Overcoming in the midst of a pandemic

ELEVATION HOUSE
IMPACT 2020

Ending economic and social isolation

WWW.ELEVATIONHOUSE.ORG
2020 was quite a year. We celebrated our first full year of operations, received our certification from Clubhouse International as a Member Clubhouse, and used our ingenuity to overcome the challenges of a pandemic. What we did not do was allow forced shutdowns and a world health and economic crisis to prevent us from serving our members.

Executing our mission - ending isolation - when social distancing and stay at home orders required isolation was not a small feat. However, we served more members in more creative ways than we could ever have imagined. Though our first full year was anything but what we envisioned, we are so grateful to have been able to provide services during a time when they were desperately needed.

It has been a privilege to walk alongside of our members over the last 600+ days since Elevation House opened. Supporting the mental health recovery of our members ensures that they live full, personally gratifying lives. We offer hope and opportunities for growth and personal development that bolster confidence and cause mental wellness to surface. The transformations we are blessed to witness are awe inspiring.

In service,

Carrie M. Edge
Executive Director
Overcoming & Adapting

Elevation House is a unique, community-based mental health organization serving adults with serious and persistent mental illness in Northwest Georgia. We end social and economic isolation by utilizing the Clubhouse model of psychosocial rehabilitation. Elevation House provides opportunities for people living with mental illness to develop friendships; find employment; obtain safe, dignified, affordable housing; achieve education goals; and access wellness supports in a stigma-free, centralized environment.

Overcoming the obstacles presented by the pandemic in 2020 was an undertaking that required adapting quickly to combat the impacts of isolation. According to Mental Health America, in the same way that people with pre-existing physical illnesses are more susceptible to coronavirus, people with compromised mental health are at an increased risk for their mental illness worsening as a result of the virus. COVID-19 has caused people living with mental illness to be physically cut off from support networks. Additionally, this population is experiencing increased financial, emotional, and physical stress, substantially increasing their risk of a mental health crisis. So, with imposed orders to isolate, Elevation House looked to creative technological solutions to bring programs to members instead of members to programs.

On March 13th, Elevation House ceased in-person services to protect our member from the virus. Using social media and virtual conferencing platforms, virtual services were immediately implemented. The Virtual Clubhouse Program (VCP) began just two business days after our self-imposed shutdown. VCP ensured the availability of essential mental health services to our members throughout the pandemic.

On July 20, 2020 we returned to limited in-person services. However, the benefits of the VCP predicated a continuance of services via technological platforms. Pre-COVID (February, 2020), we had an average daily attendance of 3.8 members. Since that time our membership has grown steadily at nearly 2 members per month and our average daily attendance increased by 90%. At the end of 2020, we had acquired 49 members; an 81% increase in membership from 2019. The demand for our services continues to grow and virtual services allow us to meet the new demands COVID presents.

Oddly enough, Elevation House experienced tremendous growth in the area of employment initiatives in 2020. While many others were experiencing job loss, our members were acquiring positions through our Independent and Supported Employment Programs. In fact, from 2019 to 2020, Elevation House realized a 429% increase in member employment. At the highest rate, in October 2020, 63% of our members were employed. We ended 2020 with an average employment rate of 37% which is, according to the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), 22% better than the national rate of employment for adults living with serious mental illness.

2020 required adapting service delivery strategies, goals and budget. It became evident to our staff and board of directors that our focus must shift toward sourcing essential services and ensuring efficient allocation of resources. This meant taking a second look at 2020 goals and ascertaining which were necessary and realistic. We made tough decision to delay goals that were not achievable under the mandated constraints of the health crisis and economic impacts of COVID-19. We deemed it necessary to delay the funding of the following 2020 goals:

- Hiring a part-time Transitional Employment Coordinator
- Purchasing a van for daily transport and Transitional Employment
- Initiating the Transitional Employment Program

These goals required more financial resources, approximately $24,000 more, than we felt could feasibly be acquired during the pandemic. Ultimately, we addressed the most urgent need—connecting members to recovery services in the midst of a pandemic. Connecting, ends isolation and saves lives! As a result we have a number of success to share in this 2020 Impact Report.
2020 DATA

Demographics

- **Gender**
  - Female: 67.3%
  - Male: 32.7%

- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - White: 77.6%
  - Black: 18.4%
  - Hispanic: 2%

- **Housing**
  - Co-habiting: 53.8%
  - Independent: 28.2%
  - Homeless: 17.9%

Program Services & Outcomes

- **Recovery Opportunities**
  - 2019: 1000
  - 2020: 2379

- **Incarceration Rate**
  - 2019: 300%
  - 2020: 0%

- **Rehospitalization Rate**
  - 2019: 25%
  - 2020: 6%

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
(UNAUDITED)

- **Expenses**
  - Program Services: 73%
  - Administration: 12.5%
  - Fundraising: 14.5%
  - Total: $109,958

- **Revenue**
  - Program Services: 73%
  - Board & Staff: 15.4%
  - Events: 25.2%
  - Individuals: 26.3%
  - Corporate: 5.1%
  - Non-Governmental Grants: 28.1%
  - Total: $77,866
We believe that every member can recover and live a personally gratifying life.

2021 GOALS

As Elevation House members, staff and board of directors look to 2021, there are a number of goals that are mission-essential. Over the next 365 days these are the five priorities that we must address:

1. Elevation House must continue strategic marketing efforts to:
   a. adults living with serious mental illness in Northwest Georgia, and their families,
   b. local medical mental health service providers, and
   c. the community, especially the business community, to secure resources and ensure future sustainability.

   To accomplish this, we must seek and secure monthly opportunities to share our mission with the community in order to identify those in needed and acquire the resources necessary to offer a quality Clubhouse program.

2. Elevation House will continue to work collaboratively with local organizations to eliminate gaps in and/or duplicative services to our target population and to ensure the most efficient use of local resources.

   Two collaborative opportunities that will continue to be a focus for Elevation House in 2021 are H.O.P.E. Alliance and LivingProof Recovery. Elevation House will continue to partner with H.O.P.E. Alliance member organizations to eliminate homelessness in our community by helping target one of the underlying causes- mental illness.

   We will also provide resources to continue the R.O.O.T Program- a holistic, long-term recovery program for those with co-occurring disorder (a mental illness coupled with a substance misuse disorder). R.O.O.T. is a collaborative between Elevation House and LivingProof Recovery. This program is unique to our community and was partially funded as a pilot in 2020 by The Community Foundation for Greater Rome. In 2021, R.O.O.T. will serve its second co-hort of 10-12 individuals.

3. Elevation House will secure at least 1 new employment program partner to help members end economic isolation.

4. Elevation House will increase membership by 20% in 2021; bringing the number of members to 60.

5. Elevation House will explore creative ventures and partnerships to find solutions for member housing issues. As a result, Elevation House will continue assisting member with finding suitable housing and decrease the number of unsheltered members.

If it weren't for my membership at Elevation House, I would not have begun a new career ...

In 2020, I truly appreciated the virtual presence of Elevation House when COVID forced us all to stay at home. If it weren't for my membership at Elevation House, I would not have begun a new career with the NWGA Center for Independent Living. I also appreciate the ongoing check-ins from Elevation House because it keeps me connected and reminds me I'm never alone. Also, I can't tell you how much the cards and notes meant while I've grieved the loss of my mother and grandmother last year. Elevation House is and will continue to be an AMAZING part of my life!

-Tereasa, Member

In 2020, Elevation House played a vital role in my life. During a pandemic where isolating was necessary, Elevation House was there on a daily basis providing virtual programs and in-person services when possible. I never felt alone.

I went through many personal changes in 2020 that affected my mental health. Elevation House was there for me when I needed help. I was in a situation where I needed housing, help getting my medications and just needed someone to be there for me. They were there to talk to me and encourage me to keep moving forward in life.

Elevation House taught me many valuable skills and lessons.

2020 was also a big year for me because, after being out of work for 10 years, Elevation House inspired me to go back to work full-time. I worked a full-time position at a local hotel and then, recently, secured a position at a local multi-specialty physician group. This is my dream job. I'm loving life again!

-Tim, Member