

June 14, 2022

Dear NAADAC Award Committee Members:

This purpose of this communication is to offer my support of Mark Sander's nomination to receive NAADAC's 50th Anniversary Legend Award. I offer this recommendation as someone who has worked in the addictions field for 50+ years, worked closely with NAADAC over the course of my career, and collaborated with Mark for decades. I am delighted to offer this recommendation for Mark. The duration, scope and depth of his contributions to the field are immense, and no one has done more to enhance the effectiveness of addiction counselors in working with people of color and to enhance the representation and professional development of clinicians within the field.

Mark's sustained contributions to our field have been grounded in his reputation as an exemplary clinician—a role he sustained along with his training, consulting, and organizing activities through most of his career. He is what many on the frontlines think of as the ultimate role model for skilled and ethical clinical practice. Amidst all the professional distractions that tempt us all, Mark's focus has not wavered from a commitment to individuals, families, and communities affected by addiction.

Mark's ability to integrate scientific knowledge and experiential knowledge as well as his remarkable eloquence as a speaker made him a natural trainer of addiction and allied health professionals. He has spent years on the road throughout the United States and in other countries as well as on multiple virtual media outlets as an educator and advocate. The subjects he has addressed through these presentations span the areas of counseling techniques, cross-cultural counseling, working with special populations, working with children of addicted parents, and ethical decision-making in addiction counseling.

Mark has been a champion of multiple pathways of recovery across cultural contexts and has trained extensively on trauma-informed care, recovery management, and recovery-oriented systems of care (ROSC). Regarding the latter, he has consulted at federal, state, and local levels on shifting the design of addiction treatment from models of acute care to models of sustained recovery management nested within larger a larger ROSC. He co-authored the first ATTC recovery management monograph and subsequently co-authored a scientific report on recovery management in communities of color. Most importantly, he has provide extensive training on the implications of this conceptual shift for frontline addiction professionals and peer recovery support specialists.

Mark has worked tirelessly to elevate the role of counselors of color in the field. He

- co-founded the International Institute of Black Addictions Professionals
- researched and published articles related to the history of addiction recovery in African American communities

- Created the Online Museum of African American Addictions, Treatment and Recovery
- Developed a training manual and hosted training of trainer events for addiction professionals of color who wish to pursue teaching and presenting as part of their contributions to the field.

To further the reach of his contributions to the field, Mark published numerous books and articles for peer-reviewed journals and professional trade journals (including *Counselor*, *Addiction Professional*, and *Student Assistance Journal*). I have had the privilege of co-authoring numerous contributions with Mark and can attest to the collegiality, professionalism, and skill with which he entered each of these collaborations. His books include:

- *Substance Use Disorders in African American Communities: Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery*, Routledge, November 2013
- *Slipping through the Cracks: Intervention Strategies for Clients with Multiple Addictions and Disorders*. Health Communications, Inc., Deerfield Beach, FL, December 2011
- *Treating the African American Male Substance Abuser*. Winds of Change Publishing Company, 1993
- *Preventing Gang Violence in Your School*. The Johnson Institute, Minneapolis, MN, 1995

Mark also is co-founder of Serenity Academy of Chicago, the only recovery high school in Illinois. He has had a 30-year career as a university educator having taught at the University of Chicago, Illinois State University, Illinois School of Professional Psychology, and Loyola University of Chicago, School of Social Work.

In the decades I have known Mark, he has never been without younger workers he was actively mentoring for further development. It would be hard to calculate the number of such workers who entered our field, pursued advanced education, or sought greater areas of impact under his influence. He graciously extends himself in offering co-authorship and co-training opportunities to those he mentors—all in an effort to prepare our next generation of addiction professionals.


Mark recognized early on that one of the best vehicles to influence the field was through his support of NAADAC and their many initiatives. Mark has been a good friend of NAADAC, having first reshaped the Illinois NAADAC's board into a vibrant working board and led many of activities to increase NAADAC visibility and membership in the state. Mark's professional visibility in Illinois, such as his leadership role in establishing the first recovery high school in Chicago, contributed to his ability to attract Illinois' addiction professionals to NAADAC. He subsequently volunteered his time to NAADAC at a national level, serving in such roles as a member of NAADAC's Clinical Concerns Committee.

These contributions have not been by happenstance. Mark has sought my regular guidance for more than two decades on how he could best contribute to the

elevation of the field of addiction counseling. Since 2010, we have met formally each January to evaluate his past year's challenges and contributions and to set his professional goals for the coming year. I have mentored hundreds of young professionals in our field and I do not know anyone who has been as strategic in shaping their contributions to the field as Mark has been.

Mark has modeled a high level of ethical conduct over his decades in the field and modeled core the recovery values of honesty, humility, gratitude, forgiveness, tolerance, respect, generosity, and service in his professional and personal life. He has brought many people into professional roles in the field and many people into recovery by the sheer magnetism of his commitment to this work.

I support without reservation Mark Sander's nomination to receive NAADAC's 50th Anniversary Legend Award. He is indeed a "legend." If you have any questions related to this recommendation, you are welcome to reach me via the below contact information.



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