



## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

# NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PROVINCIAL CLUSTER MEETING

May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014, 11:00 am – 1:30 pm

St. John's (Faculty of Arts Boardroom, Arts and Administration Building, Memorial University)

## **SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACTION ITEMS**

*In order to move forward with the work on this initiative, seven **major action items** were identified at this meeting as important next steps for the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial cluster:*

- 1) Revise and circulate the Guiding Principles document to reflect the edits and suggestions made by attendees;*
- 2) Create a CRWDP listserv for our provincial cluster, and introduce a quarterly newsletter summarizing important developments and activities within our own specific cluster;*
- 3) Contact our National Co-Leads in order to clarify the policy on funding for national team meeting attendance for formal partners;*
- 4) Make contact with the associations/networks of employers identified by attendees, with the aim of recruiting some employer organizations to our cluster;*
- 5) With the assistance of SafetyNet, develop the ideas generated during our discussion on seed grants into full proposals, to be submitted by the deadline of July 15<sup>th</sup>;*
- 6) Use the list of major research priority areas emerging from our meeting to craft an advertisement for a graduate student to work with our cluster; and*
- 7) Consider alternate meeting spaces for future cluster meetings, in order to alleviate problems with parking. Options include the boardrooms available at COD-NL and NLCAHR.*

This document summarizes the discussions that took place at the second Newfoundland and Labrador provincial cluster meeting of the Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP), which took place at the St. John's campus of Memorial University on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

The meeting was chaired and facilitated by Stephen Bornstein and Barbara Neis, Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Co-Leads. In addition to Drs. Bornstein and Neis, the following individuals were in attendance:

- Sandra Small – Academic Co-Investigator (Nursing)
- Doreen Dawe – Academic Co-Investigator (Nursing)
- Rose Ricciardelli – Potential Academic Co-Investigator (Sociology)
- Marie Ryan – Social Policy Committee Chairperson, Council of Canadians with Disabilities



- Patricia Dodd – President, Newfoundland and Labrador Injured Workers' Association
- Kelly White – Executive Director, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL
- Kim White – Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL
- John Reardon – Workers' Advisor, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour
- Kathy Skinner – Academic Program Administrator, Glenn Roy Blundon Centre, Memorial University
- Mike Herrell – Provincial Peer Support Coordinator, Consumers' Health Awareness Network of NL
- Stephen Czarnuch – Post-Doctoral Fellow (Biomedical Engineering)
- James Rosario – Masters Student (Health Ethics)
- Chrissy Vincent – Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Coordinator
- Amanda Butt – Program Coordinator, SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Research

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The meeting was opened with a round of brief introductions, intended for the benefit of those attendees who were either new to the provincial cluster or unable to attend the previous cluster meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>. We were pleased to welcome three individuals who were completely new to the initiative and had not previously attended any CRWDP-related meetings or events – Kim White, Manager of Strategic Initiatives with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL; Mike Herrell, the Provincial Peer Support Coordinator with the Consumers' Health Awareness Network of NL; and Rose Ricciardelli, a faculty member in Memorial University's Sociology Department who is interested in possibly becoming an academic co-investigator with the CRWDP.

## GROUP DISCUSSION: GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOVERNANCE

### 1) GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Based on the overall mandate of the CRWDP (published by the national office) and parts of the discussion summary from our previous provincial cluster meeting, our Provincial Coordinator produced a draft set of general principles to help guide the Newfoundland and Labrador cluster as we work together to achieve the goals of this research partnership. Each meeting attendee was provided with a copy of this draft, and we all worked together to arrive at an edited version that was acceptable to those who were present. The revised set of guiding principles will be circulated along with this discussion summary, and may be further amended to better suit the aims of all cluster members as our work develops and progresses.

***ACTION: Revise and circulate the Guiding Principles document to reflect the suggestions made by attendees.***

### 2) GOVERNANCE

The current governance structure of the Newfoundland and Labrador cluster of the CRWDP was reviewed, and meeting attendees were asked whether or not they felt there was a need for anything to be changed or added. There was a consensus among all attendees that the current governance structure already allows ample



opportunity for partner and stakeholder participation, and should thus remain unchanged with the exception of one addition – a quarterly e-newsletter produced and distributed specifically within our own provincial cluster, with a focus on local CRWDP-related news and activities. It was suggested that the e-newsletter could also be supplemented by occasional e-bulletins for news that might be particularly time-sensitive or important. In the ensuing brief discussion on electronic communications, it was also proposed that in addition to our existing e-mail distribution list, a listserv could also be created for our provincial cluster so that all members can have the capability to share relevant items. It was unanimously agreed that this would be a useful change, and our Provincial Coordinator committed to taking the necessary steps to accomplish it.

**ACTIONS:** *Create quarterly e-newsletters, as well as e-bulletins to be circulated as needed;  
Set up a CRWDP listserv for future communications within our provincial cluster.*

#### UPDATES AND DISCUSSION: PARTNERSHIP/STAKEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT

We were pleased to report that since the last provincial cluster meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup>, two new formal partners have been added to the Newfoundland and Labrador cluster of the CRWDP. The Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL (represented by Kelly White and Kim White) has already submitted a letter of formal partnership, and the Independent Living Resource Centre (represented by Wayne Penney) has committed to becoming a formal partner and is currently working on drafting a letter. John Reardon expressed optimism that the Federation of Labour may also be willing to join the initiative as a formal partner, and our Provincial Coordinator committed to sending him the necessary documents to help with drafting a letter for that organization. Following these updates, there was a brief discussion regarding whether or not formal partners would receive funding to attend full national team meetings. Nobody was clear on the exact policy surrounding this issue, so Barbara Neis committed to contacting our National Co-Leads in order to obtain clarification.

Although we have certainly seen an improvement in the number of formal partners participating in the Newfoundland and Labrador cluster of the CRWDP, attendees agreed that there is still a need for further partner and stakeholder recruitment. In particular, there is a need for our future recruitment efforts to focus on organizations that are **employers**, as our cluster currently has no representation from the employer perspective. Rather than targeting specific employer organizations, however, many of the community partner representatives who were present at the meeting seemed to feel that it may be more beneficial to instead approach broader-scale **associations or networks of employers**. Some suggestions for where we might focus our efforts included:

- **The Petroleum Industry Human Resources Committee**, which is a committee comprising federal, provincial and industry stakeholders within the petroleum sector. Its primary purpose is the promotion of careers in the Newfoundland and Labrador oil and gas industry.
  - Marie Ryan has contact information for someone within the PIHRC, and indicated that she is willing to make that connection for us.
- **The St. John's Board of Trade**, which is a regional trade association representing local businesses.



- **The Canadian Federation of Independent Business**, which represents small and medium businesses across the country and has a Newfoundland and Labrador branch located in St. John's.
- **The Department of Advanced Education and Skills, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**, which delivers many services funded under the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities including the provision of labour market and career information.
  - Ken O'Brien, who serves as Senior Manager of Employment Services with that department, may be a good person to contact. Kelly White indicated that she has his contact information and is willing to make that connection for us.
- **The Public Service Commission**, which operates a public sector employment equity initiative called Opening Doors.
  - Some meeting attendees expressed reservations about the Opening Doors Program, and suggested that participation from the Public Service Commission may not necessarily be helpful in furthering the goals of our provincial cluster.
- **Eastern Health**, which is the regional health board for the St. John's area, and/or any of the other regional health boards across Newfoundland and Labrador.
  - Kathy Turner, who is the Director of Community Supports, was suggested as being a particularly good person to contact.

***ACTIONS: Contact our National Co-Leads in order to clarify the policy on funding for national team meeting attendance for formal partners (Barbara Neis);  
Make direct contact with the suggested associations/networks of employers to outline the expectations and rewards of becoming involved with the CRWDP.***

#### **GROUP BRAINSTORMING SESSION: RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

In an effort to produce a list of ideas for research themes or projects that our provincial cluster might want to pursue, our previous meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> included a group brainstorming session on that topic. The exercise succeeded in generating a fairly extensive list of possible research ideas. This particular segment of the meeting was set aside for review and discussion of that list, with the goal of creating a shorter and more manageable list of top research priorities for our cluster. After some discussion, we were indeed able to re-organize and refine our original list to eventually arrive at five major areas on which our cluster might want to focus our research attention. These five areas are as follows:

- 1) **Mental illness among military, ex-military, police, corrections, and security personnel.** This area of investigation might consider mental illnesses such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), among others, with a focus on issues such as coping and workplace accommodations.



- Catherine de Boer expressed interest in this area of research at the previous provincial cluster meeting, and Rose Ricciardelli also indicated that it fits nicely with her particular background and expertise – she will likely choose to pursue work in this area as well, should she formally join our cluster.
- 2) **Strategies/approaches used by employers in relation to hiring people with disabilities.** This area of investigation could focus on comparative evaluation of different strategies/approaches in an effort to identify those that work well and those that do not. (One example might be a comparison between the “charitable” approach and other practices.) It might also include an exploration of the ways in which successful strategies might differ between companies of different sizes and between the public and private sectors – with, of course, specific attention to the definition and measurement of “success”. In addition, employers’ perceptions, beliefs, and concerns with regard to employing people with disabilities could be examined with the goal of determining which are myths and which are realities.
  - 3) **Social selection processes affecting the educational or career paths of individuals with disabilities.** This area of investigation might explore some processes of self-selection, but will most likely have a stronger focus on processes of other-selection by family members, teachers, guidance counsellors, mentors, employers, health professionals, and so on. It could examine both early selection into or out of certain courses or educational programs (which may begin at a very young age) as well as selection into or out of various career trajectories within the labour market. It might also examine the related issue of disclosure, and the ways in which disclosure (or non-disclosure) could affect these selection processes.
  - 4) **Policies governing income security systems, and their effects on employment status for individuals with disabilities.** This area of investigation could focus on comparative analysis of policies that exist across Canada, and could include an examination of the ways in which various policies might interact with one another to create unique employment-related challenges and opportunities for people with disabilities.
    - This area will be the focus of at least one seed grant proposal, which will include the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL as a partner. More details on the idea for this seed grant proposal will be outlined in the following section of this Discussion Summary.
  - 5) **Economic impacts resulting from the non-employment and under-employment of individuals with disabilities.** This is a very broad area of investigation that will most likely be undertaken at the national level, with regional input from the various provincial clusters across the country.

#### GROUP BRAINSTORMING SESSION: SEED GRANT PROPOSALS

This portion of the meeting was set aside for review and discussion of the recent national call for seed grant proposals, with a focus on generating some ideas for applications that might potentially be submitted by our



cluster. Kelly White (Executive Director, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL) had already put forth two possibilities in a previous conversation with our Provincial Coordinator and one of our Provincial Co-Leads (Barbara Neis). She consented to her ideas being shared with the cluster, so those ideas were presented and discussed first. They were as follows:

- 1) An examination of the provincial policies governing financial subsidies for home care support services, with particular attention to the assessment formulas used to determine qualification levels for full or partial financial aid. The primary focus of this research would be on the ways in which these policies affect labour market participation for individuals with disabilities who require home care support. The impacts of such policies on these individuals' spouses and families might also be explored. Policies relating to this issue published by the regional health boards, the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, the Canada Pension Plan, and private insurance companies could all potentially be included in the investigation (but a narrower focus might certainly be chosen). There are many specific research questions that could possibly be addressed, including the following:
  - How do our provincial policies compare to the ones in place across the other Canadian provinces and territories? What similarities and differences exist?
  - How many people in each province/region are affected in some way by these policies? In what way(s) are they affected?
  - Has there been any formal evaluation conducted on any of these policies? If so, what does it say about how well the evaluated policy is working?
  - What thoughts and opinions do employers and disability groups in each province have about the effects of their province's policies on this issue?
  - If a policy on this issue can be shown to be working well, how did that policy evolve?
- 2) An examination of the role played by government-funded wage subsidies and grants in shaping the current state of labour market participation for individuals with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador – in particular for those individuals who have a post-secondary education. The following research questions could be addressed:
  - How many people with a disability **and** post-secondary education in Newfoundland and Labrador are employed in a full-time, permanent position **without** a wage subsidy or grant?
  - How does this number compare with the number of people from that same demographic who are employed **with** a wage subsidy or grant? Who are employed in precarious work? Who are unemployed?
  - What effect, if any, do wage subsidies and grants have on career transitioning for individuals with disabilities?

In addition to these two ideas put forth by Kelly White, Sandra Small also indicated that she, Doreen Dawe, and Catherine de Boer had been discussing the idea of pursuing a qualitative study investigating the experiences of





individuals with disabilities in navigating various policy systems. There is a possibility that they might be interested in developing that idea into a seed grant proposal as well.

***ACTION: With assistance from SafetyNet, develop these seed grant proposals for the July 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.***

#### GROUP DISCUSSION: STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The issue of student recruitment was only touched upon very briefly, as time was beginning to run short. It was, however, agreed that a general advertisement should be crafted and posted as soon as possible, with the aim of attracting a Masters or PhD student to take advantage of the graduate student stipend that is provided by the CRWDP to our cluster. The advertisement could be kept very broad in scope, and include a list of all current research priorities. That way, students who are interested in any of those areas may be encouraged to apply.

In the event that any of the seed grant proposals submitted by our cluster are selected to receive funding, it was also agreed that a more specific advertisement should be created in order to recruit a student to work on that particular project.

***ACTION: Draft a general advertisement to recruit a graduate student to work with our cluster.***

#### WRAP-UP

During wrap-up, many attendees expressed frustration with the parking difficulties that they have faced when arriving at our provincial cluster meetings – both of which have been held at Memorial University. Although arrangements for parking have been made using the proper avenues, the arranged lots are often completely full, forcing attendees to find alternate spaces (usually metered). In order to alleviate this problem, it was suggested that future meetings be held off-campus in areas of town where parking is less scarce. Two viable alternatives for future meeting venues were put forth by attendees. These were the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL (COD-NL) headquarters on Torbay Road and the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research (NLCAHR) headquarters on Bonaventure Avenue, both of which have boardrooms large enough to meet the needs of our cluster. It was agreed that if it is available at the time, the **boardroom at COD-NL** will be the one used for the next provincial cluster meeting.

***ACTION: Consider alternate meeting spaces for all future cluster meetings, in order to alleviate problems with parking. Options include the boardrooms available at COD-NL and NLCAHR.***