

Updated 5/2025

Clubhouse Programs

Clubhouses are free, community-based programs that provide support and psychosocial rehab opportunities to people living with mental illness. Clubhouses offer a collaborative, restorative environment where clubhouse members can find community, opportunities for employment, education, socialization, recreation, skill building and more. Clubhouses often offer low-cost meals to members.

Clubhouse participants are “members” of the program; being a member of an organization means that the individual has both shared ownership and shared responsibility for the success of that organization. In a clubhouse setting, staff and members work side-by-side to keep the engine of the program running and thriving. By participating in and contributing to the program operation, members gain confidence and develop skills to support their mental health recovery while contributing to the community. The clubhouse provides varied opportunities for members to contribute their skills, talents, and ideas to the community. Members can participate in clerical duties, reception, food service, outreach, maintenance, research, IT and much more – depending on their interests. Participation is voluntary, and members can decide how much or how little they would like to participate. Participation in a clubhouse is all about plugging in to the activities and opportunities that are of most interest to the member.

Clubhouses often have vocational programs and support members in identifying their vocational goals and finding competitive jobs in the community. Some clubhouses also offer housing to eligible members when it is available.

Clubhouses do not offer clinical services like therapy or psychiatric treatment. Members who are in treatment get their clinical services outside of the clubhouse. [Check out this video for more information.](#)

Fees

Clubhouse membership is free. One does not need Medicaid or any insurance to become a member.

Eligibility

To be eligible for clubhouse membership one must be 18 years of age or older and have a primary diagnosis of severe and persistent mental illness. This includes Major clinical depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and schizoaffective disorder. Other diagnoses may be accepted as well. Please contact the clubhouse you’re interested in to determine their specific eligibility requirements.

Becoming a member

Clubhouses usually have an application process which asks about your interests and goals. In addition, most applications require that you submit a psychiatric and psychosocial assessment from your mental health treatment team. Once received, the intake department will review your application and contact you to let you know if you are eligible and what the next steps will be.

What does membership look like? A day in the life of a clubhouse member

The beauty of a clubhouse is that it offers many opportunities and options. One size does NOT fit all. Going to a clubhouse might look like this:

When you arrive, you will be greeted warmly by a member greeter. If you arrive in the morning, you might go directly to the unit you chose to work in. When you get to your unit, you might check in with the unit leader to see what needs to be done. Early on, you chose to belong to the food service unit.

There are many tasks to be done in this unit prior to lunch, including food prep, setting tables, and setting up food service stations. You might ask others what needs doing, or you might pick a task that you're interested in and ask to do that. You've chosen to help set tables. The cafeteria is now buzzing with members and staff working together to prepare for the meal that will take place in two hours. You might chat with others while you work or learn something new.

If food service is not your thing, you might choose to be part of the clerical unit where there's always work to be done. You might enter attendance information into the computer, or you might enter survey data into a database. If you don't know how to use the database, a member or staff will assist you. And now, you've learned to use a database!

What's described above is called the "work-ordered day." This means that during the day, members choose a unit and work alongside their peers and staff to contribute to the operation of the clubhouse. Meanwhile, you're learning new things and doing meaningful work that contributes to the clubhouse community. And you're engaged with others who respect you and may even share some of what you have gone through.

After the work-ordered day there might be a music or poetry group that evening that you want to participate in.

Remember, you can come and go as you please. If you want to stay for an hour, that's your choice! If you want to relax that day and just be around others without getting involved in your unit, that too is your choice. People will encourage you, and try to include you, but it's always your choice to be as active as you want to be.

Where can I find a clubhouse near me?

To find a clubhouse in NYC that is convenient for you, click on this [clubhouse directory](#). Check the website of each clubhouse to see where they are, and what they offer.

Tips

Becoming a member of a clubhouse is an important decision. We recommend calling the clubhouses you are interested in and asking for a tour. This will allow you to see the club, figure out your travel logistics and determine if it feels like a good fit for you. You can visit as many clubhouses as you wish to find the right fit for you.

Reminder that clubhouses don't offer clinical services like therapy and psychiatry.

About NAMI-NYC

At the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC), we assist thousands of families and individuals affected by mental illness annually through free education, support, and advocacy.

NAMI-NYC offers [mental health classes](#), [Support Groups](#), [family mentoring](#), and a [Helpline](#) with translation services in 180+ languages. Our support services are free regardless of income, insurance, or immigration status. Contact our Helpline **M-F from 10am to 5pm** and we'll connect you with NAMI-NYC services or provide you with community resources that can help you take the next step in your journey.

Phone/Text: 212-684-3264

Chat: <https://naminycmetro.org/helpline/>

Email: helpline@naminyc.org