

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

Continuous Quality Improvement

Last month, the topic of Continuous Quality Improvement or CQI was introduced. CQI challenges us to evaluate and improve our practices to better meet our vision and our mission. This month, we're going to delve a little deeper and look at the process of CQI and the thinking behind it.

Change, just for change's sake, is not what CQI is about. CQI is a systematic approach that involves evaluating a process, identifying challenges or gaps in the process and developing a plan to improve said process. It means asking key questions and acting on the answers. Why do we do things the way we do now? Which parts of a process are working well and which ones aren't? How can we improve a process and ultimately improve the quality of our service? Most importantly, how can we change to better meet our vision and our mission?

Continuous Quality Improvement has several core concepts:

- Focus should be on improving the process, not fixing the people,
- Quality means meeting or exceeding the expectations of those we serve, and
- There is no success unless it can be proven.

These core concepts challenge us to reevaluate how we adapt and grow as an organization. How do we identify what we need to improve? How do we determine the best way to improve? How do we implement and evaluate the success of our ideas? These are all important components of CQI.

The goal of improving quality is a system goal. Every aspect of the system matters, from the people giving and receiving support to the environment where support is provided. By taking all aspects of the system into consideration we have a much more effective strategy for change. Meeting and exceeding the needs of those we serve and being able to demonstrate successes is what we are striving for.



Domain 3: Health, Safety and Wellness

Going through the 25 standards of Domain 3 confirmed that Mainstream truly is a leader in health, safety and wellness. We were happy to discover during the Accreditation meeting that we already meet over half of the standards in this domain.

Our health and safety program is very comprehensive. The Joint Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to address any health and safety concerns. A regular schedule of inspections and maintenance ensures that Mainstream meets all health, safety, sanitation and fire regulations. Our health and safety policies are updated regularly and are very thorough. In fact they are so thorough that other agencies have asked to use our policies as guidelines when creating their own.

Wellness is the third component in this domain and touches on topics such as healthy eating and nutrition, promoting active lifestyles, stress reduction and employee recognition. Our mental health days, our quarterly staff solstices and the Employee Assistance Program at Wilson Banwell Human Solutions (formerly Baylis and Associates) were identified as just some of the ways in which employees are recognized and supported.

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Domain 7: Communication and Information Management

Communication is the key to forming and fostering healthy relationships. Positive communication ensures that everyone has an opportunity to share what they think, believe and feel. As an organization, promoting positive communication means adapting to meet the various communication styles of individuals.

Taking the time to get to know someone is the best way to effectively communicate with them. Be it participants, families, funding partners or other key stakeholders, everyone has a preferred way of giving and receiving information. Recognizing and responding to individual preferences ensures a more positive communication experience for everyone involved.

When supporting someone, learning how to effectively communicate with them can take time. Documenting this learning process and

sharing the information with others is key. It will provide information about how an individual communicates, help guide the process of improving communication and help demonstrate progress. Non-verbal communication in particular can be difficult to interpret and keeping a written document for others to access can greatly increase how well an individual is supported.

Mainstream has some amazing success stories when it comes to helping participants develop their communication skills. The next step is finding a way of documenting this process and of demonstrating these successes to others.



Accreditation Update



Well, it is hard to believe that it has been eight weeks since I stepped in to fill Lori's shoes. The move from Options Niagara to Accreditation has been a challenging and rewarding one and the past two months have reminded me what a unique organization Mainstream really is.

The Accreditation Team is a very dedicated group and they should be very proud of the work that has already been accomplished. Everyone has worked tirelessly during our weekly meetings and we are well on our way through the first step in the process: the Gap Analysis. Just a reminder that the Gap

Analysis is a tool to help us take stock of how many standards we currently meet and how many we will need to address in the coming months. I am happy to report that this process is going much faster than expected and we should be done several weeks ahead of schedule!

Once the Gap Analysis is complete, we will move on to the next step. This will involve looking at the standards we do not currently meet and working to bridge the gap between where we are now and where we want to be. Currently, a plan of action is being created to address these gaps. As we review each Domain, gaps are identified and a list of recommendations is compiled and submitted to the management team for review. We will begin the exciting process of implementing these changes over the summer!