

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

Accreditation

One of M.A.D. Adventures' raisons d'être is that it serves as a vehicle for introducing new topics. Topics that have been discussed so far include accountability, Continuous Quality Improvement, rights, social capital and community. The hope is that this information provides new insight and helps to create a common language across the agency.

As we prepare to begin the next phase of accreditation, it is important to take a moment to highlight another term. It's time to talk about accreditation.

When this process began, accreditation seemed like the goal we were going to work towards. The thinking was that, if we worked hard and met all the standards, we would reach 'accreditation'. As the weeks passed and we got a clearer sense of what we had to do, a broader definition of accreditation began to take shape. Accreditation is most certainly the end result but, as important, it is also the process of getting there. To put it another way, accreditation is both the journey and the destination.

As a destination, accreditation is an official stamp of approval. It will confirm that we really are doing what we say we are doing. It will tell our funders that we, as an agency, are using our resources responsibly. It will show the community that we are an agency who provides consistent, high-quality service.

As a journey, accreditation is an ongoing, self-reflective process. Embarking on this journey demonstrates that we have committed to continuous self-evaluation in order to seek ways to improve the level of service we provide. Even after we successfully receive the status of accreditation, we will continue along the road of continuous quality improvement.

Accreditation begins with us striving to meet standards of excellence put forth by an external body. As we move through the process we will begin to internalize these standards until they become a fundamental part of everything we do. This journey will continue long after we reach our 'destination'.

Working together

After a two week 'accreditation vacation' the A-Team is back and ready to start the next phase in the process. We've completed the Gap Analysis and identified which standards we meet and which need to be addressed. In every domain, we found that there were standards that we met and some that we didn't. Our next goal is to finalize an action plan that clearly outlines what needs to happen in each domain. Once the action plan is complete we will begin working with program staff to implement recommended actions in order to fully meet all of the standards.

The Accreditation Team is made up of staff from every program and they act as the voice of those that they represent. That does not mean that we have all the knowledge and expertise needed to take on this task on our own. Throughout this next phase, we will be asking for your feedback and assistance. This accreditation journey is one that we are all taking together.

"Coming together is beginning

Keeping together is progress

Working together is success"

Henry Ford

In this issue:

Accreditation	1
Working Together	1
Gap Analysis Summary	2
Contest!	2

Gap Analysis Summary

Now that we are set to begin the next phase in the accreditation process, it seemed a good time to provide a summary of the results of our baseline gap analysis.

Each of the 16 domains contains a list of standards that were discussed during accreditation meetings. Our goal was to determine whether we met, partially met or did not meet each standard.

When the accreditation review committee comes to Mainstream, they will be looking to 'triangulate' the evidence in order to ensure that we really do meet each standard. What that means is that, for each standard, they will be looking for three pieces of evidence to ensure that we truly meet the requirements. Take health and safety inspections for example. We are required to complete one every month at every location. The accreditation committee will look for a policy that outlines the steps we are to follow. They will also be looking for evidence that we

follow the policy (ie completed monthly inspection forms). Finally, they will be speaking to staff to find out how inspections are undertaken at each location.

We kept these three levels of evidence in mind as we went through the Gap Analysis. Even if we had two of three things in place, we could not honestly say that we met a standard. In many cases, meeting it will be a simple matter of updating a policy or creating a form.

Here are the final results of our baseline gap analysis. We will provide updates in each newsletter as we work through each unmet and partially met standard.

Total standards to be met: 158

Standards met: 43

Partially met: 107

Not met: 8

Accreditation Contest

Get your creative juices flowing!

The A-Team is looking for an accreditation logo!

We want something that represents Mainstream and that symbolizes this journey we are taking together. Ideally, the logo can be used to provide visual updates of where we are on this journey. One great example is the United Way thermometer that keeps rising as the pledges pour in.

Our logo will be used in our newsletters to show everyone where we are in the process. Ideally, it will also be posted in key locations so that everyone can see how much has been accomplished.

So, dust off your drawing pencils, drag out your sketchpad or rev up your computers to add your suggestion to the list. Please submit your entries to Céline or your accreditation

representative by July 18th. The winner will be announced in the July 24th newsletter.

