

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

People Supporting People

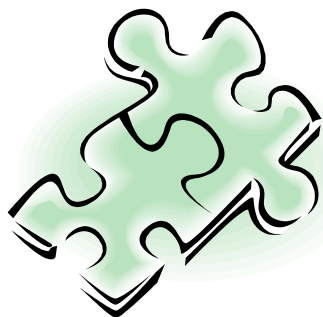
An individual's basic rights do not change simply because they require support to exercise them.

People with disabilities are people first and, according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, all people have the same rights. At Mainstream, we strive every day to ensure that our participants have the opportunity to exercise their rights. As our philosophy proudly proclaims, Mainstream is all about people supporting people.

There are times when the line between personal rights and personal safety becomes blurred. How do we respect someone's right to privacy when we know that they cannot safely go out into the community unaccompanied? How do we respect someone's right to choose not to take their medication when we are responsible for their wellbeing? There are no easy answers but that doesn't mean

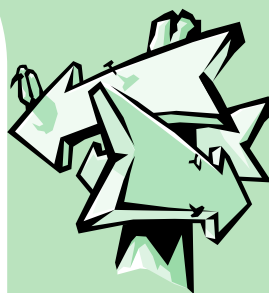
that we shouldn't ask the questions. That is what continuous quality improvement (CQI) is all about. It's getting us to look at how and why we do what we do. Maybe there's a way to do it better?

The Accreditation Team will be focusing on ethics, rights and responsibilities as we move through the Gap Analysis. These fundamental concepts lay the groundwork for the process and will guide our decision-making.. Our challenge will be to make sure that our philosophies and policies are practiced every day.



*Give every human being every right that you claim for yourself.
~Robert Ingersoll*

Domain 1: Ethical Practices, Rights and Responsibilities



This column will provide regular updates on the information discussed during Accreditation Team meetings.

The first domain that the Accreditation

Team addressed was Ethical Practices, Rights and Responsibilities. There are 11 standards in this domain and they touch on everything from how well we teach participants about their rights to how well we support diverse people in terms of spiritual beliefs, cultures and sexual orientation. Each standard was discussed in detail and several general themes came out of the conversations. Mainstream, as we already knew, is very good at maximizing informal teaching opportunities. Every choice a participant makes, every conflict that is resolved and every goal that is identified is both a teaching and a learning opportunity.

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Affirming and Protecting Rights

The Counsel on Quality and Leadership Canada (CQL) has long been an advocate for services that respect individual differences and that provide opportunities for individual development.

According to the CQL, **affirming rights** can be defined as respecting individual preferences and choices and providing the assistance people need to exercise their rights. **Protecting rights** means ensuring that individual rights are not ignored or infringed upon. The affirmation and protection of an individual's rights should be reflected in every part of an agency's services, from intake to discharge.

A right is not what someone gives you; it's what no one can take from you. ~Ramsey Clark



Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, and in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

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Staff take every opportunity to teach participants about their rights and responsibilities as they move through their daily lives. Examples of such successes can be found every day and in every program.

We are also very good at providing more formal learning opportunities in the form of classes, trainings and conferences.

We discovered that we don't currently have policies that address all the standards in Domain 1. We will need to create or revisit several policies to ensure that expectations and procedures are clearly defined. To give an example, the issue of how and when to obtain consent for using photographs is dealt with differently in every program. From our discussions, it is evident that we have many best practices

but we need to ensure that they are practiced consistently throughout the agency. Learning from each other and adopting our own best practices will help us meet the requirements of accreditation and, more importantly, will help us continually improve the services we offer.

Newsletter Title

We have a new title for our newsletter. We received great suggestions and combined several of them to come up with our new title. Thank you to Suzanne Melville, Alan Cimprich and Kris Akilie for their ideas as well as the A-Team for pulling them all together. Our newsletter is now officially known as M.A.D. Adventures (aka Mainstream's Accreditation Dream Adventures).