

From the Standpoint of People with Disabilities: An Institutional Analysis of Work in the Non-profit Sector

CRWDP webinar #5 – October 4, 2018

© Alexis Buettgen, 2018

Background

- Poverty and exclusion
- Employment focused solutions
- Absence of the non-profit sector

Research Questions

1. What strategies can be utilized to provide inclusive workplaces and positive images around disability and diversity in the non-profit service providing sector?
2. How do labour market policies in Ontario influence the potential of the non-profit service providing sector to be an inclusive employer?

Methodology

- Institutional analysis drawing from institutional ethnography
- Methods:
 - Interviews
 - Textual analysis
- Analysis process

Findings

- A generous concept of work
 - The work of being disabled
 - Emotion work
 - Benefits of employing people with disabilities

The Work of Being Disabled

“I tolerate a lot to get to work because of my disability...I try to be positive, and cheery...I push myself maybe a little too much...I don’t want [my impairment] winning...That’s why I try to stay positive and fight it. Some days I’m completely wiped, but that’s usually my evenings so I don’t have a social life...I used to [have hobbies in the community] and I had to give it up because I need to have my energy for work.”

(Faith, Organization B)

Emotion Work

“I can go in that office [pointing to her supervisor’s office next door] and cry some days...It’s the kind of thing where it’s embarrassing to cry but I’m a very sensitive person and I know its OK in there. And she told me one day that she talked to another supervisor who said they don’t keep Kleenex in their office because...you know it’s like ‘you’re a professional and you’re paid to be here and not cry in the office’... But I feel like when I’m here, I’m on and I get the work done and she [my supervisor] knows that my work is as quality as anybody else’s and that I carry my weight.” (Elizabeth, Organization C)

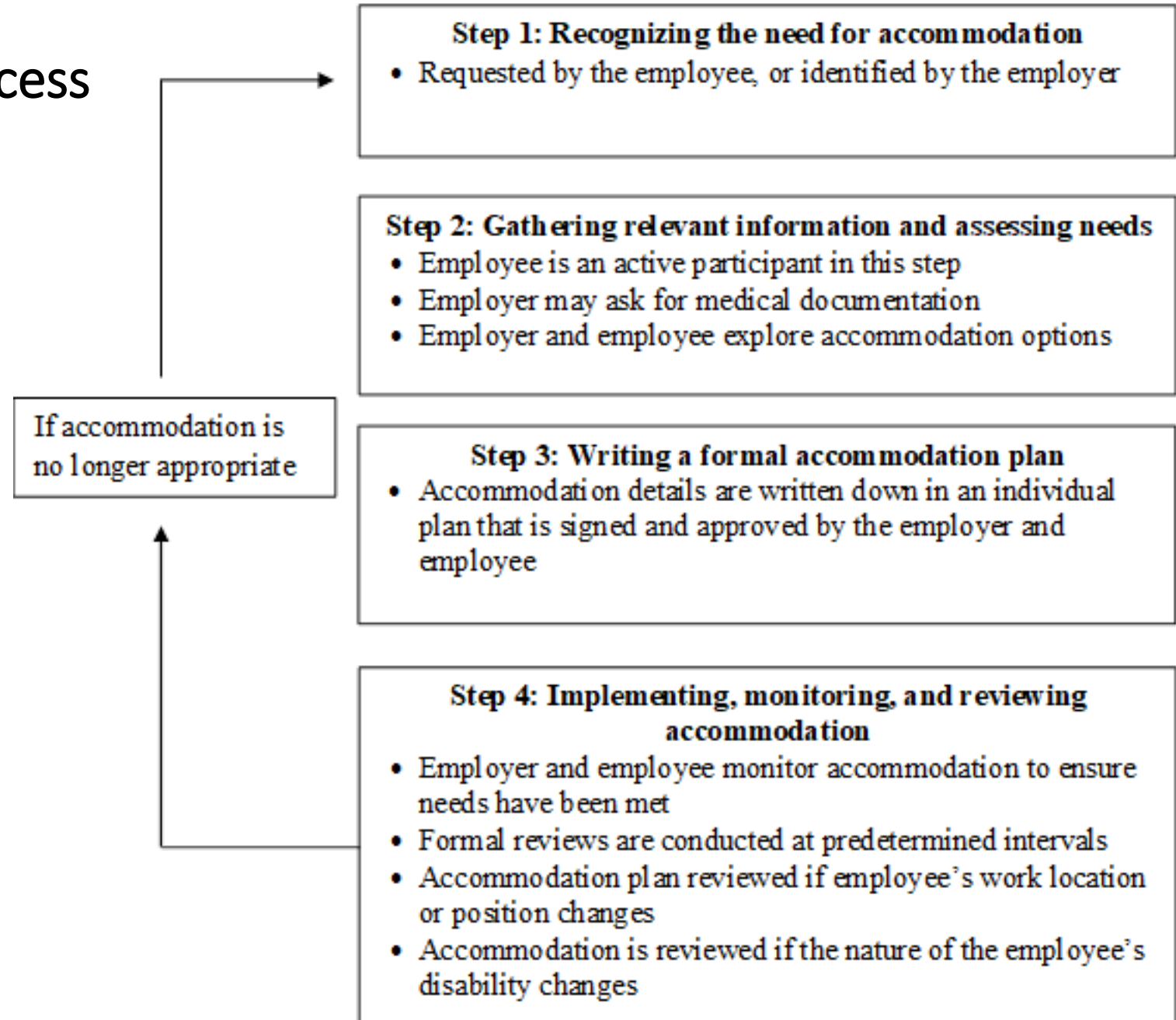
The Benefits of Employing People with Disabilities

“Everyone [at Organization A] is really passionate and committed [to their work]. Most of the employees have a disability...and I think it makes a difference in the way services are delivered and people’s perception of disability...Because we don’t act like social workers. We don’t look at people like they’re just a case file, [and] just make a list or plan of action and then check them off the list. We understand a little bit more of the intricacies of negotiating life with a disability...And we don’t get caught up in the minutia.” (Katie, Organization A)

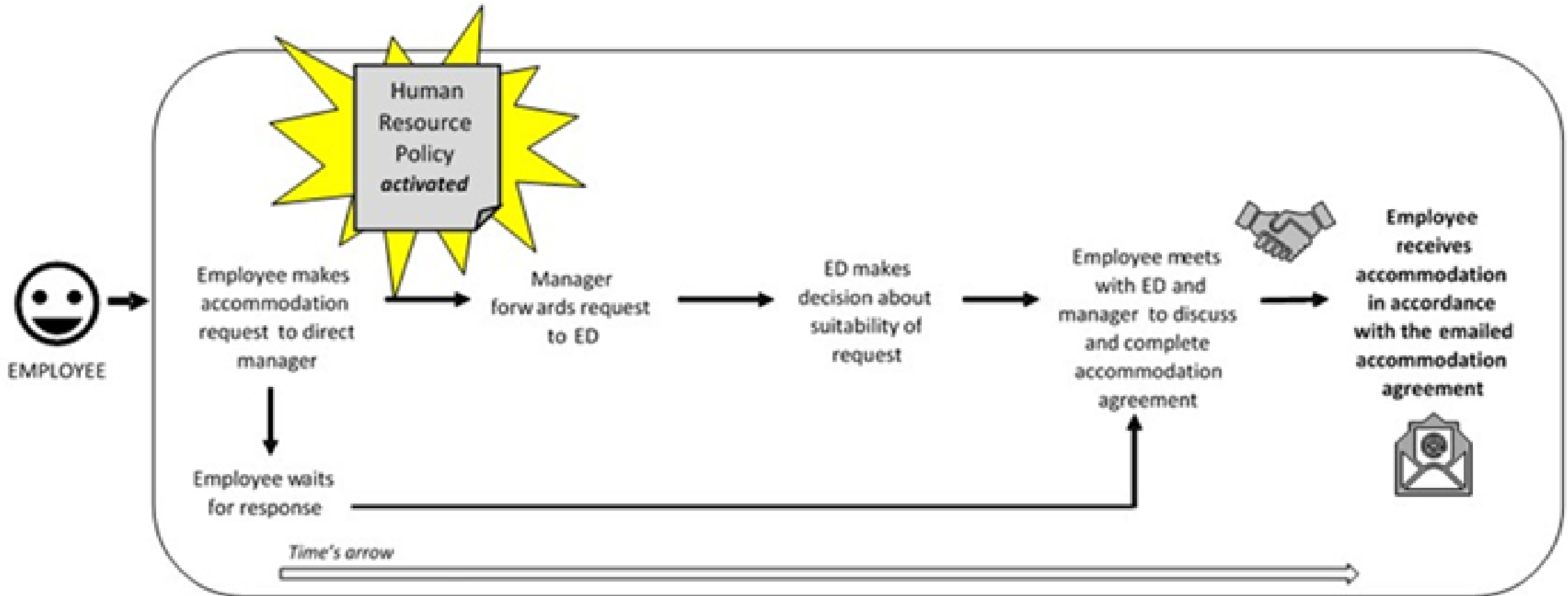
Findings

- Accommodations at work
- Textually mediated social organization

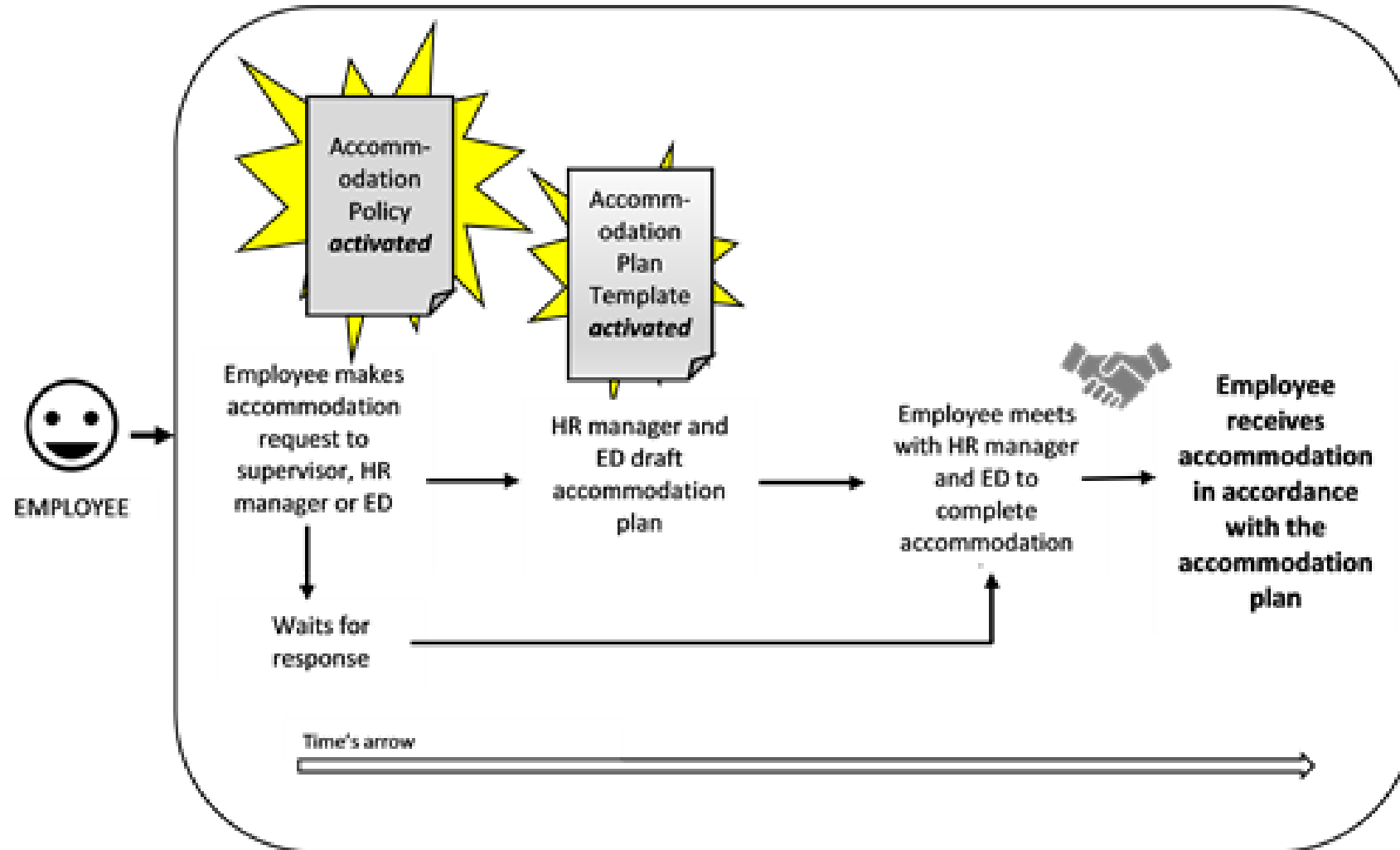
The Accommodation Process



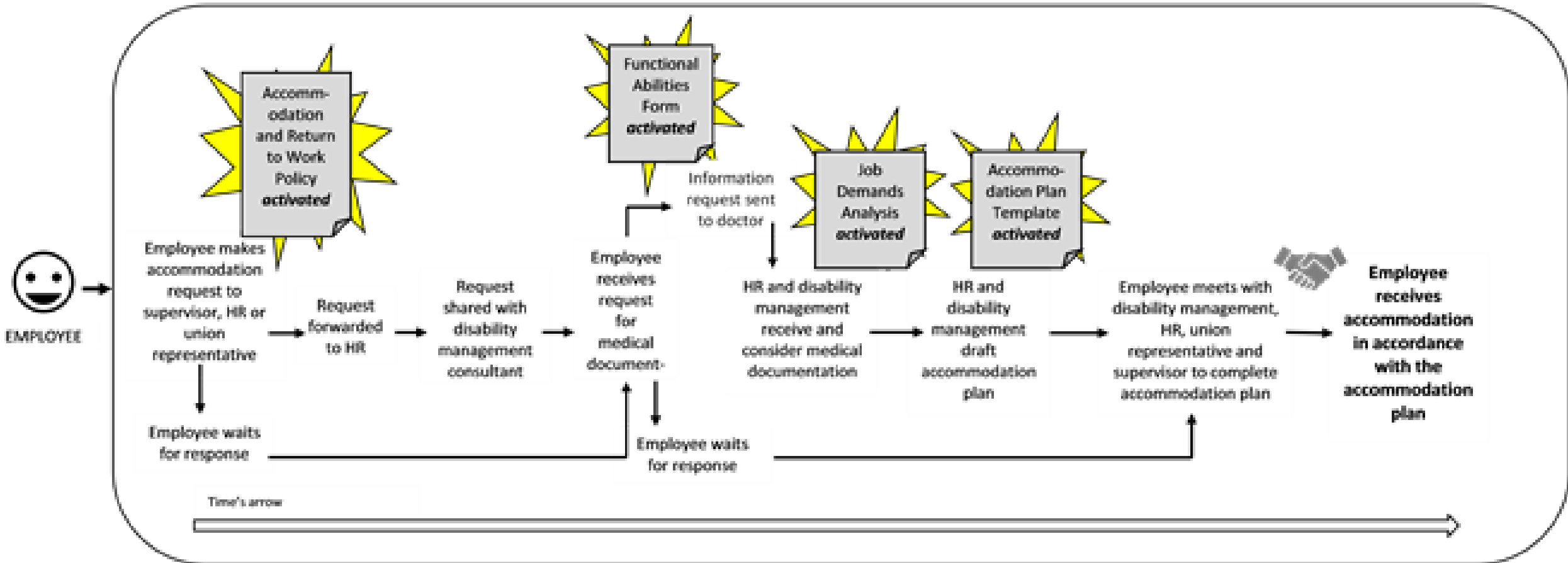
The Social Organization of the Accommodation Process at Organization A



The Social Organization of the Accommodation Process at Organization B



The Social Organization of the Accommodation Process at Organization C





Ontario Human Rights Code

*Whereas recognition of the
inherent dignity and the
equal and inalienable rights
of all members of the human
family is the foundation of
freedom, justice and peace in
the world and is in accord
with the Universal
Declaration of Human Rights
as proclaimed by the United
Nations...*

Conclusions and Implications

- Transform the workplace rather than the person
- Value subjective embodied experiences of disability
- The non-profit sector is a potential site for inclusive employment

Contributions

- For theory development
- For practitioners
- For policy development
- For research

Next Steps and Future Work

- Continue to critically examine various ways of knowing and strategies of resistance in the context of the changing nature of employment
- Develop conceptualizations and practical applications of intersectionality in the workplace
- Develop a model of inclusive employment drawing from the principles of inclusive design

Questions?

CONTACT:

Alexis Buettgen, PhD

Senior Research Officer

Canadian Centre on Disability Studies

E-mail: abuettgen@disabilitystudies.ca; a.buettgen@gmail.com