



Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition



Massachusetts Clubhouses: Resiliency and Resourcefulness in Response to COVID-19. April, 2020 (Most photos above were taken pre-COVID-19)

As vibrant employment and recovery centers that offer people with mental health conditions hope and opportunities to achieve their full potential, Department of Mental Health funded Clubhouses are used to seeing their members in person on a very regular basis – at the Clubhouse, at employment sites, at member’s homes, in local gyms, restaurants and other venues for social and wellness activities. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged Clubhouses to very quickly figure out to how to operate virtual Clubhouses; and Clubhouse members and staff across Massachusetts have risen to this challenge. Clubhouses’ resiliency, resourcefulness, innovation, creativity and dedication have produced an inspiring array of approaches and solutions to meet the needs of Clubhouse members in this new reality.

This public health crisis has reinforced what we always knew – more than just mental health “programs”, Clubhouses are communities. Members and staff may not be able to

gather inside their Clubhouse space, but they continue to connect and care for each other, holding their Clubhouse communities together during this crisis, despite restrictions on physical togetherness.

The current working motto of Clubhouses, and signs posted on some Clubhouses' doors, reads:

Our Clubhouse Building is Closed. Our Clubhouse Community is Open.

Rather than implementing “social distancing”, Clubhouse communities have implemented physical distancing, while finding ways to help members stay socially engaged and connected to their Clubhouse, and their fellow members and Clubhouse staff. What has become clearer than ever over the last several weeks is the critical role that our Clubhouse communities play in the lives of the individuals with whom they work. During this time, when members are not able to see family, friends, be involved in social and recreational activities as well as continue working their jobs, Clubhouses recognize the social isolation that members feel and how much they need social contact, support, help with finding resources, and connection to others. This has been the current and primary mission of all of the 36 Massachusetts Clubhouses – to help members secure the support they need to weather this difficult time in their lives.

The Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition (MCC) recently conducted a survey and held a Zoom meeting with Massachusetts Clubhouses to find out how Clubhouses are providing services to members at this time. Our goal was to encourage a sharing of best practices and innovative ideas on how to run a Clubhouse without walls, providing Clubhouse services both mobile and remotely. Clubhouses are doing some amazing work across Massachusetts in supporting their memberships through this pandemic. Here are just some examples of the incredibly creative approaches Clubhouses have implemented:

Outreach to Clubhouse Members

Massachusetts Clubhouses are supporting members by staying in contact with them.

- Massachusetts Clubhouses are reaching out to and helping members stay connected to their Clubhouse community in a variety of ways – though phone calls, virtual platforms, texts, and emails.
- One encouraging trend is that some members, who had not been coming in, including older members, are now actively engaged. Once we can meet in person again, we have hopefully discovered new ways to engage these members who want to be connected but can't always physically attend the Clubhouse.
- Clubhouses are asking members: How are you? What are your needs? How can we help? And staff are having conversations to help members not feel so alone. Based on feedback from outreach calls, a response is developed on how to help meet members' expressed needs.

Virtual Meetings & Conference Calls

Massachusetts Clubhouses are connecting with members via a variety of online platforms as well as with conference calls.

- Massachusetts Clubhouses are holding a daily Unit or House meeting via conference calls and/or online platforms. Some are holding such meetings twice a day (ex. at 9am and 3pm or 11am and 3pm) etc.
- Clubhouses are using on-line Platforms such as Facebook Live, Zoom, WebEx, Clubhouse Websites and Conference call services.
- Other types of scheduled online or conference call meetings offered by Clubhouses include Job Clubs; cooking classes, health and wellness discussions (which include info on COVID 19); sessions on meditation, stretching, and exercising; and group discussions on finances, nutrition, and stress management.
- Clubhouses are holding online Zoom or conference call Dual Recovery Anonymous meetings.

Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA) Meetings

Dual Recovery Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. DRA is designed to help those who have a mental health condition as well as an addiction in their recovery from both. DRA is open to those who are struggling with any kind of addiction including drugs and alcohol as well as over

eating, gambling, smoking, shopping etc. Many DRA meetings also welcome those who are supporters of DRA who wish to play a role in forming or strengthening DRA meetings an/or helping others in their recovery paths.

Some DRA meetings have chosen to hold their meetings via Zoom or via conference calls that are open for others to join the meeting. Some are only opening their meeting to their own community. To view the on-line and conference call Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA) meetings, go to the Dual Recovery section of the MCC web site: www.massclubs.org. The list includes both DRA meetings hosted by Clubhouses and also DRA meetings that are hosted by Recovery Learning Communities.

DRA Zoom Meetings Open to the public

CROSSROADS CLUBHOUSE, Hopedale is hosting 2 weekly DRA Zoom meetings

WEDNESDAY: 4pm-5pm (DRA Step Meeting),

FRIDAY: 4pm-5pm (DRA Discussion Meeting)

Meeting ID: 470 634 361

Call-in Number: 646-558-8656

URL: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/470634361>

NEPONSET RIVER HOUSE, Norwood is hosting 3 weekly Zoom DRA meetings

MONDAY: 11am-12pm,

TUESDAY: 4:30pm-5:30pm

FRIDAY: 2pm-3pm

Meeting ID: 606 073 3905

Call-in Number: 646-558-8656

URL: <https://zoom.us/j/6060733905>

FORUM HOUSE in Westfield is hosting 3 weekly Zoom DRA meetings

MONDAY: 4pm-5pm

WEDNESDAY: 4pm-5pm

FRIDAY: 4pm-5pm

Meeting ID: 244 086 6418

Call-in Number: 646-558-8656

URL: <https://zoom.us/j/2440866418>

QUINCY/FALL RIVER RECOVERY CONNECTION CENTER is hosting eleven weekly Zoom DRA meetings

MONDAY: 10am-11am & 2pm-3pm,

TUESDAY: 10am-11am,

WEDNESDAY: 9am-10am & 3pm-4pm

THURSDAY: 10am-11am & 3pm-4pm,

FRIDAY: 10am-11am & 2pm-3pm & 6pm-7pm,

SATURDAY: 11am-12am

Meeting ID: 496 068 0998

Call-in Number: 646-558-8656

URL: <https://zoom.us/j/4960680998>

COMMUNITY COUNSELING OF BRISTOL COUNTY is hosting eight weekly Zoom DRA meetings

MONDAY: 12pm-1pm,

TUESDAY: 12pm-1pm & 5pm-6pm,

WEDNESDAY: 12pm-1pm & 5pm-6pm

THURSDAY: 12pm-1pm,

FRIDAY: 12pm-1pm & 5pm-6pm

Meeting ID: 612 119 7042

Call-in Number: 929-436-2886

URL: <https://zoom.us/j/6121197042>

BROCKTON RECOVERY CONNECTION CENTER is hosting 2 weekly Zoom DRA meetings

WEDNESDAY: 7pm-8pm,

FRIDAY: 1pm-2pm (Step Meeting)

Meeting ID: 288 937 2907

For complete list go to MCC web site: www.massclubs.org

Assistance with Internet and Technology Challenges

Clubhouses are providing assistance to members who have internet or technology challenges - providing technical assistance, and helping members who do not have phones to obtain phones, or extend the limits on their pre-paid phone minutes. Clubhouses are also exploring how to help members without Wi-Fi to gain free Wi-Fi access.

Engagement in Clubhouse Work

Clubhouses are engaging members in the work of the Clubhouse virtually in creative ways, for those who would like to do this - emailing work projects, such as the newsletter, home to those with computers; engaging members in menu planning, and creating a Clubhouse cookbook; participating in gathering Clubhouse statistics; choosing the color to paint Clubhouse walls; interviewing potential Clubhouse staff; and preparing to participate in and raise money through the NAMI Mass Virtual Walk.



Employment Supports

Support for members who are currently working is continuing.

Many members who have jobs are not able to work right now because their places of employment are temporarily closed. For those who are working, providing employment supports to members is particularly challenging to do right now. However, Clubhouses are finding ways to do so, including:

- Calling members who are employed and providing support over the phone, checking in and problem solving.
- A few Clubhouses are providing Transitional Employment (TE) back up coverage and one Clubhouse is continuing to staff a group placement.
- Helping members get tax prep help from volunteer tax preparers.
- Providing benefit counseling, and assistance with filing for unemployment as member's employment statuses change.

Clubhouses are also supporting and remaining connected to employer partners, even those that needed to temporarily suspend Clubhouse members' jobs. Maintaining strong and supportive relationships with employers will help to ensure a smooth transition for members back into these jobs when this crisis has ended.

Helping members who are seeking employment is on-going.

Staff continue to help members who are seeking employment. Despite the challenges, Clubhouse staff are helping members:

- Develop resumes
- Practice interviewing skills
- Complete online job applications

- Connect to online computer classes
- Sign up for online Serve-Safe training, or prepare to take an in-person course in the future

Social Programming

Clubhouses are engaging members in much needed social activities, including:

- Sending home puzzles, art projects, cooking projects and then via Zoom or FB Live, being together while doing the puzzles/art projects/cooking projects.
- Emailing meditation and movement links to members who have Wi-Fi access and then conducting Meditation, or Moving and Grooving together via Zoom.
- Fun activities such as Scavenger Hunts, Trivia, and Music Sing-alongs.
- Dropping off (curbside) pizza dough and toppings and then being together virtually while making pizza.
- Watching Live Streamed movies together and via What's App chatting, texting with each other about the movies.



Food and Meals

Many members relied on two meals a day at the Clubhouse. Clubhouses are delivering food to members who choose to take advantage of this resource in a variety of ways:

- Staff are preparing meals at the Clubhouse, freezing them and delivering them the next day. Many deliver meals for two days at a time (curbside delivery) or deliver to some members one day and other members the next day. Others are delivering food, meals or box lunches to members who want them once or twice a week.
- Clubhouses are preparing grab and go food or meals for members who pick up the food without entering the Clubhouse, at designated times and with calling ahead to arrange this.
- Several Clubhouses have food pantries that are open with reduced hours for members to access. Physical distance is maintained.
- Clubhouses are also helping members navigate how to get food from grocery stores and other community resources.
- Clubhouses have helped some members order food to be delivered to their homes from supermarkets or food delivery services.

Care Packages

Clubhouses are preparing and delivering Care Packages for those who would like them. These Care Packages may include:

- Playing cards, DVDs, word games, art projects, cleaning supplies, toilet paper, etc.
- Donation of dog and cat food delivered to members who have pets and need pet food (or grab and go prep of pet food).
- Helping members who are homeless access clothing via donations.

Housing Supports

Clubhouses are continuing to provide housing supports in many different ways:

- Helping members who are homeless or are facing the danger of homelessness.
- Reaching out to homeless members who have been placed in new residences or secure new housing placements.
- Educating members about their rights regarding utility companies not being allowed to shut off electricity and gas at this time and providing Information about the rules around evictions, where to call for resources, etc.

Staffing Virtual Clubhouses

While the Clubhouses in Massachusetts are not open for members to enter the physical facility at this time, staff are staggering their work schedules between working out of the Clubhouse space and working remotely from home. No more than 5 staff are allowed in the building at a time. One Clubhouse is engaging specific members to join the team of 4 staff to work on specific projects in the Clubhouse.

Some Clubhouses have divided staff into teams and the two teams do not work on the same days. This is to ensure that if a staff person on one team tests positive for COVID-19 and that team needs to self-isolate, the other team can continue working out of the Clubhouse, delivering meals, care packages etc.

Clubhouse facilities are being cleaned and disinfected regularly by staff to protect those who are working there.

Stronger Together

These are unprecedented and very difficult times; and all of us will get through this by supporting each other and being strong together. The Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition will continue to partner with and connect Clubhouses throughout the state during these challenging times - helping Clubhouses share best practices, learn from each other, problem solve together, and ensure that all of our Clubhouse communities come out of this stronger and more vibrant than ever.

Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition | 617-872-0190 | Revas.maclub@verizon.net
www.massclubs.org

