



Centre de recherche sur les politiques en matière d'invalidité professionnelle (CRPIP)  
Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP)

## Who We Are

### The Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy

- In 2012, the Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP) was created through a 7-year **SSHRC Partnership Grant**
- National collaboration with 60+ researchers and 50+ partners across 15 research institutions.
- 4 Clusters – including through SafetyNet, Memorial University





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## Co-Directors

**Emile Tompa**

Senior Scientist, IWH  
Associate Professor,  
McMaster University

**Ellen MacEachen**

Associate Professor,  
University of Waterloo





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## Our Mission

Our mission is to conduct **partner-informed research** on how to improve Canadian work disability policy to help all people access employment and income security.



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## Work Disability Policy Context

- Complex Canadian work disability policy system consisting of multiple programs at the provincial and federal level
- Changing nature of work, workers and injuries posing new challenges
- Economic climate can create pressure to further restrict eligibility





## Social and Organisational Silos

### Work injury system

Work injury & illness  
researchers  
Workers' compensation  
policy-makers  
Injured worker activists  
Overall medical and socio-  
legal frame

### Social security policy system

Disability researchers  
Social security policymakers  
Disability rights activists  
Overall human rights +  
medical model frame

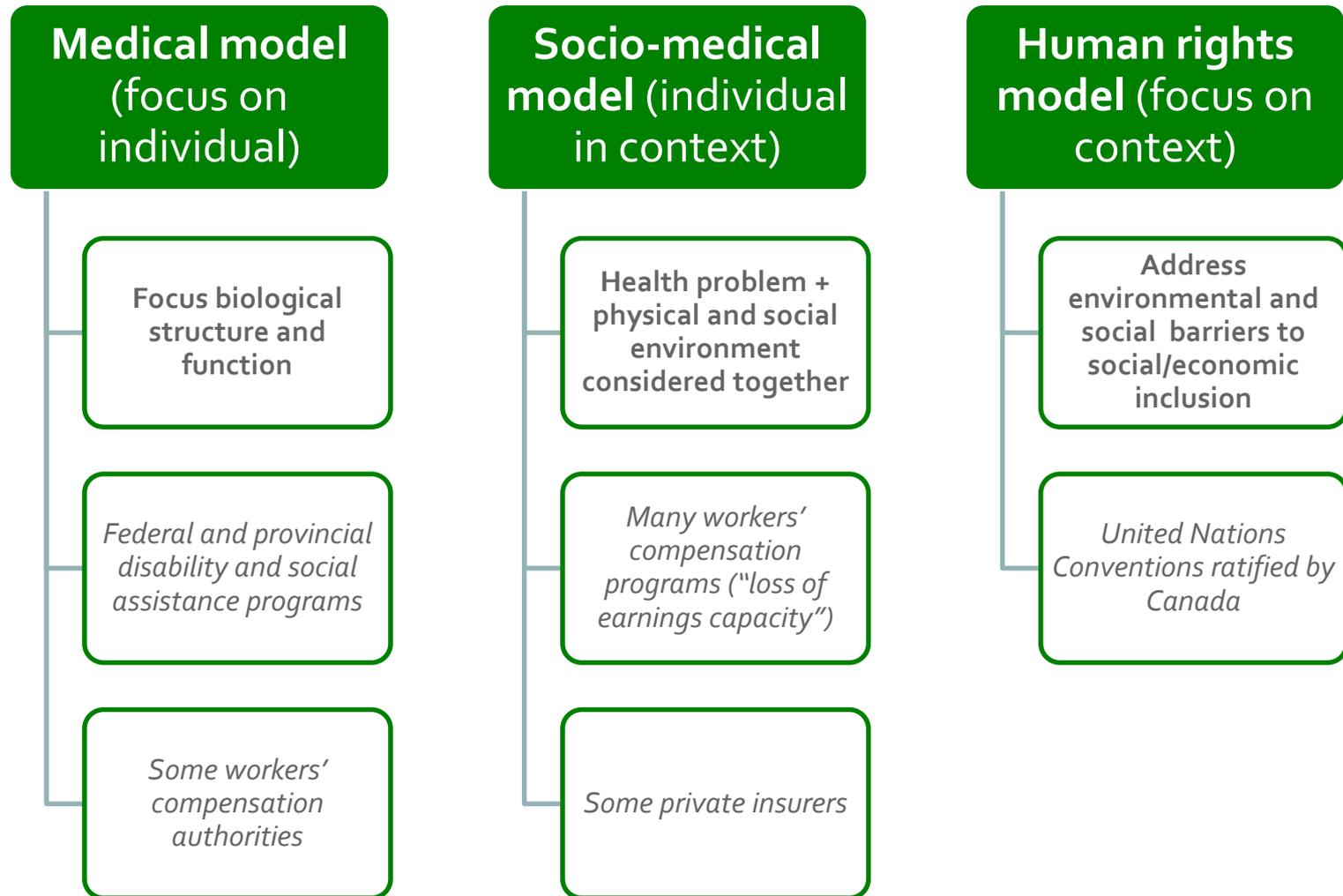


## Patchwork of Canadian Work Disability Programs





## Varied Disability Concepts Across Canadian Programs





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## Core Mandate

- **Bring together varied stakeholders** in the Canadian work disability policy system, including employers
- **Identify issues associated with program coordination and complexity**
- **Facilitate dialogue**, problem identification, and policy action
- Support multiple transdisciplinary research projects, including international comparative work
- **Build capacity for research on applied work disability policy**
- **Build consensus on a roadmap for work disability policy**



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## Overall Objective and Research Questions

**To identify how people, when disabled, can be better retained and integrated into the Canadian labour market**

### Research questions

1. How well does the Canadian disability policy system serve the current and emerging needs of working-age individuals, when disabled, in terms of employment support and opportunities?
2. For what individuals and labour-market contexts does it work well/not work well and why?
3. What are the key opportunities for policy and program improvement in the short and long run?





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## Population Health Focus

### **Work disability touches most people at some point over their lifetime....**

- People with disabilities represent about 15.5 per cent of Ontario's population (similar percentages apply across the country)
- More than 50% of Canadian families touched by disability
- Aging of the Canadian population means more working age adults will be affected by chronic and episodic health conditions



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## **Newfoundland and Labrador Cluster**

### **SafetyNet**

**Co-leads: Stephen Bornstein and Barbara Neis**

- multiple faculty, community partners, students and postdoctoral fellow

#### **Activities**

- **Roundtable on Inclusion and Best Practices**
- **'Seed grant' projects** (1 year, \$10,000 in funding each)
- **Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Projects**

**Similar objectives:** To tease out how the array of policies and administrative practices pertaining to persons with disabilities plays out in specific contexts and for particular groups, identify problems and strategies for resolving these.



## NL Cluster: Roundtable on Inclusion

- Co-sponsored with COD-NL and Independent Living Resources Centre
- Objective: facilitate a conversation between diverse groups about what it really means to be inclusive of persons with disabilities in workplaces
- Questions that guided the conversation:
  - 1.) How is disability inclusion currently promoted in NL workplaces?
  - 2.) What are some examples of effective inclusion-related strategies, changes and initiatives from workplaces in other locations?
  - 3.) What can we do to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities (including those caused by work) in workplaces?



## Best practices for disability inclusion in NL workplaces

1. The need for continuity of support and services through all stages in life (versus providing supports for a limited period/in a limited context)
2. The importance of cross-disability understanding and consideration
3. The value of taking a multi-pronged approach to workplace disability inclusion

**Key outcome:** Disability Inclusion Group at Memorial to improve recruitment and retention of staff and faculty with disabilities and students and support development of disability studies curriculum at Memorial.



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## **CRWDP Seed Grant Project #1**

### **NL Cluster**

#### **Disability Support Services for Persons with Disabilities in NL**

- Partnership between SafetyNet and COD-NL
- Approach:
  - Document review and analysis
  - Interviews with key informants
  - Focus groups
- Report submitted July, 2016



## **Disability Support Services for Persons with Disabilities**

### **Findings:**

- There are still real problems of labour market access for PWD
- Labour market integration involves a combination of real and perceived obstacles
- Problems are especially severe in a province with a weak and shrinking, economy
- Significant reforms of the social assistance programming and improved awareness and interest among employers, especially in the private sector are needed.



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## **CRWDP Seed Grant #2**

### **NL Cluster**

#### **Eligibility Criteria for Disability Programs and Labour Market Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities (PWD)**

- Partnership between SafetyNet and “Empower” (formerly “Inclusion NL”) with NL and NB government partners
- Approach:
  - Document review and analysis
  - Interviews with key informants
  - Focus groups



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## Eligibility Criteria for Disability Programs and Labour Market Inclusion of PWD

### Focus

- Similarities and differences between NL and NB
- Provincial and federal policies
- Specific disability populations
  - young people with autism trying to make the transition from school to work
  - adults with mental health disabilities (both work-caused and work-related) including PTSD and other stress disorders
- Research to begin in summer of 2017



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## CRWDP Graduate Student Projects NL Cluster

### Daniella Simas Medeiros

- Focus: Threats to health and well-being of correctional officers who work in provincial institutions.
- Core question: are correctional policies serving the current and emerging needs of correctional officers?



### Aleksandra Stefanovic-Chafe

- Focus: Supported employment programs for persons with mental health disabilities in NL.
- Primary goal: define pathways and increase opportunities for individuals with mental health issues to successfully integrate in local labour markets.





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## Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Projects NL Cluster

### Ololade Adedoyin Animashaun

- Focus: Employment experiences of people with disabilities in urban and suburban NL including how their location affects their access to social supports and job opportunities.
- Objective: identify barriers and strategies for reducing those barriers.



### Dana Howse

- Focus: Supporting mobility to, from and within work with a physical disability: policies and practices in NL and Ontario.
- Work-related mobility can increase opportunities but pose challenges for the physically disabled. Identify challenges, their relationship to policy context and identify strategies to address those challenges.





## Why CRWDP is particularly important for NL/Atlantic Canada?

1. Relatively high rate of injury and occupational disease (work-caused disability)
2. High rate of other forms of disability linked to rapidly aging population and high rates of outmigration
3. High unemployment and high rates of precarious employment contributing to exclusion of people with disabilities/replacement of workers with work-related disabilities?
4. Regional benefits of going beyond 'accommodation' of injured workers to 'inclusion' and universal design approaches to make workplaces better for everyone.



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# Thank You

