

Canadian Access and Inclusion Project Innovation Think Tank, November 2018 Changing Attitudes to Increase Meaningful Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Canadian Society

The Government of Canada will pass new laws that ensure full access and inclusion for Canadians with disabilities in every aspect of society. Canadian Access and Inclusion Project (CAIP), a partnership of 31 not-for-profit organizations, was formed to learn about barriers and solutions from people living with disabilities across Canada, and to present these solutions to Federal Government. We learned that people with disabilities believe new laws are important, and that it is equally important for people in society to embrace and welcome people with disabilities into their communities.

In November 2017, 31 CAIP Project Council member organizations along with politicians, private sector representatives and key decision makers gathered in Ottawa for a 3-day meeting to deliberate about the attitudes that the general public have toward people with disabilities and develop bold, innovative solutions that go beyond policy, legislation and regulations. Our goal is to cause a shift in Canada's culture whereby more people passionately value and actively include persons with a broad range of disabilities in communities across Canada. In advance of the Innovation Think Tank, there was a tremendous amount of work done to set the stage for success.

The Process

- **Evidence** – During Phase 1 of CAIP, 1,212 individuals were consulted on their barriers to full community inclusion. Attitudes were determined to be one of the biggest barriers experienced by individuals with a disability.
- **Support** - The Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities embraced the concept of the Innovation Think Tank and officially announced the event publicly at a Media Conference on Parliament Hill in May 2017
- **Education** - Canadian Disability Policy Alliance hosted a [webinar](#) and developed [educational materials](#) for CAIP Project Council members to fully understand attitudes and the science behind attitude change.
- **Challenge** - CAIP Project Council members were motivated to understand more about attitudinal barriers and to recommend programs and ideas to change attitudes in the sectors of employment, community and youth. 36 projects or ideas were recommended for discussion and recommendation at the Innovation Think Tank.
- **Call to Action** – This report will be delivered to the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities and other Federal Government departments with the goal of securing support to advance the innovative programs described below.

"We have strong attitudes around inclusion and equity...but sometimes that doesn't translate into opportunity for Canadians."
Minister Qualtrough
[CBC Radio One](#)

This document provides answers to 3 critical questions about changing attitudes.

1. What is attitude?
2. How can an attitude be changed?
3. What innovative ideas do we recommend to change attitudes toward people with a disability?

What is an Attitude?

- Attitudes are a complex collection of beliefs, feelings, values and dispositions which characterize the way we think or feel about certain people or situations.
- People's attitudes are a product of life experiences, including the relationships we build with the people around us.
- The role of people with disabilities in changing attitudes towards disability is very significant.

How Can Attitudes Be Changed

Research tells us what works and what does not work to change attitudes.

What does not work to change attitudes?

- Public awareness campaigns
- Disability simulations

What does work to change attitudes?

- Having contact between people with disabilities and others without disabilities
- Participating alongside a person with a disability
- Rewards and incentives
- Youth focussed initiatives
- Engaged health professionals
- Discrepancy awareness

What innovative ideas do we recommend to change attitudes?

CAIP Project council members identified 36 ideas or programs that would change attitudes in the sectors of employment, youth and community. At the Innovation Think Tank, delegates deliberated and chose the top programs that would be recommended for support from the Federal Government.

Top Programs to Change Attitudes Toward People with a Disability

Risk Free Employment for Individuals with a Disability

Author - Rob Shaw, CAIP Youth Consultation Coordinator

This project is intended to change attitudes of employers so that they will welcome employees with a disability. It will dispel the myths of large amount of sick days, high risk of accident, inability to do the job and increased insurance rates. Instead of employers covering the health/dental insurance of employees with disabilities that the federal government will create a funding program that covers these costs for the first 2 years of employment. The program could then be extended by having the federal government cover 50% of all health/dental claims for years 3-5 that an employee is employed (within the same organization) which would encourage companies to keep employees with disabilities on a permanent long-term basis. This program could help to change employer's attitudes towards hiring an employee with a disability by increasing their contact time with employees that have disabilities while taking on no "perceived financial risk".

Disability Mentoring Day & Engage Talent (Projects to be combined)

Authors – Dolphin Digital Technologies & Ontario Disability Employment Network

Disabilities Mentoring Day (Dolphin Digital Technologies) is designed to address misconceptions about hiring a person with a disability and utilizes technology to bridge the communication and knowledge gaps between business, employment and community support organizations, and persons with disabilities. Using a mentorship model, this program will provide mentees access to workplace contacts, environments, skills, and the HR process. It will increase confidence among job seekers with disabilities, enhance internship, co-operative education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, dispel employers' fears about hiring people with disabilities and give employers an opportunity to benchmark themselves as being accessible to what is a largely untapped pool of talent as well as a massive consumer market.

Engage Talent (ODEN) is a multi-tiered initiative of activities built upon two core concepts:

- Hiring people who have a disability is a necessity for successful businesses; and,
- All messages will be delivered by leading business champions using a peer-to-peer approach.

ODEN would offer a variety of activities, including, but not limited to:

- Employer engagement sessions – lunch and learns, breakfast meetings, etc. These would be done in partnership with local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development offices, Human Resources Professionals Association Chapters and Employment Service Agencies.
- Social Media Campaign – creating a series of short videos, focusing on inclusive business operators who speak to the myths and misconceptions around creating an inclusive workplace and the benefits they have gained in their business.
- Webinars – create a series of webinars that focus not only on the ‘why hire’ question but quickly move to the ‘how to’ question, demonstrating a series of tools and strategies businesses can use.

Fill the House & Know My World (These projects to be combined)

Authors – Spinal Cord Injury Canada & Spinal Cord Injury Alberta

Fill the House (SCI Canada), will give MPs across Canada a better understanding of the needs of individuals with a disability in their constituency. It will also underscore the lack of accessibility and access of our House of Commons. Each MP will choose and support 1 individual with a disability from their constituency to sit in their House of Commons seat and be MP for a day. Selected participants will have the opportunity to address Prime Minister Trudeau on the importance of access and inclusion in their community and celebrate the royal assent of the new federal accessibility legislation.

Know My World (SCI Alberta) - Individuals with disabilities from several regions across Canada will be hired as ambassadors. Federal, provincial and municipal government officials will spend part of a day observing the ambassador as they navigate their community, with a focus on what works well and where barriers continue to exist. Know My World ambassadors will be a collaborator regarding the development of solutions and policy changes and will support local politicians and administrators to champion changes to the broader civic council and all levels of government.

Interact – Radical Inclusion Through Visual and Performing Arts

Author – Spinal Cord Injury Canada

The mission of Interact is to create art that challenges perceptions of disability by opening doors for artists with disabilities and audiences eager to experience their work. Artists might never have seen the arts as a life choice, but now see the arts as essential to their humanity. Interact will be multi-cultural, intergenerational, and will embrace the entire spectrum of disabilities. Interact will create art that challenges perceptions of disability by: creating art in a spirit of radical inclusion; inspiring artists and audiences to explore the full spectrum of human potential; and transforming lives by expanding ideas of what is possible.

Tetra University Club

Author – Sam Sullivan Disability Foundation

This project concept builds on Tetra Society of North America’s successful program to bring together volunteer engineers and people with physical disabilities to create custom assistive devices that enable greater freedom and independence both in the home/office and out in the environment. The project proposal is based on taking this synergy into post-secondary institutions. This would entail formalizing a structure whereby engineering students work directly with students with a disability at their university to identify accessibility challenges and create innovative solutions both for the individual student, as well as, on the campus environment. In this way, the students would naturally identify opportunities to increase accessibility on campus. The benefit to the students would be in their one-on-one interaction, whether in deepening understanding about challenges or working together creatively to identify innovative solutions. In addition, a university would benefit from the project to identify how they can improve inclusion and accessibility for student life on campus.

A Complete List of Bold and Audacious Programs to Change Attitudes

- [Accessible Cities Award](#)
- [Accessible Health Care](#)
- [Advancing Access and Inclusion for Victims of Domestic Violence](#)
- [Breaking Down Attitudinal Barriers in Preschool](#)
- [Canada's Got Talent!](#)
- [Citizen Pathway](#)
- [Disabilities Mentoring Day](#)
- [Discrepancy Awareness](#)
- [Don't Dis My Ability](#)
- [Educational Reform](#)
- [Engage Talent](#)
- [Equal Recognition for All Athletes](#)
- [Fill the House](#)
- [Governor General Meritorious Service Award for Access and Inclusion](#)
- [How Would You React?](#)
- [Human Library](#)
- [I Am Awesome](#)
- [Inclusive Employer Award](#)
- [Interact](#)
- [Know My World](#)
- [Media Standards and Training](#)
- [Mobilizing the Leaders of Tomorrow.... Today](#)
- [Multi Media Programming](#)
- [My Aging Story](#)
- [National AccessAbility Week](#)
- [Plays That Work](#)
- [Power of Sports and Recreation](#)
- [Public Awareness Campaign on Disability](#)
- [Risk Free Employment](#)
- [Tetra University Club](#)
- [Tools of Change – Access and inclusion Planning Kit](#)
- [Universal Design and Training](#)
- [Universal Design Network](#)
- [Walk in My Shoes](#)
- [Work and Volunteer Day](#)
- [Workplace Accessibility – Experiential Learning for CEO's](#)
- [Youth for Tomorrow Leadership Summit](#)

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Think Tank participants

Special Guests

The Honourable Kent Hehr, Minister for Sport and Persons with a Disability
Senator Jim Munson

Office for Disability Issues, ESDC	Kate Bailie
Ability Online	Michelle McClure
Ability New Brunswick	Haley Flaro
Active Aging Canada	Patty Clark
Barrier Free Canada	Robin East
Canadian Disability Participation Project	Kathleen Martin Ginis
Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability	Jane Arkell
Canadian Spinal Research Organization	Andrew Fisher
Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society	Nicole Diakite
Sam Sullivan Foundation	Ruby Ng
Spinal Cord Injury Alberta	Teren Clarke
Spinal Cord Injury British Columbia	Chris McBride
Spinal Cord Injury Canada	Bill Adair
CAIP Lawyer Panel	David Shannon
CAIP Lawyer Panel	Alexandra G
Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba	Ron Burky
Canadian Paraplegic Association Nova Scotia	Tara Antle
Spinal Cord Injury Ontario	Peter Athanasopoulos
Spinal Cord Injury Prince Edward Island	Meaghan McKenzie
Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan	Delynne Bortis
Consumer Lead	Joanne Smith
Consumer Lead	Rilind Dragoshi
Prospect	Alexi Davis
Spinal Cord Injury Newfoundland and Labrador	Michael Bury
REACH	Joanne Silkauskas
West Park Healthcare	Alicia Tyson
Canadian Disability Policy Alliance	Mary Ann McColl
Canadian Disability Policy Alliance	Shannon Jones
Neil Squire Society	Gary Birch
Ontario Disability Employment Network	Jeannette Campbell
Rick Hansen Foundation	Laura McBride
Youth Representative	Rob Shaw
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association	Christianne Scholfield
Dolphin Digital Technologies	Scott Burton
Dolphin Digital Technologies	Jamie Burton