

New Fountain House Research Department Will Examine the Impact of Community-Based Approaches to Mental Illness

*A \$3 Million Grant from Dauten Family Foundation supports first-in-kind
participatory research*

New York, NY [July 9, 2020] – Today, Fountain House, a leading mental health organization based in New York, launched a new research initiative to investigate how systems of community engagement and support can lead to recovery for people living with mental illness - and benefit individuals, families and communities, and public health policy. The department is supported by a \$3 million grant from the Dauten Family Foundation.

People living with mental illness face health and social challenges that often result from debilitating social isolation. While essential inroads to understanding genetics and biology for therapies that support people with severe mental illness have increased, research into the critical – and often overlooked – role of community-based social-therapeutic supports is lacking.

Fountain House pioneered a restorative model that for more than 70 years has worked with people living with mental illness to break down social isolation and build the community and the resilience needed to thrive. It has partnered with healthcare networks, criminal justice organizations, and other services to design and create solutions to support recovery and social determinants of people living with mental illness. It has inspired more than 300 replication projects around the world, with 200 in the U.S., and reaches more than 100,000 people a year worldwide.

The new research department will create a living social laboratory – designed and conducted in partnership with people living with mental illness who are part of this wide network – to investigate, monitor, track and finally define how systems of community engagement and support, working both together and independent of medical and psychiatric interventions, can lead to recovery. It will also demonstrate how these programs avert negative outcomes like incarceration, homelessness, and repeated hospitalization that worsen health and social welfare and place a significant economic burden on society.

“At a moment where mental health needs have skyrocketed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to show how and why community-based solutions are critical for our society,

for public policy, and for human rights. We are proud to partner with the Dauten Family Foundation to make this a reality,” said Dr. Ashwin Vasan, President and CEO of Fountain House. “Now more than ever we need evidence at hand to show that models of community support can break cycles of isolation and prevent mental health crises.”

“In a world that has so underinvested in mental health research and care, the Dauten Family Foundation targets causes with unique missions, strong governance, and talented leadership teams that can move the needle in the field and ultimately help to improve the lives of the millions living with mental illness,” said Kent Dauten, Chairman of the Dauten Family Foundation. “Our family could not be more excited about partnering with Fountain House to enhance its research capacity in this initiative. We anticipate that it will provide evidence for this impressive model of recovery, as well as influence public policy in the broader mental health field. At this time of pandemic-forced social distancing and isolation, the timing is certainly right to strive to better understand the therapeutic power of community.”

The Dauten Family Foundation also supports genomics research at the Broad Institute, basic neuroscience research through the Harvard Brain Science Initiative, and translational research at the Dauten Family Center for Bipolar Treatment Innovation at Massachusetts General Hospital.

ABOUT FOUNTAIN HOUSE

Since 1948, Fountain House has supported people living with mental illness to overcome social isolation and build the community and the resilience needed to thrive in society. Fountain House has become the most widely replicated community-based model for people living with mental illness. Today, more than 300 affiliated programs serve over 100,000 people in the US and in more than 30 countries. www.fountainhouse.org

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