping Stone we usually will offer a final lifeline – that I as Program Director and members of the interview team will work intensively with them for the next two weeks to offer greater guidance or there is the offer of finishing up in two weeks.

Need to bring copies of staff contracts and staff checklists, appraisals.