

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

People, not Paperwork

In an effort to ensure that every program meets all of the person-centred planning standards, we have had to introduce several new forms and formalize the process across the agency. Every program now has an annual series of steps to follow for each person using services so that we can document goals and demonstrate outcomes. It was a challenge and everyone should be proud of how far we've come in a relatively short time.

That being said, we need to take a step back to remember what person-centred planning is and why it is so important.

Let's go back to the beginning, or more specifically, to our core values and philosophies. Mainstream values above all else the right to make one's own choices and to have a say over the kind of services one receives. These beliefs should serve as a guide for every decision that we make.

Person-centred planning is a relatively new term but it is not a new concept. Simply put, it is how we ensure that every person using services has the opportunity to reflect on what is important to them and has the support they

need to meet their personal goals.

A lot is expected of us as support workers. Ensuring that every person has the opportunity to choose their own path is not always easy. Helping someone learn how to make decisions for themselves can take time. Finding ways to support people to meet their goals can be a challenge. That is why we have developed or adopted existing tools to help facilitate the conversations that need to happen and document the process as it unfolds.

The Quality of Life Assessment, the Social Capital Circle and the IPP meeting are just a few examples of the tools we use. And they are just that: tools to help guide the process. We don't complete the Quality of Life assessment so that we can say we completed it. We do it because it can be a powerful ally. It facilitates a conversation that explores all aspects of a person's life.

Continued on page 2

Intake Packages

Our quest to be accredited has led us to create several products intended to inform and educate people about Mainstream and the programs we offer. We have lovely new program brochures, a fantastic new Rights and Responsibilities booklet and will soon have a new brochure that outlines our complaint and grievance process. It's impressive!

Ideally, all of these resources will be given out during intake meetings but it was felt that there was still something missing. We needed something that summarizes some of the important details about a program. With help from across the agency, the A-TEAM is developing a fantastic new tool. It's an intake booklet that will be given out during initial meetings. Each program will have their own unique booklet which will provide a summary of some of the important information that is presented during an intake meeting but is often overwhelming to someone new.

The information in each program's booklet will reflect the unique characteristics of the program. The content has been determined using feedback from staff meetings. Some programs wanted information on transportation and social activities, others wanted information on

Continued on page 2

In this issue:

People, not Paperwork	1
Intake Packages	1

People, not Paperwork

Continued from page 1

It helps people learn to look at their life in a new way, reflect on what is important to them and think about what areas in their lives they are satisfied with. The experience of going through this assessment is a validating one because the person feels that they have truly been listened to. Once the Quality of Life is complete the process of setting goals becomes somewhat clearer.

The Social Capital Circle is a new tool that was developed to help meet several accreditation standards. Again, it is not simply a form to be filled out and filed away. This circle has several important roles to play. First of all, it was designed to capture a snapshot of all of the people in someone's life at a given moment. This is important as it can be compared from year to year to demonstrate changes in a person's social capital. The Social Capital Circle is divided into four sections in order to help teach about different types of relationships. As people fill out the circle, it provides a visual representation of the difference between friends, paid supports, acquaintances and strangers. Finally, the questions at the end of the form are used to facilitate a discussion and identify relationship goals that a person may have.

The Social Capital Circle and the Quality of Life are just two of the tools that we use to help people reflect on their lives and identify areas that they want to change or improve. Once the process has been completed, the IPP (or ILP or MAP) meeting is a culmination of

all the hard work that has been done. This meeting is a time to bring a person and their support circle together to celebrate the successes of the past year and plan for the next one. This meeting is about the person and their goals and desires guide the proceedings. Our role is to facilitate and ensure that a person's goals and wishes are respected and supported. We are the catalyst: we bring the person and their support circles together and use the person's goals guide to the conversation. Person-centred planning is not about what we want for a person, it is about what they want for themselves.

As each program gets used to the new forms and processes that accreditation brings, we must not lose sight of who we are and why we are here. As our philosophies state, our role is "to provide the necessary tools that will enable each person to exercise self-direction and ownership of choices". Forms and processes may help facilitate that but they are simply a means to an end. Listen, support, respect individuality and look for creative solutions. It is our goals that allow us to dream and our dreams that help us exceed all expectations.

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

C.S. Lewis

Intake Packages

Continued from page 1

tenancy agreements and renter's insurance. Included in all booklets will be information on person-centred planning, annual forms such as Consent to Disclose Information and Photo Releases, grievances and contact information.

Once these booklets are complete, we will assemble

intake packages for each program which will contain all of the information mentioned in this article. Hopefully these new tools will provide clear, concise information to people interested in our programs and their supports. Thank you all for your suggestions and we look forward to your feedback once the intake booklets are complete.