

**Thank you for joining us today for MHA's  
RPC Webinar:**

**Regional Policy Council Webinar:  
When Equity Meets Policy: Attacks,  
Impacts, and Pushback**

**We'll begin shortly at 2 PM EDT/11 AM PDT**



**Regional  
*policy* Council**

**MHA**  
Mental Health America

# MHA's Regional Policy Council Webinar:

## When Equity Meets Policy: Attacks, Impacts, and Pushback

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**Tuesday, April 25**  
**2 PM - 3 PM EDT**



Regional  
*policy* Council

**MHIA**  
Mental Health America

# Welcome

**Debbie F. Plotnick, MSS, MLSP, Executive Vice President**  
**State and Federal Advocacy**  
*Mental Health America*



Regional  
*policy* Council

# *Mental Health America would like to thank our 2023 sponsors of the Regional Policy Council:*

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Regional  
policy council



# Housekeeping

- **The recording and the slides will be available to download in about a week**
- **Please put all questions in the chatbox**



# About the Regional Policy Council

<https://mhanational.org/regional-policy-council>



Regional  
*policy* Council

# Moderator

**Laura Evans, Director of National and State Policy**

*Vibrant Emotional Health*



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# Panelists

*Shelby Rowe, Suicide Prevention Resource Center*

*Tansy McNulty, 1M4*

*Preston Mitchum, PDM Consulting*

*Jennifer Wang, Fountain House*





# When Equity Meets Policy

**Jennifer Wang, Senior Director of National Policy, Fountain House**  
April 2023

**FOUNTAIN  
HOUSE**



**We cannot coerce, institutionalize,  
shelter or jail our way out of the  
issue of mental illness in our country.**

## MISSION

**To create the community,  
innovation, and social change  
needed for people most impacted  
by mental illness to lead  
connected and healthy lives.**

## VISION

**Transforming the way the world sees and treats people most impacted by mental illness.**

- from stigma to dignity
- from isolation to community
- from individual to societal impact

# VALUES

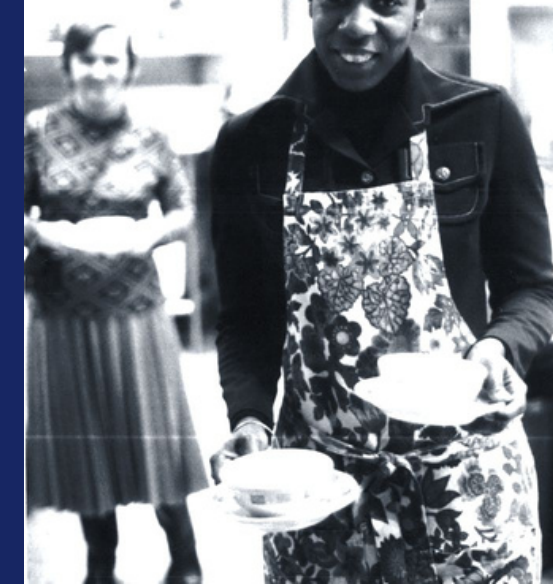
**We believe that every person...**

- ★ Is capable of great things
- ★ Deserves just and equitable treatment
- ★ Has the right to self-determination and community



# Our History

- Public-private partnership, founded in 1948 in NYC by **people living with serious mental illness**
- *Members* at the center of their own recovery **by choice**
- Community is our therapy; housed in a physical **clubhouse environment** where skilled *social practitioners* partner with **members in their recovery**
- Provides employment, educational and creative programming, as well as housing support and healthcare access
- Breaks debilitating social isolation which leads to poor health and life expectancy 25 years less than general public
- Replicated at >200 sites in 40 states, additional 100 in 30 countries



# Serious mental illness is a social justice issue because current policies & systems punish & criminalize mental illness

➔ People with mental illness are overrepresented in other vulnerable populations

**2.5x**

people  
experiencing  
homelessness

**3.5x**

incarcerated  
people

**5x**

unemployed  
people with  
SMI

➔ Fatality is disproportionate and premature for people living with mental illness

**16** <sup>out</sup> **19**  
<sub>of</sub>

people with mental  
illness killed by NYPD  
since 2015 were  
people of color

**2** <sup>to</sup> **4**

More likely to die  
from unnatural causes  
such as suicide or  
homicide

**10-25** <sub>years</sub>

shorter life expectancy  
than the general  
population



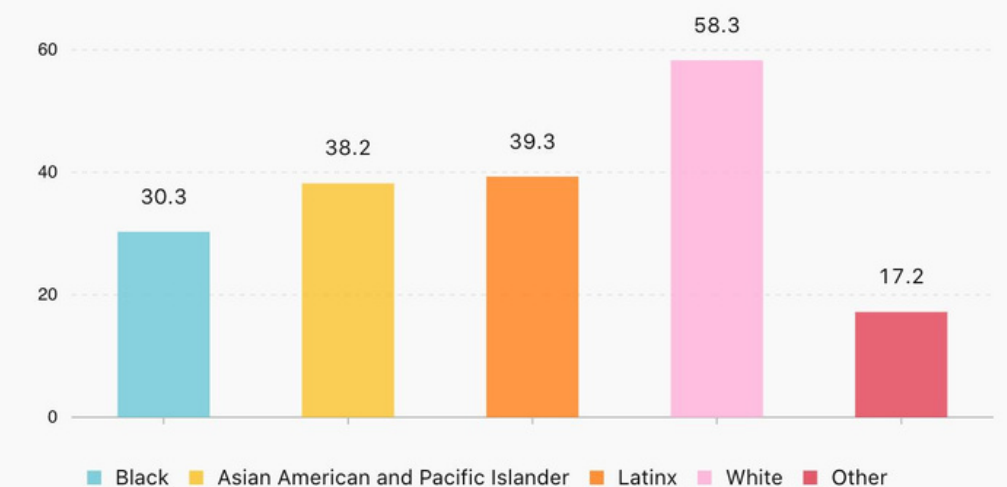
# Mental Health: An issue rooted in inequality in the United States

- Access to mental health treatment is significantly lower for Black people. That is why FH works with a population that is majority BIPOC. Our Bronx clubhouse membership is 90% BIPOC, which matches the broader community – in the Bronx, 91 percent of residents insured by Medicaid live in a mental health desert. The vast majority of them are Black and brown and low-income
- Black people living below the poverty line are 2x more likely to report psychological distress
- Our mental healthcare system lacks cultural competence– “a culturally competent mental health care provider is able to consider how someone’s culture, race, and ethnicity may influence their mental health, and the best way to treat them”

All of these played a role in our desire to expand into the Bronx in 2013 and we want to increase the number of people served by clubhouses in NYC

Black, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander New Yorkers are **less likely to be connected** to mental healthcare than White New Yorkers

Percentage of those with depression who self-report receiving mental health treatment, by race/ethnicity



Connection to mental healthcare differs significantly **by neighborhood**.

In the three neighborhoods with the highest connection to mental healthcare, nearly 70% of those with mental health needs receive treatment; in the three neighborhoods with the lowest connection, only around 20% of those with mental health needs received treatment

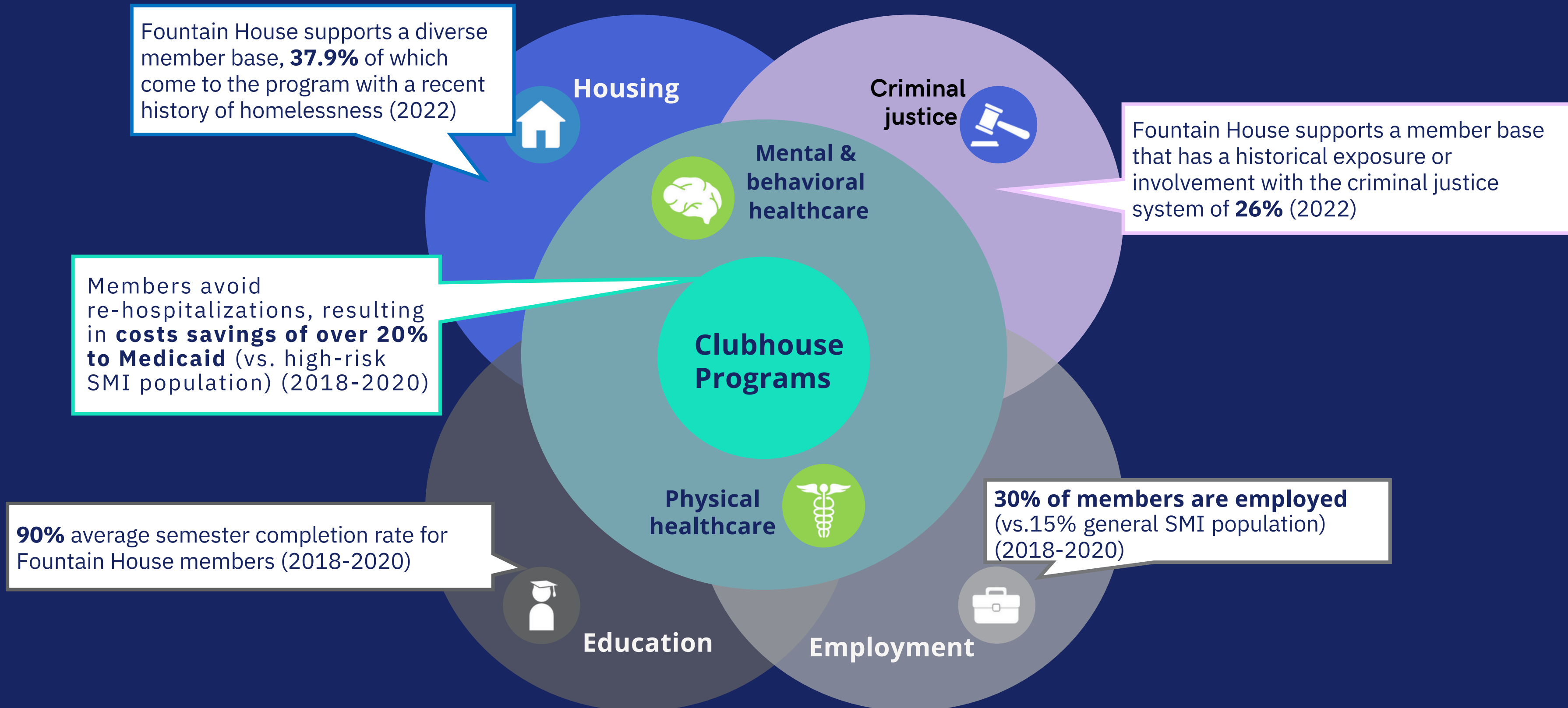
Percentage of those with mental health needs connected to care, by neighborhood





# What has made Fountain House successful?

Our strategy, including our policy work, is grounded in lived experience & is intersectional



# Ongoing equity strategies internally and externally

- Breaking stigma is a core part of our work, and is also considered rehabilitative. Who do we center when we stigma bust?
- We are committed to working to become an anti-racist organization over the long term. This is supported by our leadership, but importantly, also had grassroots support from our membership. Members had already established affinity groups, such as the Black and Brown Women's Group, for both members and staff.
- Our goal is to co-create change and programming devoted to ensuring that we achieve our goal of being an anti-racist and inclusive organization



# FOUNTAIN HOUSE

**Thank you for attending the 2023 RPC Webinar:  
*Mental Health America Regional Policy Council Meeting:  
When Equity Meets Policy: Attacks, Impacts, and Pushback***



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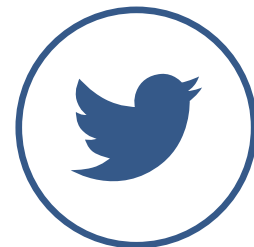
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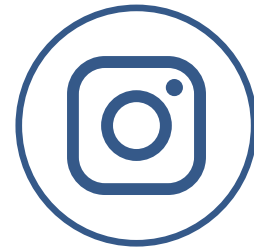
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**Please join us for our 2023 Mental Health America Conference  
in Washington, DC and online from June 6-10, 2023!**

**<https://mhanational.org/annual-conference>**



**This event has concluded. Your survey answers mean a lot to us.  
Thank you for joining us today!**

