



Moving Forward Together: Disability and Work in Canada (DWC) Initiative

Terminology and Acronyms

Definitions

Accessibility: Consistent with [Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), we use the term “accessibility” in a broad sense to refer to the quality of physical environments, transportation, information and communication technologies and systems, services, products and facilities that enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. The full list of measures to ensure accessibility can be found in the text of UN CRPD Article 9. At the workplace, identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility is achieved through genuine efforts of employers and employees and learning from individual people’s experiences.

Disability: The term “disability” describes the situation of exclusion of persons with health conditions and impairments from full participation in society. A person can experience disability when built environment, attitudes and/or social structures do not support their identity, abilities and functioning. Interaction of different factors, such as race, sex and gender, Indigenous status, geographical location, age, etc. may impact experience of disability. Since most of us experience health impairments or deterioration at some point of our lives, disability is a universal and temporal experience, a part of every human’s journey, and it must be addressed through social transformation and making society inclusive by design. Our understanding of disability follows the purpose of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”. (Article 1) The CRPD adopts a social model of disability, and defines persons with disabilities as including “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (Article 1)

Disability-confident: We use “disability-confident” to describe workplaces that are welcoming and where employers and employees are committed to learn about disability and to remove barriers for participation of people who experience disability, including physical and attitudinal barriers. Policies and practices in disability-confident workplaces are developed to support hiring, retention and career development of persons with disabilities.

Inclusion: Inclusion means that everyone, independent of their disability status, can fully participate and is welcome, respected and appreciated as a valuable member of society. Inclusion is an active process of supporting and promoting participation of persons with disabilities in communities and workplaces, uncovering and addressing intrinsic biases, actively involving and engaging persons with disabilities to assess and improve policies and practices. Members of the Disability & Work in Canada initiative join the voices of the disability community and of advocates to eliminate discrimination and marginalization of persons with diverse backgrounds, functions and abilities living in Canada, and to promote everyone’s full participation in society.

Inclusive design: We use “inclusive design” to refer to design of an environment (for example, of a workplace) with the view of the diversity of those who will be using it. Inclusive design means architectural planning and design of spaces so that they are usable by people of different abilities and life circumstances. Everyone, independent of health status, functions, identities and personalities, should feel welcome and safe in inclusively designed workplaces. Inclusive design also needs to be flexible, to be able to adjust and offer solutions with a diversity in mind.

Navigability: The ease with which clients can identify the program(s) most suitable for them, and move within and between programs when their circumstances change

Pillars: Key areas of focus for the strategy. The two pillars of the DWC strategy are to foster disability-confident and inclusive workplaces and to develop comprehensive supports for persons with disabilities

Strategy: High-level overview of initiatives planned to achieve the vision

Vision: What we want the world to look like in the coming years; typically framed as a high-level outcome

Acronyms

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations)

DWC: Disability and work in Canada

GDP: Gross domestic product