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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Although this manual, the training, the practicum and in particular the evaluation (please remember this is NOT an exam!) may seem rather daunting now, I hope that you are going to enjoy the process, and that you will also learn skills that help you to do your current or future volunteer or paid job in the field of resourcing people.

Those who have been involved in developing the accreditation program from the very beginning are very excited about the potential of accreditation and the opportunities it represents in improved and consistent services and in future funding.

Good luck and if you have any questions at any stage of the process, please do not hesitate to call Diane Wagner at the LDAO office at (416) 929-4311 Ex. 22, or e-mail dianew@ldao.ca.

OUTLINE OF FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

Participants usually take six months to a year to complete the Directory of Services, carry out the practicum and write the evaluation.

The written test is done as a take home. The completed Directory of Services can be mailed with the test, or the Directory of Services can be checked when LDAO staff visit the chapter office.

The written test will be based on material from the training session and the manual. It is an open book test.

85 to 100% - is required on the written test for accreditation

60 to 85% - results in deferred accreditation under two options:

75 to 85% - supplementary questions can be answered.

60 to 75% - a new written test may be taken at a time to be arranged

After the written test, participants will receive an Accreditation certificate and a letter, outlining the areas where they had difficulty or could improve.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

It is assumed that you will read this manual from cover to cover and will supplement the information contained within it by having access to the following:

a) Internal Documents

- LDAO By-Laws and LDAO Governance Policy Manual (in Chapter section of LDAO website)
- LDAO Public Policy Manual (in Public Policy Section of LDAO website)
- your chapter's Constitution
- your chapter's goals, objectives, annual reports, financial statements, etc.
- your chapter Board's minutes, reports, etc.

b) External Documents

- Education Act and regulations
- Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001)
- your school boards' Special Education Plans and any revisions

It is not expected that you will become knowledgeable about all of these or even that you read them all. But it is important that you know that they exist and how and where you can use them, should you need to.

The information that has been included in the manual is material you should become very familiar with. That does not mean memorizing it, so do not worry if you do not remember things easily.

Directory of Services

Accreditation participants are asked to complete a Directory of Services for the area covered by their chapter, in order to complete Accreditation.

You may create your own format for the information to be filled out, e.g. computer files, file cards, binder with pockets for brochures. Just make sure you have information on all the categories contained on the blank pages of the Directory of Services.

The purpose is that by the time you have completed the Directory of Services, it is your own personalized WORKING directory, something that you use on a daily basis. As things change, it is important that you enter the changes in your Directory of Services or data collection system.

In order to find the information for the completion of your Directory of Services, do not forget all the various resources, including the Blue Pages of your telephone directory,

your local Community Information Centre, local directories, etc. It is important that the information that you supply to clients is as accurate and up-to-date as possible.

Do not be afraid to ask for help from others, both in completing the manual and in doing the work. Also, remember that it is better to tell someone that you do not know the answer to their question, but will find out and get back to them, than to give people the wrong information.

YOU **CAN** DO THIS. GOOD LUCK!

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

To complete Accreditation, the candidate must carry out a practicum component of 20 hours on-the-job performance with their local chapter.

The 20 hours with the chapter can be spent on a combination of: answering resource calls, resource interviews, working with support groups, or doing a needs assessment or other survey of chapter members. Alternate activities should be approved by the trainers.

The president of the chapter must sign the Practicum Completion form, attesting to the 20 hours spent. (If the President is taking Accreditation, the form is to be signed by the Past President. If there is no active Past President, this task can be completed by the Vice President).

The practicum component should be completed within six months of the training session.

PRACTICUM COMPLETION FORM

As President of LDA of : _____

I hereby attest to the fact that: _____

Has completed 20 hours of on-the-job performance in the following manner:

Activities	Time Spent	Number of Contacts
Resource calls		
Resource interviews		
Support group meetings		
Needs assessment survey		
Other chapter survey		
Other		

Signature: _____

Date: _____

EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY RESOURCES DIRECTORY

ITEM	COMPLETE	NEEDS WORK
YOUR CHAPTER		
Chapter Goals		
Chapter Services		
Chapter Resource Inventory		
Inter-chapter Resource Support		
Current Executive		
MINISTRY REGIONAL OFFICES		
Education		
Training, Colleges & Universities		
Community & Social Services		
Children & Youth Services		
Health & Long-term Care		
SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION		
Local school boards		
Contacts for Special Education		
Contacts for LD Services		
Contacts for Assessments		
IPRC Information		
Parent/Special Needs Assoc.'s		
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION		
Offices for Students with Disabilities		

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES		
Service Canada		
ODSP Employment Supports		
Youth Employment Centres		
Job Connect		
Employment Agencies		

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES		
Medical/Professional		
Psychological assessments		
Mental Health		
COMMUNITY SERVICES		
Information Centres, etc.		
Remedial & Tutoring		
Literacy, Adult Basic Ed, Upgrading		
Social Skills		
Recreation		
Private Schools		
Legal Counsel		
Multicultural		
Other sources of Help		

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR RESOURCE FACILITATOR

Purpose

To provide resource information by telephone, and in response to written requests, on learning disabilities services to the population and on the work of the Association.

Skills and Knowledge Required

LDAO Accreditation

Line of Authority

Usually reports to designated director on the Chapter's Board or, if the chapter has a more senior staff person, e.g. an Executive Director, to that individual.

Responsibilities

The specifics of these responsibilities will vary from chapter to chapter, It is important that the Chapter Board of Directors develop a detailed written job description for the individual. This should include the following:

- a) to become familiar with all local and regional services to people with learning disabilities;
- b) to become familiar with the chapter's services to the population;
- c) to respond to calls, e-mails and correspondence from parents, individuals with learning disabilities and professionals regarding resources for people with learning disabilities;
- d) to know when, where, and how to refer clients to more in-depth and intensive sources of counselling and information;
- e) to keep statistics and report regularly to the Board of Directors and/or designated supervisor;
- f) to process and fill orders for resource materials and make sure that adequate supplies are maintained in the chapter resource centre;
- g) to perform other related duties as directed by the Chapter Board.

ROLE OF THE RESOURCE FACILITATOR

Being a resource person for your chapter can be a very rewarding experience. Remember, although you may feel very new to the job and unsure of some aspects of it, you will be able to make a valuable contribution because of your own experiences and the insights you have gained from them both as a parent and as a member of the Association. Keep in mind that you are speaking as a member of LDA and specifically of your local chapter; it is important that you are an informed member, informed about the Association and its work, about learning disabilities in general and about resources in your area.

It is important that you keep a record of your telephone inquiries, both for yourself and your chapter. Samples of various record keeping sheets are provided elsewhere in this manual. Being able to review past calls sometimes makes it possible to identify a need in the community which the chapter might well like to address. Statistics are very important for both the chapter and LDAO to establish community needs and trends for grant applications and briefs. **Always keep your telephone inquiry records in a locked place to ensure confidentiality.**

Enquiries from Parents

The telephone resource person should be sensitive, non-judgemental and appropriate. Your aim is to help the parent by listening and providing the empathy that an informed parent who has a child with similar difficulties can offer.

Listen with as few interruptions as possible - let the parent unburden for a while - listen for the parent's feelings (e.g. anger, anxiety, frustration, etc.). If you need some parts of the story clarified, repeat what you heard the parent say (make notes as he/she is talking) and ask for more information or clarification. Acknowledge the feelings of the parent.

Some information you may want to find out:

- name, sex, age, school placement, board;
- what has been done already and by whom;
- what were the professional's recommendation(s);
- what does the parent "feel" about his/her child (always refer to "your" child) - at home, at school, after school activities, with peers (strengths and weaknesses);
- what does the parent want to do? What does he/she need information about?

A parent may request information about:

- information concerning the assessment, placement and special education process within school systems;

- professional services in the community, e.g. psychologists, mental health services
- help with their approaches to professionals - they need to approach with confidence and not with aggression or anger. Their parental confidence needs boosting and they need you to listen and tell them what a good job they are doing. Letting them rehearse with you is good;
- recreational resources or social skills programs;
- vocational and social services for LD adolescents and adults.

If the parent needs more information than you feel you can give, tell them you would like to try and find an answer and call them back. If you do not feel comfortable responding to their questions, you can **ask permission** to discuss and refer the questions to someone else in your chapter, or to LDA Ontario where appropriate.

If the parent(s) are not already members, encourage them to join the association so that they can receive information on a regular basis. Tell them about any programs, workshops, etc. that may be of interest to them. Be cautious about overwhelming an already anxious parent.

Adult and Adolescent Enquiries

You will find that many phone calls will come from adults and adolescents who are calling for help for themselves. Some people are able to ask directly for help and have some understanding of the sort of help they want. Often a caller will be very hesitant to speak about their problems and may even ask for help for a 'friend'. When you receive such a phone call you may not know at first if the caller is asking about themselves or someone else. The caller may also be reluctant to leave their name, or only give a first name.

Requests may be made for:

a) Assessment:

Assessment for learning disabilities is done using a series of psychoeducational tests administered by a psychologist or psychological associate (diagnosis must be made by a qualified member of the College of Psychologists). This is usually only available for adults through professionals in private practice, and can be quite expensive. Ask if the person has any coverage under a group medical plan (e.g. through an employer, spouse's employer, or parental plan if the individual is under 25 and still in school). If covered, they should be able to get some of the cost of assessment covered, with a referral from a medical doctor. Ask them to check their plan under Services of a psychologist.

Students in postsecondary who are OSAP eligible can pay for assessment through the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD). They can apply through the office for students with disabilities at the college or university.

If the person is eligible for ODSP Employment Supports, they may be able to get a psychoeducational or psychovocational assessment as part of their employment planning.

You will need to find out what options for assessment are available for adults in your own community.

b) Employment

Service Canada, www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/audiences/disabilities/index.shtml, (part of HRSDC) will have information about retraining programs, including those funded through the Opportunities Fund (for individuals with disabilities).

Information about Job Connect and apprenticeship programs is available through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/.

Information and regional contacts for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Employment Supports program can be found at www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/social/odsp/index, Familiarize yourself with the eligibility requirements and application process.

c) Remediation

Find out about adult literacy and upgrading programs offered through school boards, community colleges, and community literacy programs. There is a directory on the AlphaPlus website:
<http://alphacom.alphaplus.ca/AlphaBaseEng.nsf/fedffe845da930418525661b0073455c?OpenView>

Keep a list of private tutors and tutoring clinics who deal with adults, noting those with special education training.

General Information Inquiries

a) Membership:

Take caller's name, address, telephone number and refer it to the chapter person responsible for membership. Explain to the caller the benefits of membership, e.g. receiving newsletters from the national, provincial and local level (if your chapter has a newsletter); member rates (if you have them) on chapter programs. Tell the caller about upcoming meetings that may be of interest.

b) Speaker Requests:

Take name of organization, name and telephone number of caller, nature of event and topic of speech, date, place and address, time and length of speech. Tell the caller you will have someone call and confirm the request. Phone your chapter senior staff member or president with the details of the request.

c) Videos/Literature and/or Publications:

If your chapter does not have a resource centre, suggest that the caller contact the LDAO office for further information: info@LDAO.ca.

d) Students Looking for Resource Information:

Refer them to local resources you are aware of, to your own resource centre, or to the LDAO library (library@LDAO.ca) They can also access links to other useful websites through LDAO: www.ldao.ca/aboutLDs/resources.php

TIPS FOR RESOURCE FACILITATORS ON WORKING WITH ADULTS

Relate to the adult as an adult

- Turn off your maternal/paternal instincts
- Don't make assumptions about who they are, what they are capable of
- Remember that this is an adult whose life is complex, and whose learning disabilities are only part of who they are.

Understand possible impacts of learning disabilities

- May need understanding and support before information
- Reaching out to call can be a BIG step
- May be living in isolated circumstances
- Depression/anxiety/self esteem can be on-going struggles

Be clear about what you can provide and stay out of areas you are not expert in

- Know when to refer
- Know the crisis intervention telephone numbers in case they are needed

Provide information on how to access any services, e.g.:

- Who to ask for?
- What questions to ask?
- How to make decisions regarding a service?

It may be helpful for the adult to rehearse answers to questions that may be asked, e.g. "Why do you suspect you have an LD?"

Model good boundaries

- At the end of the contact, review what has been discussed
- Go over any steps you or the caller agreed to make
- Ask if the caller would like you to follow up with them later
- Ask how they learn best and try to provide any follow-up information in that format

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN TALKING TO ADULT CALLER

1. What difficulties are they having that are currently interfering in their life? When do these occur?
 2. What are their present circumstances? – attending school, working, unemployed, on social assistance (OW) or disability supports (ODSP)?
 3. What are their hopes and plans?
 - To do upgrading?
 - To make a career change?
 - To attend post secondary education?
 - To cope better on their job, get promoted?
 4. What are they looking for?
 - Understanding their difficulties?
 - Advocacy?
 - Support Group?
 - Remediation of specific skill deficits - spelling reading comprehension, math, writing?
 - Assessment?
 - Coping skills?
 - Information on counselling, therapy?
 5. Education History:
 - Highest grade at school?
 - Courses at Applied or Academic level in high school (if a recent grad)?
 - In a special class at school in elementary or HS? (If in a “special class” throughout HS, may have an intellectual disability versus LD)
 - Post secondary courses taken or attempted
 - What kinds of subjects did they do well in, have difficulty with?
 - What kinds of help, accommodations did they get in school?
 - What helped the most?
- If they have come from another country:
- Have they done any schooling in Canada?
 - Did they have difficulty in school in their home country, in their native language?
6. Work History:
 - What kinds of work do they do, have they done?
 - What have they been most successful at?
 - What difficulties have interfered?
 - Have they had any help, accommodations on the job?
 - What work would they ideally like to do?
 7. What support systems do they have?
 - Spouse, partner
 - friends
 - family doctor who knows them
 - parents
 - counsellor/therapist

ENDORSEMENT OF SERVICE FACILITIES

Given that LDAO does not have the facilities for making valid assessments and comparisons of schools, camps and other facilities established for individuals with learning disabilities, it is our policy not to express opinions as to the relative merits of one school or camp over another. Directors, officers and staff will be at liberty to express their personal opinions providing it is made clear they are not speaking on behalf of the Association. Chapters are also urged to refrain from endorsing any particular facility.

RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHER EXCEPTIONALITIES

Learning disabilities affect up to 10% of the general population. While our definition focuses on the presence of average to above average intelligence and excludes other conditions as the primary cause of the problem, it is important to realize that LDs are communication disabilities, which may occur in conjunction with many other disabilities or exceptionalities .

In terms of intervention, the focus will usually be on the primary disability, but it is important to understand that a person who has cerebral palsy (CP) or epilepsy, for example, may also have learning disabilities.

When we assist an individual or parent where the primary diagnosis is something other than LDs, we must ensure that even while we encourage them to approach the most appropriate service agency in the community, we also offer any information that may be helpful. Such requests must be handled sensitively and with empathy. Information about the special education process can be useful for all exceptionalities, and information about rights to accommodations may be useful to individuals with all disabilities.

POLICY ON COUNSELLING & EDUCATIONAL TESTING OFFERED BY LDAO CHAPTERS

1. COUNSELLING

a) Chapters may offer short-term, goal-directed counselling only on educational or vocational issues related to learning disabilities, by staff or volunteers who meet the following qualifications:

I. Have completed an educational program at the postsecondary level which includes supervised training in counselling (e.g. BSW, MSW, Social Service Worker, MA/Med in Counselling Psychology, DipCS in Assessment & Counselling, B.Ed with additional qualifications in Guidance Counselling).

b) Chapter personnel doing counselling shall adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Canadian Counselling Association (membership in the Association is encouraged).

c) Resource facilitating is not to be represented as counselling. (See glossary of terms following this section).

d) This policy applies to counselling offered with or without a fee and by chapter staff or volunteers.

2. EDUCATIONAL TESTING

a) Chapters may offer educational testing by chapter staff or volunteers who are qualified to administer the tests used. Educational testing in this policy refers only to the evaluation of academic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. A list of typical academic tests can be found in Appendix B.

b) Diagnostic assessment for learning disabilities can only be done by a qualified psychologist or psychological associate registered with the College of Psychologists.

3. Glossary of Terms re Counselling and Educational Testing Policies

a) **Resource Facilitating** - providing information about learning disabilities and about community resources and services, ways of accessing those services, and rights to services. Helping parents or individuals understand processes they may need to go through to access services, and giving them an opportunity to express feelings about their situation.

b) **Counselling** - entering into an agreement with a client to provide services which may include informing, advising, guiding, educating and/or coaching around a specific area of concern.

c) **Supervised training in counselling** - involves ongoing regular contacts with a person qualified to provide counselling, to discuss specific client cases.

d) **Psychotherapy** - providing specialized treatment interventions for mental disorders or serious emotional problems.

e) **Case Management/Coordination** - coordinating services for a client in a complex situation where more than one organization is involved.

POLICY RE CHILD PROTECTION PREVENTION AND REPORTING OF ABUSE

1. Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy:

- a) Child means a child under the age of 16.

- b) Parent means a parent, person having lawful custody or person having charge of the child.

- c) Child in need of protection means a child who has been abused or for whom there is a risk that the child is likely to be abused and the parent who knows or ought to know of the abuse is not taking steps to prevent it.

- d) Abuse means physical harm, sexual molestation or exploitation, failure to provide medical treatment when required, emotional harm, failure to provide treatment for a mental, emotional or developmental condition which could seriously impair the child's development.

- e) Reasonable grounds are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal judgment would suspect.

2. Reporting:

- a) Any LDAO, Chapter or Satellite staff or volunteer who suspects on reasonable grounds that a child is or may be in need of protection shall promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local Children's Aid Society.

- b) The person making the report shall report directly to the Children's Aid Society and shall not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf. However it is recommended that volunteers consult with their supervisor before making the report provided that the child is not thereby placed at risk.

3. Prevention:

- a) LDAO, its Chapters and Satellites will implement the procedures for recruitment, screening, orientation and supervision of staff and volunteers set out in these policies.

- b) Staff and volunteers working with a child will do so in an environment where there is always another adult present or in close proximity.

- c) Staff and volunteers working with a child in a home environment will ensure that a parent or guardian is present at all times.

PRIVACY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

In Compliance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Document Act (PIPEDA), the LDAO and its Chapters will adhere to the following procedures around the collection, distribution, and use of any personal information in the workplace.

PROCEDURES FOR PIPEDA POLICY

1. Accountability:
Volunteers, staff, and representatives of LDAO and its Chapters will be responsible for protecting all client information. LDAO and its Chapters will appoint one person as Privacy Officer at their respective offices. It will be the responsibility of each staff and volunteer to follow compliance policies. In the event of a complaint, the Privacy Officer will be assigned the task of resolving the matter to the client's satisfaction.
2. Identifying Purpose:
When initial contact is made with a client, you will advise them that LDAO and/or the Chapter collects information for the purposes of research, statistics and for planning of services and programs at the provincial and local level only. Confirm that LDAO and its Chapters have a policy that expressly states that their personal information is not shared outside the organization.
3. Consent:
LDAO and/or its Chapters must advise the client that with their permission, you are going to take some notes of the conversation that may be used for the express identifying purposes above.
4. Limiting Collection:
Limit personal information collected to that which is necessary to achieve the organization's purposes as outlined in Item 1 above and meets the client's purpose for contacting the organization.
5. Limiting Use, Disclosure and Retention:
LDAO and its Chapters will not disclose any information collected on a client without the written permission of the client or as required by law. LDAO and its Chapters will have a process for the safe retention of such information for up to 5 years after contact is initiated, unless there is ongoing contact with the client. At the end of five years, LDAO and its Chapters will destroy the information in such a manner as required to ensure that the client is not identified.
6. Accuracy:
Information will be maintained in an accurate, complete, and current form and used only to fulfill the purposes for which it was collected, unless additional consent has been obtained.

7. Safeguards:
All information collected from clients will be stored in a secure area. LDAO and its Chapters will designate staff and/or volunteers authorized to access the information and the storage area. The client will be advised of this at the time of contact.
8. Openness:
Make clients aware of the policy and practices that apply to the management of personal information on initial contact and be prepared to give them written copies of policies and practices.
9. Individual Access:
Upon request, we will inform clients of the existence, use and disclosure of their personal information. Clients will be able to verify the accuracy and completeness of information. The client can challenge the accuracy and completeness of the information and have it amended as appropriate.
10. Challenging Compliance:
Any issues or complaints as to compliance with PIPEDA principles will be forwarded to the Privacy Officer or a designated PIPEDA Compliance Officer. LDAO and its Chapters will have a written process for resolving any issues or complaints. The client will be required to put their concerns in writing or alternate format and the final resolution of the issues will also be provided to all parties in written form or alternate format on request.
11. LDAO and its Chapters will develop specific notification to appear on all fax and e-mail forms, plus a verbal comment for phone contact that complies with the Act.