



LOOKING AHEAD: IMAGINING THE CLUBHOUSE OF TOMORROW

Joel Corcoran, Executive Director, Clubhouse International

Good morning again. I hope that you are all as inspired by that opening session as I am. What a wonderful beginning to our seminar.

Today as we are gathered here in Denver I am struck once again by the unique nature of our international community.

We are here from Clubhouses in 21 countries. The room is full of Clubhouse members, staff, board members and many different Clubhouse supporters, mental health advocates and volunteers. We represent large and small countries and large and small organizations and of course people from various backgrounds and circumstances. We are unique in that we are connected by the issues relating to mental illness and a steadfast commitment to overcoming those issues through the power of a caring and inclusive community.

Today our Clubhouse International network is strong. We are now located in 34 countries with 325 unique Clubhouse communities working to change and improve the circumstances for local people living with mental illness. At the same time we are united across geographic, economic and cultural borders working as a collective force to insist that the world simply must do a better job at including, helping and valuing the lives and potential of all people who are challenged with mental health problems.

We are now in our sixth decade of demonstrating that recovery is possible when people have both the right treatment and a caring support system to provide encouragement, assistance and unending opportunities for participation and achievement.

All of the Clubhouses represented in this room and all of those that are not able to be with us this week are heroes of this life saving work. I remain in awe and inspired by the daily dedication and the gigantic accomplishments that each of you achieve year after year. We are up against what sometimes seems like overwhelming odds including too few resources, disproportionate and unfair support from government and healthcare service systems and a social prejudice about mental illness that is paralyzing and exclusionary. Yet somehow in spite of that all of you continue to bring people out of the darkness and back into the world. By providing a place to belong and contribute and a sophisticated opportunity system that we call Clubhouse you reclaim lost futures.

You have a world of experience at imagining future success and making it happen. You are experts at creating better tomorrows.

Really, you are change makers.

This week we want you to draw on that expertise and imagine a bigger and better tomorrow for our Clubhouse International community. We want you to consider your Clubhouse's future and imagine a set of circumstances that would allow you to increase your role and impact in society. What would it look like if Clubhouses were fully supported and integrated into healthcare and social service systems?

Our theme for the World Seminar is "Tomorrow's Clubhouse: Being the Change the World Needs". This theme was inspired by the ideas and areas of interests expressed by so many of you in response to our call earlier this year for topical agenda suggestions and the conversations as we built the program workshops and presentations.

But it is really meant to be more than that. We want to challenge all of us to take notice of the fact that the world around us is rapidly changing.

Technology advances are changing the way everyone does everything. If you are not keeping up you are truly falling behind. The way we communicate, meet, collect and store data, access and present information has all changed and is continuing to change.

In the world of mental health everything is changing too. It is not the same as it was when the Clubhouse movement began. There are constant advances in knowledge and treatment. There is at long last a growing public dialogue about mental health and the urgent need to reform public policy.

Today there are international advocacy partnerships focused on moving the world as a whole to address mental health as a priority. These partnerships include groups like The Movement for Global Mental Health, Mental Health Innovations Network and The World Federation for Mental Health.

The World Health Organization has developed a Mental Health Action Plan that is now promoting a recovery model over medical model only. It calls for not only treatment but instead a holistic approach with recovery as the focus. This year the United Nations has finally included mental health in the newly announced Sustainable Development Goals.

Community mental health funding in many places from government is shifting from a focus on programs to a focus on the individuals served and their program preferences. Both public and private funding sources everywhere are demanding more and more data and evidence from programs with an emphasis on measurable outcomes.

There is a growing trend to integrate mental healthcare with general healthcare.

Community partnerships and collaboration are essential to funding and successful program development.

I could go on but you get the idea. The world in which Clubhouse was born has changed. Even the world in which Clubhouse International was born has changed. It is an entirely new and developing environment that is full of threats to our way of working if we don't adapt and move with the changing world. However what we want you to see that it is even more full of opportunities to advance our mission and to increase our successes.

I have to tell you a little side story. The famous Robby Vorspan from Clubhouse International's staff takes a lead role in organizing the program for this seminar. One of the many jobs she has is to work with presenters to come up with the titles for the various sessions. As the program development is progressing Robby often assigns a session a descriptive temporary title that captures the essence of the topic while we select the presenters and finalize the content.

The conversations we had about this session led her to give it this title. Not your Grandmother's Clubhouse.

Of course me being me I switched it to a more conservative title. I mean after all we have a prestigious official from NIMH on the panel. Robby wanted to keep the other one.

After further consideration and with all due respect to Dr. Pringle, I wish we had kept Robby's title. Not your Grandmother's Clubhouse does a better job capturing the message.

Our seminar this year is focused on change. Not bad change but change as progressive, necessary and full of opportunities to advance our work in the world of mental health and beyond. We are convinced that we need to embrace change while insuring that our bedrock values of dignity for all, self-determination, the restorative power of community and unending opportunities to succeed are fully included in the new social structures addressing the issues of mental illness.

I want to remind you this morning of two familiar quotes

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?

Robert Kennedy

Let us imagine a better world for people living with mental illness in the future and let us work through our Clubhouses and this wonderful Clubhouse International network of ours to be that change.

I am absolutely confident that if we come out from behind the walls of our Clubhouses and embrace the fast changing world around us we can be the change the world needs. I can envision a time in the not too distant future when healthcare systems and society in general embrace and value “community” as necessary part of any effective mental health system.

Clubhouses are uniquely positioned make this change happen. Community is in our DNA.

But for this to happen we simply must more fully join the rest of the world and raise our collective voice through advocacy, partnerships, modern technology and most importantly by demonstrating the success of the Clubhouse model throughout the world by collecting and reporting outcome data that allows us to measure our impact.

And finally we must continue to bring each other along. Our Clubhouse International network was built upon our willingness to support and cross train each other. We have shared innovations. We have improved upon each other’s successes and have held each other accountable to our best practice standards.

Our collective impact is what makes us strong. Our collective voice is what will make us heard. Our collective knowledge is what will help us continue to innovate while staying entirely focused on the needs and preferences of Clubhouse members. Just as is true in your Clubhouse community, in the Clubhouse International community we stronger working together than would be going it alone.

And so, our seminar is focused on change and innovation and growth and the future. We have asked many strong Accredited Clubhouses with come and present their radical new initiatives and ideas and to challenge us all to think differently. I hope you will go to some of these presentations and engage in the conversation with an open mind.

We thought to help us better understand and plan for our future it is important for us to know what is going on with the rest of the mental health world. To gain some knowledge here we thought why not start at the top.

To help set the context for our dialogues and learning over the week we thought it would be nice to hear from a leading mental health agency about their work and plans.

I am so pleased that we have Dr. Beverly Pringle with us today. She comes to us from the National Institute (NIMH). NIMH is the largest research organization in the world specializing in mental illness. It is one of, if not the most influential organization in the world regarding the future direction for treatment and understanding of mental illness and what needs to be done make progress towards much better prevention and recovery rates. Dr. Pringle is Chief of

the Global Mental Health Research Program at the National Institute of Mental Health, where she provides scientific leadership for the institute's global research activities, monitors NIMH's international grants and activities, and provides technical consultation to the global mental health research community. Dr. Pringle has also served as Chief of the NIMH's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Research Program, and, prior to that, as Chief of the Services Research Branch at the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Dr. Pringle is here with us today representing the office of the Director at NIMH.

We asked her to be with us today for two reasons. First to tell us about the work and direction of the NIMH and about what is happening in big picture in the world of mental health. For the very reasons I spoke about earlier it is so very important that we in the Clubhouse community understand and participate with the thought leaders in our field.

Second we want to give her the chance to get to know the Clubhouse International Community and our about our work and future direction. When accepting our invitation Dr. Pringle told me that she was very much looking forward to the opportunity to hear from us and get know us.

As she comes to the podium won't you please let Dr. Pringle know how pleased we are that she is with us today.

Dr. Pringle.....