

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

How we do our work is as important as the work we do

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Continuous Quality Improvement (or CQI) is a concept that we will revisit often in the coming months. The driving force behind CQI is the idea that everything can be improved upon. Even processes that already work well can always be enhanced.

Quality can be a difficult concept to understand. One reason for this is the fact that different people assess the level of quality of a process quite differently. Take goal planning for example. A supervisor may see the goal planning process as a way of measuring progress and demonstrating outcomes, thereby ensuring quality of service. The people working directly with participants may see the process as a way to revisit the goals of the past year and plan for the upcoming one. A participant may see the process as their opportunity to tell others more about who they are and what they want to achieve. All of these perspectives are correct but each person will assess the

quality of service based on their own perception of what they see as important.

Based on this example, it is evident that, in order to improve quality of service, we need to develop processes to obtain information from all perspectives across the organization.

Most of the challenges that agencies face are the result of processes, not people. CQI seeks to improve processes so that people are better able to do their jobs. This in turn allows us to provide consistent, quality service.

CQI challenges us to look for ways to improve, even when everything seems to be going well.



Domain 2: Planning and Delivering Outcome-Focused Services

Domain 2 stresses that, in order to effectively support people, we need to recognize that everyone has different abilities, needs and dreams.

Mainstream already knows this. In fact, our philosophy concludes by saying that Mainstream “upholds the ideals of mutual respect, the value of individuality and an open mindedness towards the ever changing needs of its people”. We work very hard to involve participants as much as possible in any goal-planning process. Participants direct the process and make the decisions. We, as paid supports, are simply there to facilitate and support them as needed.

During our discussions, the Accreditation Team identified several key areas that, as an agency, we need to address in order to meet all of the standards in Domain 2. First of all, we need to find better ways of involving an individual's support system of
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Domain 4: Family, Friends and Community

Domain 4 emphasizes the importance of having social opportunities and of being active in the community. It also focuses on the importance of developing and maintaining positive relationships.

Mainstream participants are very active in their communities. All of our programs create opportunities for individuals to participate in community classes and activities. We support individuals to participate in both formal activities (church, LBS, Special Olympics) and informal ones (grocery shopping, Tim Hortons). Through the goal planning process, staff learn what activities an individual is interested in and then provide the support needed so that they can participate.

During the Accreditation meeting, countless examples were provided of how Mainstream

fosters social opportunities. Strengthening family ties, developing friendships and accessing community services are just some of the positive changes participants have been able to make with the help of staff.

As an agency, we are already very good at relationship building and we are getting better all the time. The challenge is that we do not consistently keep track of what we are doing to help people build and maintain relationships. Improving how we document would allow us to keep track of what has been tried, what was successful and what wasn't. Keeping track of successes and challenges is an essential part of Accreditation as well as Continuous Quality Improvement. Only when we can reliably show what we do well can we realistically identify what we need to improve.

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family and friends in the planning process, should they choose to. We need to develop a more formalized process to document and measure outcomes. We also need to get better at demonstrating whether the skills we teach are being retained. Finally, we need to have a better way of assessing whether an individual recognizes the risks that may be involved when they make a decision.

This may sound like a lot of work but, in reality, we've already laid a strong foundation. We do have a person-centered planning process that is based on meaningful input from participants. The next step is to take the information obtained from that process and turn it into an action plan that can be used to measure outcomes and demonstrate progress.

Each program has or will be developing their own process of goal planning and of

measuring outcomes. Coming up with a system that works will take time and there will most certainly be some trial and error involved. At the end of the day, every program will have developed a system that works for them and the people they serve. These systems will allow us to keep track of goals and successes and demonstrate that we do what we say we do.

