



M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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



Happy Kwanzaa!

It's December! A whole month of food, drink and festivities lies ahead of us. Some people are filled with dread at the very idea. Others have had their trees up and decorated since the middle of October and cannot wait to get the party started.

Whatever camp you fall in, the commercial and spiritual sides of Christmas are everywhere in December. In fact, it is so pervasive that other less flashy celebrations often get lost in the rush to buy Guitar Hero. Thankfully, M.A.D. Adventures is here! This newsletter is dedicated to sharing new information and encouraging people to think differently. December is no time to slouch on our duties! So Happy Kwanzaa!

Kwanzaa, for those who don't know, is a non-religious African American celebration that starts on December 26th and goes for 7 days. Each day, family members gather to light one of seven candles. As each candle burns, the family discusses one of the principles on which Kwanzaa is based. Throughout the week, people greet each other with the Swahili expression "Habari Gani" which means "what's new". People reply with a response that is related to one of the principles.

The principles of Kwanzaa are:

1. Unity
2. Self-determination
3. Collective responsibility
4. Cooperative economics
5. Purpose
6. Creativity
7. Faith

These principles would definitely make for some interesting discussions and some enlightening moments as well. How many people take the time to really think about what creativity means to them? Or purpose?

What is particularly interesting about the seven principles of Kwanzaa is that they are relevant to so many things. In fact, one of the first things that came to mind upon reading them is how they apply to accreditation.

The first principle, **Unity**, is a key part of accreditation. It is about coming together for a common purpose and working collectively to reach a goal. The A-Team is the most obvious example of this but it is happening everywhere across the agency.

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December Plans

December is going to be a busy month for both accreditation and 3Rs. Accreditation, as mentioned in the last newsletter, is in the 'regrouping' process. Everyone is busy working on tasks for their respective programs and crossing more and more standards off the list. We are also getting ready for the Quarterly Meeting on December 10th when we bring everything together and plan for the next three months.

3Rs classes are moving along nicely and several people have already completed the training. That means that it's probe time again! All 26 individuals who signed up for 3Rs, even those who have not yet had the training, will need to have 2 probes done. Some probes will be booked in December and the rest in early January. For those staff who have been designated to help with probes, you will be asked to help again.

The first set of probes, done back in September, raised a few concerns. The main issues were that some probes were inappropriate (eg telling someone that they no longer had a job) or that the probers did not listen to staff requests (eg they were asked not to do a rights restriction related to a person's volunteer placement but still did it).

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Happy Kwanzaa!!

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Mainstream is building bridges between programs and bringing people together. The latest example of this is Quality of Life. This assessment is going to be used by all programs as part of the annual person-centered planning process. Designated staff from each program will be learning how to complete the Quality of Life assessment. They will be learning from each other by shadowing staff who have already been trained. Unity: coming together from across the agency for a common goal.

Self-determination is the second principle. Throughout the process of meeting all 154 standards, it is imperative that we never lose sight of who we are. As an agency we have our own unique skills and beliefs that set us apart from other organizations. Each program has developed their own style and that too should be preserved.

Collective Responsibility, the third principle, refers to the role that every single one of us has to play in the accreditation process. Accreditation is not something done in seclusion by 8 people in a room. Accreditation will only succeed if everyone steps up to the plate, works together and accepts responsibility for its success.

Purpose, the fifth principle, is about staying focused on what we're really trying to do. It can be a challenge to keep our eye on the goal when daily responsibilities get in the way. But remembering where we are headed and why we are going there keeps us motivated.

Exchanges take place between the Resource Centre and the community that illustrate the principle of **Cooperative Economics**. People and businesses in our community pay taxes and a portion of the taxes they pay are transferred to Mainstream to help fund the Resource Centre. In turn participants from the Resource Centre volunteer their time and skills to assist businesses and agencies supporting other causes in our community. That is Cooperative Economics!

Creativity is the fun part. Every one of the standards we have to meet clearly states what we have to do but does not give much guidance as to how we have to do it. As long as we meet the standard, we get to do it our way. We get to be creative and we get to make sure that all decisions we make are 'Mainstreamized'.

Faith. That's what we hold on to when we look at the accreditation 'to-do' list. We will get there, one standard at a time. No matter how far it might feel between where we are and where we have to go, we will get there!

December Plans

The researchers and probes have been told these concerns and several solutions have been proposed. First of all, rights restrictions will NOT be done for anyone about losing a paid job or volunteer placements. Period.

Second, when possible, the designated staff present during the probe will be asked what the rights restriction should be so that it is meaningful. That will avoid rights restrictions being done that are not relevant to the individual. Hopefully these changes will ensure that the second round of probes runs more smoothly.

Despite the challenges of the first round of

probes, everyone went above and beyond to help coordinate them. It was a huge undertaking to book 52 probes for 26 people but we did it in record time. Let's all work together to pull it off again!

