

M.A.D. Adventures

(Mainstream's Accreditation Dream)

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

Preparing for On-Site Validation

Four weeks and counting until FOCUS arrives to see us in action. We've done the work to meet the standards and are ready to invite the validation team to Mainstream.

On-site validation is the most exciting part of the process. For over 18 months, we have worked so hard and this is our chance to showcase our agency. It is our opportunity to show off the amazing work that is being done across the organization. This is also the time for us to have a conversation with FOCUS about some of the things that make Mainstream so unique.

There are still many questions about what the on-site validation will be like so this newsletter will attempt to address some of those questions.

BEFORE THEY ARRIVE

Coordination efforts are already underway to ensure that the time the validators spend here is used effectively. FOCUS is currently working with Mainstream to develop a schedule for November 23rd to the 26th.

Meeting times will be scheduled with certain employees and board members. FOCUS does not need to meet with every single person connected to Mainstream. They do need to meet with key people to collect information in order to confirm that we are doing what we say we are doing. FOCUS will most certainly want

to talk to Kevin, Margaret, Kris and Noor as they are the best people to answer questions about organizational mandate, finances and health and safety, fundraising and human resources. They will also want to book time to meet with two members of Mainstream's Board to discuss board operations and governance.

The FOCUS validators want to talk to people using our services. A list of every person using services was sent to FOCUS and they will be choosing a random sample from each program. Each person chosen will be asked for consent and, if they agree, a time will be set for them to meet with one of the validators. Employees may be asked to assist with these meetings in terms of coordinating times and facilitating communication if necessary.

Finally, we will need to arrange times for FOCUS to visit our four programs. FOCUS will decide ahead of time which home(s) they want to visit and we are responsible for arranging this visit at a time that meets the needs of people in the house. Meetings will also be scheduled with various people in Options Niagara and Supportive Independent Living and the Resource Centre. FOCUS chooses a random sample while trying to ensure a balance between people who are new to the agency and those who have been receiving services for many years.

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WHEN THEY ARE HERE

A team of three FOCUS validators will be coming to Mainstream. Our lead validator is Laura Clarke and our two peer validators are Megan MacDonald from Christian Horizons and Kelly Christo from Developmental Services in Woodstock. Kelly's agency has recently been accredited by FOCUS so she is familiar with that part of the process as well.

The validating team will hold an orientation meeting on Monday, November 23rd. This meeting is an opportunity to meet the validators and is used to provide an overview of what will happen during the three days.

Once the meeting is over, the validators begin data collection. That is the term they use as they are only here to observe and ask questions, not make decisions about whether or not we will be awarded accreditation. Each validator is assigned a group of domains and they meet with the person best able to answer the questions for each domain.

Validators are responsible for ensuring that they have collected all of the data they need. In addition to meeting with specific people, they will want to simply observe our daily operations. They may ask to sit in on a class in the Resource Centre, visit someone at their job placement or watch what happens during a cooking contract. They are simply trying to get as many perspectives as possible.

After three days of data collection, the validators will meet to debrief and then return to Mainstream on the morning of November 26th. They will provide a summary of the findings that they will be submitting to FOCUS. This meeting is an opportunity for us to clarify any final details, ask questions and get a sense of what they observed during their visit. We will NOT find out at this point whether or not we have been

awarded accreditation. The validators will send their findings to the FOCUS Accreditation Committee. This committee is comprised of three people who have extensive experience in the developmental services field. They review the findings of the validators and make their final decision within 45 days.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Within 45 days of their visit, we will be informed of their decision. FOCUS will let us know which areas we excelled in and which ones they would like us to address. No agency is expected to be perfect so we can expect that there will be areas they would like us to work on. That is in keeping with the theme of Continuous Quality Improvement.

We also find out at this time whether or not we have been awarded accreditation.

We will be expected to submit a report within one month outlining how we will address any outstanding issues. Once they receive and approve the report, we will be officially accredited!

Hopefully this helps clarify the process. As this is our first time going through a validation, there are bound to be questions and concerns. Céline will be attending staff meetings over the next few weeks to help further clarify things. She will also be holding 'mock validations' so that everyone gets a sense of the questions that may be asked. She, and the rest of the A-TEAM, are here to help so, as always, keep those communication lines open!