

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

Accreditation Update

It has been a busy few weeks in Accreditation and we've been working on all sorts of great things. Here is a quick summary of some of our recent accomplishments.

We have reviewed and updated our program brochures to ensure that they reflect our current practices. We also created a new brochure to inform the people we support and our stakeholders what to do if they have any concerns with how service is provided.

On February 6th, Kris met with a graphic designer who will be designing our new brochures. Armed with the information we've provided, she will create a professional, eye-catching new look for us. It's something that we've talked about doing for a long time and it's exciting to see it happening.

Kevin and Céline have met several times with Alan and Michael from the Board to work through all 11 standards from Domain 5: Organizational Mandate, Governance and Leadership. Together, they have come up with a plan to address any unmet standards. As with most other domains, it turns out

that the Board is already doing most of the things that are required. The challenge now is to formalize processes, document practices and be able to demonstrate to others that they do what they say they are doing.

The 3Rs project is slowly wrapping up. There is only one more group left to complete the training and their classes should be done by the end of February. Probes and tests are ongoing but they should also be done in a few weeks.

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Domain 15: When Support is Provided in a Person's Home

Domain 15: When Support is Provided in a Person's Home takes a close look at how well we meet the needs of the people we support within our residential programs. In particular, FOCUS wants us to demonstrate how we address issues of compatibility between housemates, accessibility requirements, privacy, and levels of support required. As with all accreditation standards, we have to be able to prove that we do what we say we do.

Plenty of discussion during recent accreditation meetings yielded some great suggestions for how to formalize the way we address concerns within our residential programs.

First of all, we need to find a way to consistently record concerns that are raised by the people we support. These can include issues between housemates, accessibility concerns, or even the desire to move.

Second, we need to have a consistent method of working through these issues. If housemates are not getting along, why not? What has been tried? What changes could be made to improve the situation?

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Or another example: why does someone want to move? Perhaps there are things in their current living situation that they are not happy with. A few simple changes may make the difference.

Third, we need to develop an effective way of teaching the people we support how to work through the solution process. Let's explore the example of conflict between housemates. As support providers, we can intervene and do what we can to improve the situation. It also comes down to the choices made by the housemates themselves. Teaching people how to make positive choices and take responsibility for their own actions is a key part of the solution.

To summarize the last few paragraphs, we need to document concerns that are raised by the people we support. We need to demonstrate what steps we've taken to try to improve the situation. And finally, we need to use the situation as an opportunity to teach people how to make positive choices and take responsibility for their own actions.

Once we understood what we needed to do, the next step was to figure out how to do it. We came up with the idea of a form (yes, another one!) that people could fill out when they wanted to make a change to their living situation. The first step on the form would be to identify the reason for the request. For example, I want to move or I am not getting along with my housemates. The next step

would be to elaborate on the request. For example, my housemate and I keep fighting about how loud I play my music.

The next part of the form is to see whether this is an ongoing issue and, if so, what has been tried. From there, staff would help the person work through possible solutions and these would be documented. For example, I agree to use earphones to listen to my music after 10pm.

A follow-up plan would be used to evaluate whether the issue was resolved and, if not, the process would start again.

As a provider of residential services, we are all well aware of the challenges that we face. Limited housing spaces, limited staffing, personality conflicts and aging populations are just some examples. The good news is that Mainstream is creative and we continually strive to be innovative and meet the needs of the people we serve. Now we need to demonstrate to others all of the things that we do every day.

Hopefully, this new form will provide a systematic way of working through an issue, coming up with solutions and then evaluating them. Your Accreditation representatives will be bringing them to your staff meetings in the next few weeks. Discuss them, try them out and give us feedback on how they're working.

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The last step will be the three month probes which will start at the end of March. Every person who signed up for the 3Rs training will have two final probes done. Once those are complete, we will have finished the training and research component and will be able to start using the curriculum to

teach the classes ourselves.

Thank you so much to all of the staff who have been assisting with the probes. They can be a challenge to organize and often wreak havoc on your schedules. Our success with this project is due to your continued support and we could NOT have done it without you!