

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

There is no "I"

Clichéd but true: there is no "I" in TEAM. Apparently there is a "ME" in there but only if you rearrange the letters so that doesn't really count!

Spelling and quotes aside, teams are interesting beasts aren't they? Take a group of individuals with different interests, talents, backgrounds, fears and hopes and put them together. Add to the mix a variety of communication styles, work ethics, opinions and values. Give them a common purpose or goal and see what happens.

Some teams work beautifully and others just can't seem to get their you know what together. Anyone who has stood in line at Tim Hortons knows this. A good team can handle a cue of 30 customers in minutes; a poorly organized team can't seem to figure out who should have made the coffee. What makes the difference between a 30 second wait and a 10 minute wait? What makes a team work?

Teams come in many forms and have many goals. All members of a sports teams need to work together if they want to win the game. An orchestra only creates beautiful music when everyone

plays their parts. For an example a little closer to home, the Accreditation Team members come together from across the agency to ensure that all voices are heard as we work to meet the standards.

The interesting thing is that most teams contain all the skills and talent they need to be successful. Yet not all teams work well together. What makes the difference?

In the last newsletter, core competencies were discussed. These are the skills that help make the difference between doing a good job and doing an excellent job. The same holds true for teams. There are skills that make the difference between good teams and great teams.

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Accreditation Update

We're one month into the next phase of accreditation and things are beginning to fall into place. The action plans for four domains have been completed. Tasks have been assigned to individual staff or entire programs and everyone is working to ensure that we meet all the standards.

Keeping track of all the things that need to happen is a bit of a juggling act. Providing updates on how we're doing is also a challenge as there are many things happening all at once.

Currently we are working on four domains. We decided to start with Domain 1: Ethical Practices, Rights and Responsibilities and Domain 2: Planning and Delivering Outcome-Focused Services because they affect all the programs at Mainstream. The A-Team has identified all the standards that each program has to meet. Discussions have been taking place in all staff meetings to plan how each program can meet all of the required standards. Our goal is to have all the standards in these domain met by Thanksgiving.

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Strong teams adopt positive practices. They:

- challenge ideas not people,
- embrace conflict because healthy conflict often leads to new ideas,
- recognize the strengths of others as an asset not a threat,
- make decisions based on fact, not emotion,
- create a safe environment where all members of the team are valued and encouraged,
- come together for a common purpose and work together to achieve it, and
- leave individual differences at the door.

Great teams, like many things in life, are a work in progress. Successful teams do not develop overnight and it requires a lot of

effort on everyone's part. Getting over past hurts, putting aside personality conflicts and understanding someone else's point of view doesn't just happen. It takes a concerted effort and a willingness to leave one's comfort zone.

The symphony that is playing a breathtaking piece of music got to that point because all members spent hours practicing together. The sports team that made it to the finals only succeeded by putting the needs of the team first. It takes hours of work to get there but the results are worth the effort.

*“It's amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.”
Robert Yates*

Accreditation Update

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Remember that, while we know what standards we have to meet, we haven't finalized a plan of how to meet them. That's the rationale for bringing the discussions to staff meetings. It's your opportunity to get involved and your expertise and suggestions are needed.

Domain 3: Health, Safety and Wellness is another domain we are working on. Health, safety and wellness is something that affects everyone at Mainstream and most changes that need to occur are at the policy level. We already have very good health and safety practices but they have not been consistently documented. Policies will be written and, once completed, will be presented at all staff meetings. Our goal is to complete this domain by the end of September.

The final domain we are currently tackling is

Domain 12: Finances and it is in very good shape already. Adding a few policies and collecting copies of our annual budget and financial audits are all that is required for this domain. Again, we are hoping to have everything completed by the end of September.

We are moving along nicely and it feels good to be taking on the challenge of meeting these standards. The changes that we'll be making are really positive and will only help to improve the service that we offer. The most exciting aspect is the fact that we're all working together to reach our goal.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Meade