



A closer look...

Crossroads Clubhouse has been a part of the Grey Lynn community for over ten years. It has provided an oasis for people who suffer the disabling effects of mental illness.

The modern catch-cry within mental health services is “Independence”. Individuals are placed in flats and houses in the general community to get on with their lives and their own recovery. For many, this is what they have always wanted. The reality, though, can be stark and startling, with no set routines or the structure of a work day. Without the ability to interact with other people in a meaningful way, people can often feel isolated.

The descriptive name “Clubhouse” was taken from the original language that was used to communicate the work and vision of the first Clubhouse, which was called Fountain house and started in 1948 in New York City. Fountain House continues to serve as the model for all subsequent Clubhouses. There are now over 300 Clubhouses in 33 countries around the world, and Clubhouse International maintains regular research into the effectiveness of this recovery model.

Crossroads Clubhouse is a membership-based organisation, 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 organisation means that an individual has both shared ownership and shared responsibility for the success of that organisation. To have membership means that there is a place for members to belong and have a place they are always welcome. For a person living with the effects of mental illness, these simple things cannot be taken for granted. Mental illness can have the devastating effect of separating people from others in society.

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 this community and is engaged in meaningful work for this community. Crossroads Clubhouse is designed as a place where a person with mental health problems is not a patient and is not defined by a disability label. This acceptance can often be the first step back to social inclusion.

The “Work-Ordered-Day” is the central feature and essence of the Clubhouse model. The Clubhouse provides a pre-vocational and loosely structured training environment where members can participate in the running of the Clubhouse. Members can assign themselves to either of the **units** which focus on the various activities that take place at the Clubhouse. Crossroads Clubhouse currently runs two working units; the Hands on Unit, and the Heads up Unit. Working in units not only helps create structure for the work of the Clubhouse and harness the strengths of its members – it also provides a mechanism to build meaningful relationships for those participating.

Furthermore Clubhouse assists and supports members to secure, sustain and, subsequently, to better their employment. Members who are working 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 the evening and weekend programmes. The Clubhouse also assists members to utilise Auckland's Supported Employment agencies and through its community outreach programme has built up working relationships with Community Health Centres, Te Whetu Tawera (the Auckland Hospital Mental Health Unit), the Mason Clinic and a range of other service providers including WINZ.

The Clubhouse has a full-time staff of four people, and a membership of over one hundred members, with a daily attendance of around 30. The Clubhouse is currently funded by the ADHB and runs under the auspice of the Arahura Charitable Trust.

For more information about Crossroads Clubhouse including upcoming events, check out our website **www.crossroadsclubhouse.org.nz** or phone us on: **09 376 4267**