

IMH Level 3 & 4 Endorsement

Application Anxiety Dialogue

Long-Time MI-AIMH Member: “I’m scared!”

Sheryl Goldberg: “Excuse me? Were you talking to me?”

LTMM: “Aren’t you the MI-AIMH Endorsement Chair? I just wanted you to know I’m scared to apply.”

SG: “But you’ve been doing this work for years! You’re just the sort of person this endorsement is for!”

LTMM: “The length of time I’ve been working is part of the problem. I went through formal training a long time ago, and the competencies we’re expected to have are really broad. What if I don’t know enough, or what I know is out of date?”

SG: “Most people find, when they start to look back at their academic transcripts and list the conferences and in-service trainings they’ve done since then, that their education is broader and more current than they realized.”

LTMM: “Still, test-taking was never something I was good at, even when I knew everything the test was about. How should I study for the multiple choice part?”

SG: “I don’t think you should study the way you did for college courses. When you review the competency areas, if you feel really uneasy about the content of one or more of them you can do some reading on your own or even sign up for a course, but you should also remember the Winnicott principle of the good-enough parent. We know our members draw from many different fields, and the exam reflects that interdisciplinary reality. Everyone has different areas of strength. You don’t have to get a perfect score – just good enough.”

LTMM: “Just supposing I really fail – is that it? Or will I get feedback on my errors, and a chance to try again?”

SG: “???” A “provisional” response would be given to you, and you would have the chance to discuss feedback with your assigned endorsement advisor before you take the exam again.

LTMM: “And then there’s the case study part. I haven’t done direct service for years, now – I’m in management. I’m scared I can’t respond well as a practitioner anymore.”

SG: “I don’t care how many years it’s been, I’ll bet there are still home visits and families you remember like yesterday. And even if you aren’t supervising anyone right now, you’ve done that in the past or you couldn’t apply to level 3 or 4. If you wanted to refresh yourself with recent reading, you could read “Case Studies in Infant Mental Health”, eds. J. Shirilla & D. Weatherston. What would you tell a supervisee about having trust in herself and the infant mental health principles that have become second nature?”

LTMM: “Okay, okay – but if I fail that part? Then what?”

SG: "?????" Once again, a "provisional" response would be given to you, along with opportunity to discuss feedback with your assigned endorsement advisor before you take the exam again.

LTMM: "Well, maybe I'll try – but I don't know where I'll find the time to put it all together."

SG: "Think about how and where you might have some of this information already gathered. Do save your old calendars? Keep a list of professional development for CEU's or other purposes? Does your employer keep records in your personnel file of training attended? I bet if you gave it an hour a week for a month you'd have it done. In fact, track the hours it takes you and let me know. That would be helpful information for others."

LTMM: "The assessment fee costs a tidy bit."

SG: "It does at Level 3 & 4, however, it is in-line with fees for credentialing offered by other professional organizations. This year, MI-AIMH will be offering a reduction in the Endorsement fee (see details on page _ of this issue of the Crier). Although this is a brand new credential, some employers may see how much the endorsement after your name will be worth on grant applications and program evaluations, etc. Eventually, it will be a mark of someone who is a qualified, specialized professional in this field, that employers will recognize and prefer to hire."

LTMM: "And if I need someone to hold my hand while I do this?"

SG: "Holding each other is what we are good at in MI-AIMH. When you apply you will be assigned a MI-AIMH advisor to speak with as you take the steps along the way. Some folks have persuaded a colleague to apply along with them, and support each other through the process."

LTMM: "I'll do it! But I'm still a little anxious . . ."

SG: "Take a deep breath or two – then run, meditate, do yoga, knit, eat comfort food...whatever calms you. Give yourself a chance to think about one next step and do it. Then get in touch and we can talk some more."