

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

A Language Primer

Our language is constantly evolving, just ask anyone who uses Facebook. Words that did not exist five years ago now fill our daily vocabulary. Blogs, tweets, and odd looking collections of letters like "lol" are the thing these days. Facebook is not the only place where vocabulary changes. It is constantly changing and evolving right here at Mainstream too.

M.A.D. Adventures has introduced several new terms and expressions over the past year and perhaps it is time for a recap.

Person using services

Reading through our policies, one will notice many evolutions of the term we use to describe the people we support. Participants. Clients. Individuals. Individuals with a Developmental Disability. People using services was first suggested by FOCUS and it makes sense. It's positive, it emphasizes the person and focuses on the fact that they have a choice in the service they receive.

Person-Centred Planning

In the past, we've referred to this process by one of the steps: the IPP process or the Quality of Life

process. Person-centred planning is all-encompassing and it emphasizes several things:

- it is all about the person
- the person guides the process, therefore
- the process will (and should) be different for each person

ILP (Individualized Life Plan)

The IPP (Individual Program Plan) has been changed to ILP. This change was made to reflect the person centred planning process. An Individualized Life Plan is about the person and how they want to live their life.

Social Capital

This is all about relationships: how many you have and how meaningful they are. The term social capital represents a snapshot of the people in our lives. Research suggests that the more people we have in our lives the healthier we are, the happier we are and, believe it or not, the longer we live. The key to social capital is that it refers to *meaningful* relationships, with people who share similar interests and passions.

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Introducing: Training Weeks

Mainstream is a busy place! Offering innovative programs and classes, building social capital and person-centred planning takes time and energy. We try to put people first in everything that we do but that means that other things do not always get the priority that they should. Trying to fit mandatory trainings such as First Aid and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention into regular schedules is challenging. FOCUS is asking that we provide other training as well so the challenge of scheduling becomes even more daunting.

We have come up with an exciting solution: training weeks! Two weeks have been set aside in January 2010: the 18th to the 22nd and the 25th to the 29th. The idea is that we will create two identical weeks of training and all employees are required to attend one of the weeks. This way, we can ensure that everyone receives the training that they need and we can continue to run all of our programs. It's a great idea and we are very excited for our first set of training weeks to begin!

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Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

“Everything can be improved upon” is the CQI motto. Continuous Quality Improvement is a mindset that progressive agencies such as ourselves have adopted. CQI challenges us to constantly reflect on how we provide service and operate our organization so that we can find ways to make to improve. It is what we are doing now as part of the accreditation process and what we will continue to do.

Outcomes

Outcomes are benefits or changes that occur after participating in a program, class or other activity. These outcomes can relate to behaviour, skills, knowledge, or attitudes. More importantly, outcomes are specific and measurable. For example, if someone takes a money management class, one of the

outcomes may be that they learn to do their own budget. We use outcomes as part of our person-centred planning process to demonstrate how people have met their personal goals.

Outcomes are not just for people, they are also for organizations. As an organization, we set goals and then identify expected outcomes to indicate when we've met our goals. In the previous newsletter, we spoke about our plan to develop an annual Outcomes Management Report. We will have a plan for the year and outcomes will be used to demonstrate that we have met the goals that were identified.

New terms are constantly being introduced and, as a proactive organization, it is important to recognize and adopt them. It helps ensure that we are all speaking the same language, so to speak! LOL

Introducing: Training Weeks

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The training weeks will include a mixture of mandatory training such as NVC as well as other sessions and workshops that will address or introduce topics that the entire agency would benefit from.

One example is person-centred planning. Mainstream puts tremendous importance on making services work for people. Our policies emphasize this and our person-centred planning process is all about putting people first. When FOCUS comes, they will be looking for more than policies and forms. They want to know how we ensure that all employees really understand how to translate policy into practice. Having a day dedicated to discussing person-centred planning, identifying challenges and brainstorming solutions would be a great refresher for everyone. Having people from every program come together in this exercise is also a great

opportunity for everyone to hear new ideas and learn from each other.

Some other topics we are considering for our training weeks include behaviour support, accessibility, an annual 3Rs refresher, sensitivity training, safe food handling, and universal precautions. We are also hoping to review and discuss some specific policies such as Privacy and Confidentiality, Rights, Behaviour Support and the Grievance Process.

The training weeks will include some sessions that will be repeated every year and others that will be included based on interest or need. They will be an opportunity to take a break from our daily routines, reconnect with other programs and remind ourselves of why we do what we do.

We will continue to provide updates as we work out the schedule for the 2010 training