

# The Effectiveness of a Clubhouse Model in Adults with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness

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### BACKGROUND

People with severe and persistent mental illness have increased difficulty obtaining and maintaining jobs as well as general functioning within society compared to those without mental illness. Additionally, many patients with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) are at risk upon discharge from a psychiatric facility due to the increased challenge of a lack of social, vocational, and transitional services within the community. Clubhouses are recovery centers that help persons with serious mental illness obtain and maintain community-based employment, education, housing, social integration, and other services. The clubhouse model, originally identified as the Fountain House model, takes a psychosocial approach to mental health recovery. Clubhouses are strengths-based, emphasize teamwork, and provide opportunities for members to contribute to the day-to-day operation of the Clubhouse.

#### The clubhouse model:

- Began in 1948 in NYC
- Funded by NIMH in 1994
- 320+ clubhouses worldwide
- Once a member, always a member
- Focuses on ability rather than illness
- Staff and members are considered equal

Despite the 60-year history of psychosocial clubhouses, there have been relatively few studies that examine the degree to which they accomplish their stated goals and identify specific elements of the clubhouse model that facilitate positive change in members.

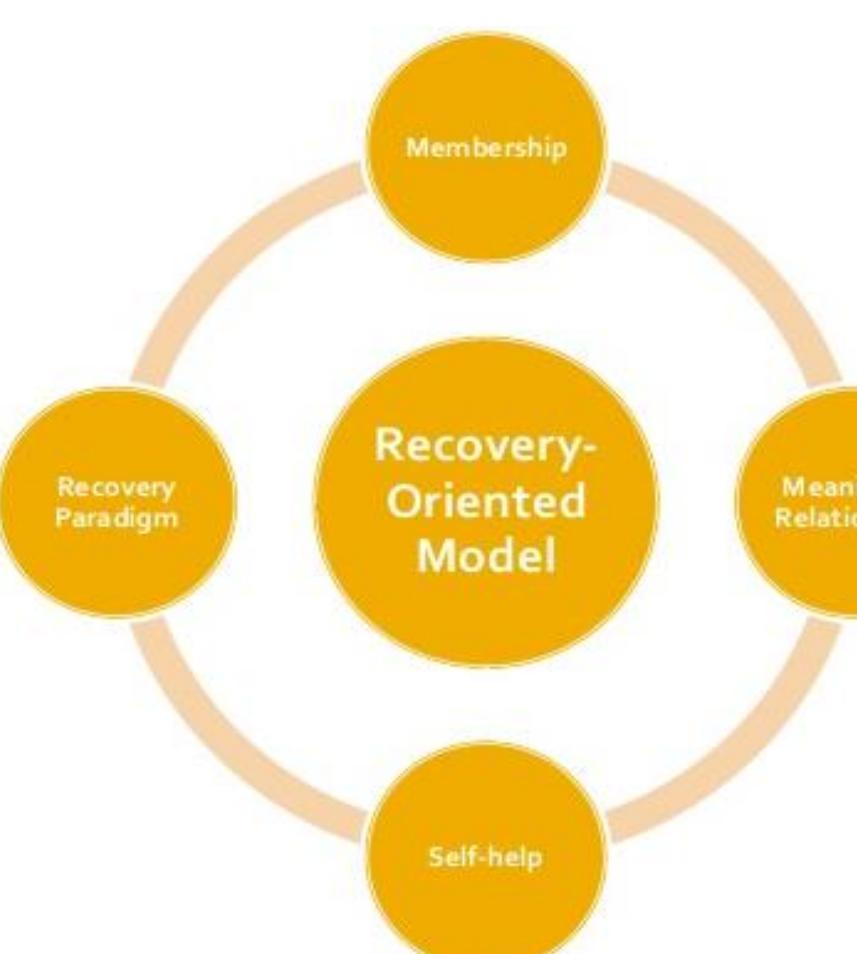


### FOCUSED QUESTION

What is the effectiveness of the clubhouse model approach in adults with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI)?

### METHODS

- A literature review was completed to gather evidence on the effectiveness of the clubhouse model for adults with SPMI.
- Inclusion criteria included all levels of evidence, articles that were written within the past 10 years, studies including adults diagnosed with severe mental illness(es), and articles that met the PIO of the focused question.
- Exclusion criteria included articles not written within the past 10 years, studies not including adults diagnosed with mental illness(es), and articles that do not meet the PIO of the focused question.
- Search engines used were Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, and research articles from Clubhouse International Organization. Keywords: adults, mental illness, clubhouse model.



Of the research conducted, 154 articles were found. Seven articles were thoroughly examined to evaluate the efficacy of the clubhouse model. One article included a systematic review, in which 52 articles were further investigated to identify the best evidence available as well as areas that may require further study. Two articles included a qualitative study; one from twelve members at an Australian psychosocial clubhouse and another from 112 members in eight clubhouses in New York City. Additional articles included mixed methods studies, randomized controlled trials and a quasi-experimental study.

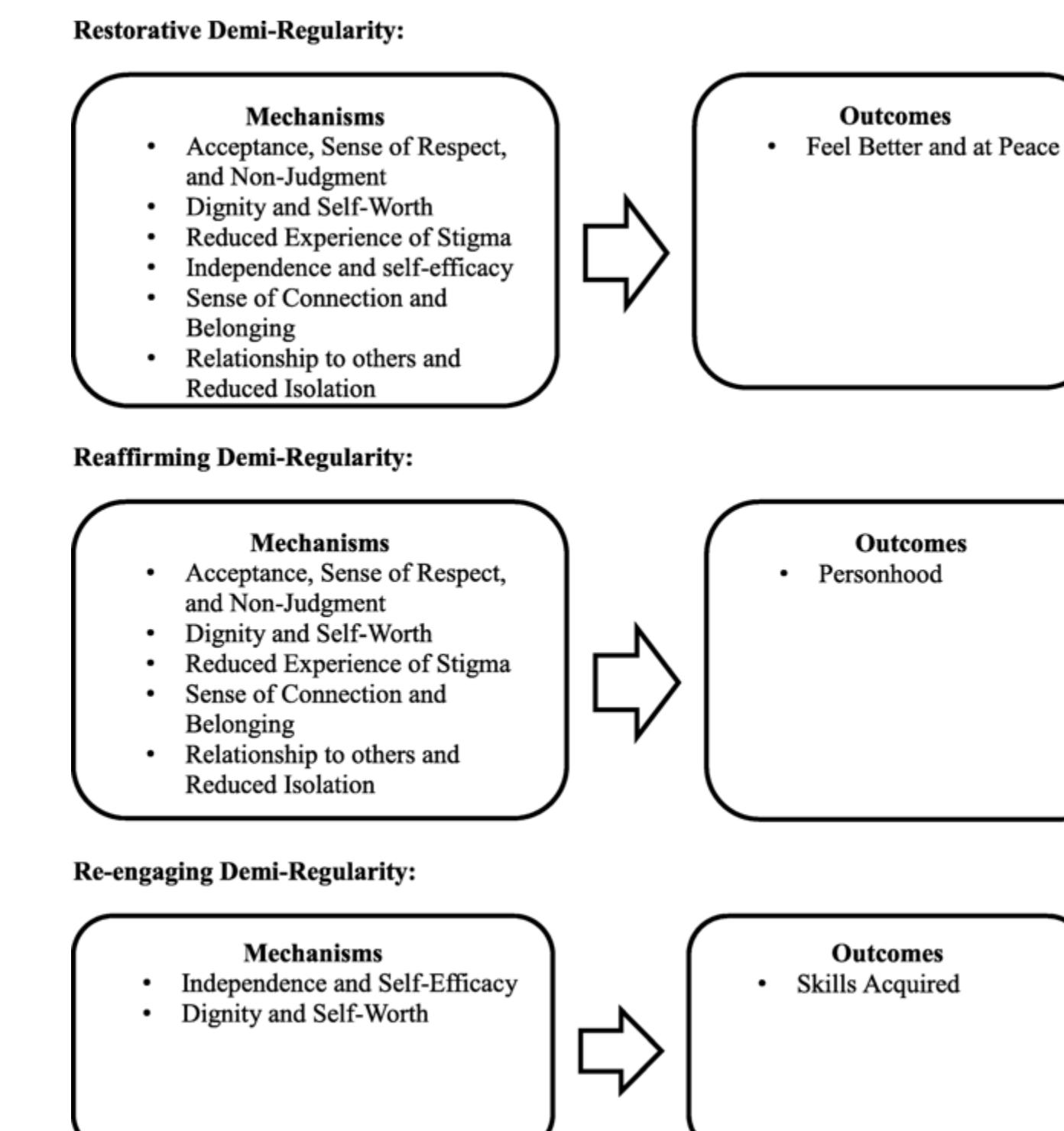


<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/pathways+clubhouse+help+builds+confidence+after+mental+health+cri sis/11615953/story.html>

### RESULTS

Findings from the research indicate that those who are active members in a clubhouse are more likely to:

- Have lower rehospitalization rates
- Feel a sense of community and support
- Be involved in transitional, supported, or independent employment
- Live in supported housing
- Higher perceived quality of life, higher interpersonal relationship scores, and lower received stigma compared to those in a rehabilitation skills training model
- Seek additional supports outside of the clubhouse
- Develop a sense of personhood (sense of connection and belonging, as well as acceptance, sense of respect, and non-judgment)
- Feel accepted, understood, and valued by others

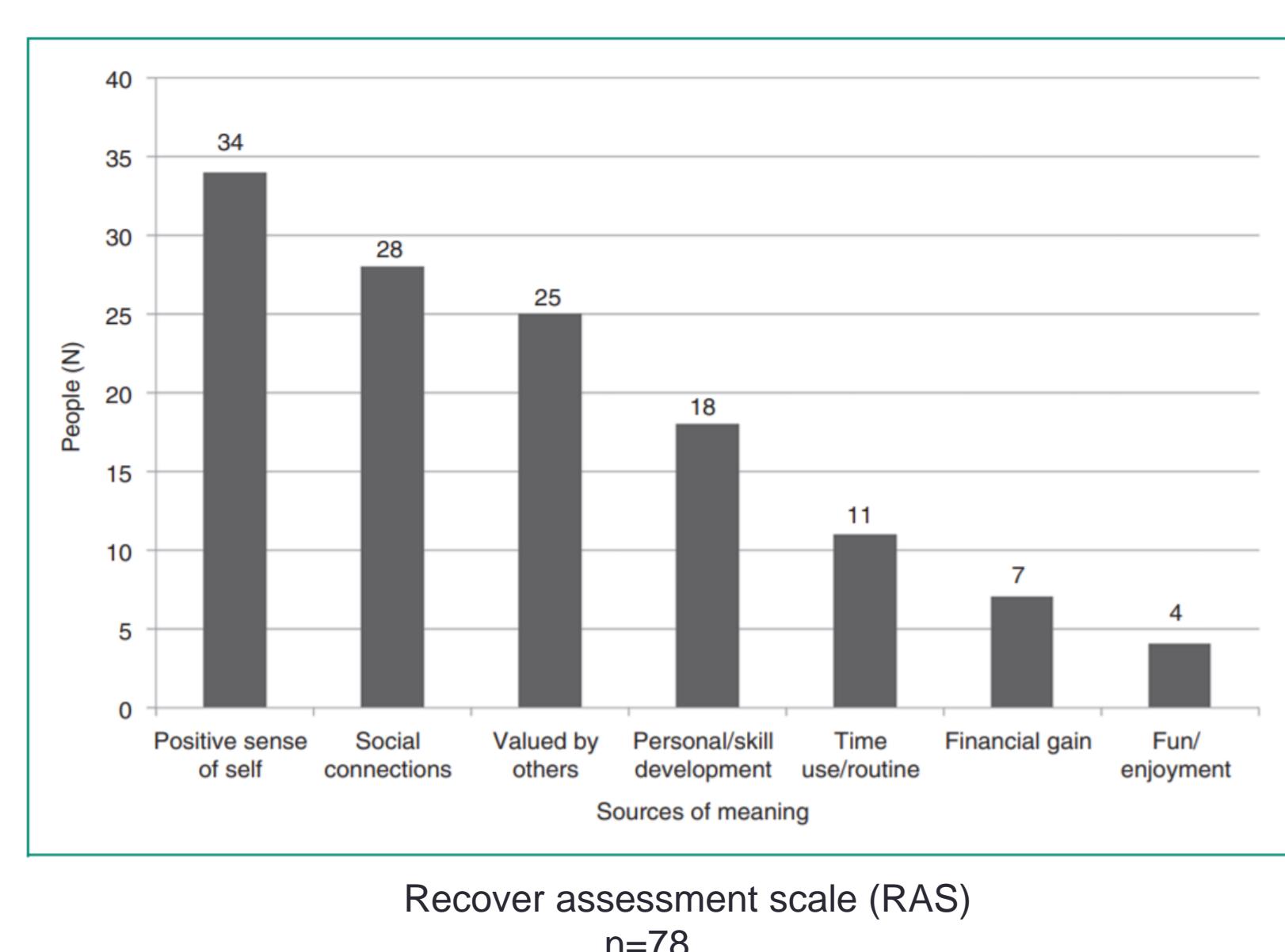


One study found that frequent use of the clubhouse correlated with higher scores on the outcome scale and that the participants responses indicated positive outcomes in all areas (experience of safety in general, thriving in general, ability to take part in the community, ability to structure the day, confidence in themselves and their resources, and participation in society).

When comparing clubhouse participant's responses to those in a rehabilitation treatment program, program of assertive community treatment (PACT), and day centers, clubhouse participants consistently showed significantly higher satisfaction scores. Clubhouses are a promising practice and the research supporting them is growing. Additional studies are necessary to provide a clearer and more contemporary basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the clubhouse model.

### BOTTOM LINE FOR OT

Meaningful everyday occupations are important for mental health and personal recovery. In congruence with the holistic approach that occupational therapists utilize, the clubhouse model focuses on improving a person's social, emotional and vocational self, and focuses on the person's abilities rather than their illness. Occupational therapy is founded on the basis that meaningful engagement in occupations provides purpose to their life, as well as supports their mental and physical wellbeing, thus making occupational therapy an essential contributor to mental health recovery (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2014). However, meaningful engagement in occupations is both personal and contextual for each individual; what is meaningful for one might not be for another. It is important for occupational therapists to understand that, for many, meaningfulness centers around interdependence: being and socializing with others, feeling a sense of belonging, giving or contributing, and being valued by others (Hancock, Honey, & Bundy, 2015).



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