Work-Able: Graduate Internship Program Evaluation

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Work-Able is a graduate internship program that hires recent post-secondary graduates who self-identify as having a disability into the BC Public Service for 12 months. This evaluation is to determine whether Work-Able is meeting its objectives to provide meaningful work experience for people with disabilities, increase the capacity of the BC Public Service to recruit and retain employees with disabilities, and to create best practices for recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities. An analysis of the literature on people with disabilities and employment was conducted. Through a series of interviews with employees hired through Work-Able, their supervisors, and mentors, recommendations have been created to inform the BC Public Service on next steps for Work-Able.

Methodology

This research was informed by a conceptual framework designed from the World Health Organization’s *World Report on Disability* (2011b), and includes four pillars: Attitudes, Service Delivery, Accessibility, and Consultation and Involvement. These pillars are based on the barriers identified and recommendations made by the World Health Organization regarding people with disabilities. These pillars were identified due to their connection to employment practices and the labour market for people with disabilities. A fifth pillar, Lack of Data and Evidence, informs the four other pillars and the purpose of this research, to provide recommendations for Work-Able to assist in the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities within the BC Public Service.

This report is a formative evaluation on Work-Able. Participants interviewed included interns hired through Work-Able, supervisors, and mentors. Interviews employed a qualitative research methodology called the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT). It was designed by Flanagan (1954) and expanded upon by Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, and Amundson (2009). The ECIT entailed designing a set of interview questions that aligned with the four pillars to reveal critical incidents and wish list items identified by participants. Critical incidents included any experience, sentiment, or feeling connected with Work-Able or employment for people with disabilities. Wish list
items included desirable items that participants wished they would have had during these experiences. Interview analysis and credibility checks resulted in the creation of 10 categories.

Key Findings

Each of the 10 categories was aligned with one of the four pillars. It is noted in the literature review that people with disabilities face stigmas and challenges to obtaining and retaining employment. Participants’ experiences affirmed that these are leading barriers impacting employment rates for people with disabilities. Supervisors and mentors reported positively that they and their teams have learned about accommodations and said that supporting the intern is a worthwhile and rewarding experience. Four of the five interns interviewed noted that they have been supported by their supervisors and colleagues and found their work experience meaningful.

Incidents for all participants regarding accommodations were mostly positive, with the exceptions being the length of time to acquire accommodations, navigating internal ministry approval processes, and the challenge when neither the intern nor the supervisor knew of the appropriate accommodation to provide. This resulted in a wish by both interns and supervisors to have greater resources on how to arrange for and acquire the appropriate accommodations. Supervisors and mentors found the support they received and the learning opportunities to be valuable to their ministry. Interns noted they had educational moments with co-workers surrounding their disability. The literature reviewed echoes that employing people with disabilities within the workplace can be beneficial for employers by creating a diverse workplace as well as having dependable and successful employees.

Supervisors and mentors found the recruitment and interview process to be positive, with only minor concerns raised. Interns raised some wish list items concerning the interviews, but mostly felt accommodated and viewed their experiences positively. Additionally, experiences surrounding the accessibility of the BC Public Service were highlighted. Interns raised concerns about addressing potential conflict with co-workers and supervisors surrounding their disability. Interns had worries about gaining future
employment after the internship. Several of the interns expressed interest in continuing employment with the BC Public Service.

**Recommendations**

This evaluation concludes that the Work-Able program is on track to meet its objectives, and recommendations given will assist in doing so. Recommendations for further improvement include:

1. Increase knowledge about and practice of inclusive workplace behavior;
2. Streamline the application and interview processes;
3. Utilize the Employee Accessibility Advisory Council;
4. Improve upon the process of acquiring accommodations;
5. Offer additional resources for interns upon the completion of the internship to facilitate retention within the BC Public Service;
6. Conduct a summative evaluation of Work-Able in five years; and
7. Change elements of the "Intentional Conversation" disability awareness session.
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1.0 Introduction
1.1 Issue/Problem

Almost 15% of BC’s 3.7 million people aged 15 and older identify as having a disability, according to the most recent Canadian Survey on Disability conducted with data from the 2011 National Household Survey (Arim, 2015, p. 6). Within the BC working-age population, 4.8% of people aged 15-24 report a disability, 6.7% aged 25-44, and 17.5% aged 45-64. This number is expected to rise significantly over the next two decades as the population ages (Statistics Canada, 2013, p. 13). The employment rate for all British Columbians aged 25 – 64 is 79% whereas the employment rate for those with a disability is 49% (Turcotte, 2014, p. 2). Employees with disabilities continue to be underrepresented and underemployed in BC and there is a need to remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities (Arim, 2015). Only 3.2% of the BC Public Service self-identify as having a disability, while people with disabilities who are working age make up 6.9% of the BC labour market (BC Stats, 2013, p. 3).

The BC Public Service has committed to increasing the number of BC public Service employees who have disabilities by intentionally reducing barriers and building capacities within the workforce to create inclusive workplaces. Additionally, as the current labour force ages, there is an increasing likelihood that a larger proportion will develop age-related disabilities. Looming labour shortages will require the BC Public Service to look for new sources of talent, and people with disabilities are a largely untapped labour pool (Brett, 2006). When employees, including people with disabilities, feel valued and respected they are much more likely to work harder and be more committed to their employer (Unger, 2002, pp. 3-4).

The Work-Able Graduate Internship Program (Work-Able) is a recruitment strategy designed to attract people with disabilities by hiring up to 15 post-secondary graduates for a 12-month internship within the BC Public Service. Ongoing mentorship and job coach support is provided for each employee with the intention that they consider the BC Public Service as a career choice at the end of the internship. To assist this, all employees hired through Work-Able will be considered to have in-service status for five years following the internship and are able to apply to internal and external job
postings. In addition, Work-Able aims to increase the capacity of the BC Public Service to accommodate people with disabilities in the workplace as well as during the recruitment process. The Work-Able recruitment service delivery model intentionally matches the hiring process for all government employees, and is designed to appraise the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the applicants. Accommodations for the employee were discussed after the offer of employment had been accepted. Nine employees hired in September 2015 began their internship in nine different ministries within the BC Public Service.

Work-Able objectives include:

- Annually hire up to 15 individuals with disabilities with recent post-secondary education (within three years) on auxiliary status for a 12-month internship in government;
- Increase capacity of hiring managers and mentors to support and coach employees with disabilities;
- Gain better understanding of available accommodation supports in the workplace;
- Identify clear pathways for hiring employees with disabilities;
- Inform best practices for recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities;
- Access an under-utilized labour pool; and
- Consult the Employee Accessibility Advisory Council (comprising current BC government employees with and without disabilities) for feedback and guidance. (BC Public Service Agency, 2015a, p. 1).

Work-Able intends to meet these objectives by providing disability awareness training for hiring managers, supervisors, and mentors, and conducting a program evaluation to assess performance measurement (BC Public Service Agency, 2015b, p. 6).

1.2 Need

As a new program, Work-Able was analysed to discern if it is achieving the goals and objectives set out in its project charter and supporting documents. The inability to welcome, accommodate, and remove barriers from the workplace can result in a loss of attracting people with disabilities into the BC Public Service. People with disabilities face
greater challenges to finding employment, and there is a need to address this at a societal level and across the labour market (Turcotte, 2014). Educational attainment is one of many factors that influence the employment rate of people with disabilities. However, people with disabilities with post-secondary education on average still have lower employment rates and receive less income than those without disabilities. Recruiting recent graduates from post-secondary institutions allows for the BC Public Service to tap into an under-utilized talent pool to help with the continuation of expertise and knowledge (BC Public Service Agency, 2014b). Work-Able provides an opportunity to develop capacity and skill-sets within the BC Public Service to recruit, retain, and advance people with disabilities.

1.3 Purpose and Organization of the Report

The research questions have evolved over the course of the study to meet the needs of the Work-Able program and the research project (Agee, 2009). Based off of these questions, this report makes recommendations on what has worked well and what has room for improvement.

**Research Statement:** To analyse the Work-Able Graduate Internship Program to determine whether the program is meeting its stated goals and objectives.

**Research Question:** Is Work-Able able to create best practices that can inform the BC Public Service to attract and retain employees with disabilities?

- Does Work-Able provide meaningful and beneficial work experience for the employees hired?
- Did the employees hired through Work-Able perceive or experience any barriers during the Work-Able hiring process?
- Did the employees hired through Work-Able perceive or experience the process of obtaining accommodation(s) to be adequate?
- Can Work-Able increase human resource capacities and knowledge of best practices in the recruitment, accommodation, and retention of employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service?
This report is organized into eight sections: introduction, literature review, conceptual framework, methods and methodology, findings, discussion, recommendations, and conclusion. It examines the literature on employment for people with disabilities, including legislation, government policies, and the many employment factors that affect people with disabilities and employment programs. It outlines the conceptual framework, methods, and methodology that inform the interview measures, leading to interview results and recommendations.

1.4 Work-Able Background

Launched in September 2015, Work-Able is delivered by the BC Public Service Agency (PSA) in partnership with CanAssist, the Ministry of Advanced Education, and the Ministry of Social Development and Social innovation (BC Public Service Agency, 2015b, p. 5). It is designed to increase the number of employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service. Three key documents provide the framework for the Work-Able program:


2. *Being the Best 2014* (BC Public Service Agency, 2014b): The PSA’s corporate human resource plan for the BC Public Service, launched in 2006, outlines the three key goals for improving the BC Public Service across all ministries. These are “building internal capacity,” “improving our competitiveness,” and “managing for results” (2014b, p. 8). Work-Able is aligned with the goal of improving competitiveness for employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service. As outlined in the *Work-Able Graduate Internship Program Project charter*, the program aims to improve the “quality of hiring experiences for employees with disabilities” as well as the “capacity of hiring managers” (BC Public Service Agency, 2015b, p. 6).
3. *Accessibility 2024* (Government of BC, 2014a): The ten-year action plan lays the roadmap for the BC Public Service’s strategy to make BC the most progressive province in Canada. Designed around 12 building blocks, the plan represents themes that emerged from public consultation held between December 2013 and March 2014. A key component is to increase employment for people with disabilities within BC (Government of BC, 2014b). The *Accessibility 2024 One Year Progress Update* directly refers to the Work-Able program, stating “work is underway to strengthen the transition from school to work for post-secondary graduates with disabilities” (Government of BC, 2015, p. 21).
2.0 Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this study focused on the recruitment, retention, and accommodation of people with disabilities and informed the research question, the conceptual framework and the interview measures. The four primary jurisdictions reviewed are Canada, Australia, the United States (U.S.), and the United Kingdom (U.K.), excepting Section 2.4 that discusses the international context. These jurisdictions have followed similar chronological progressions in the development of employment rights for people with disabilities as well as have had similar cultural and economic patterns as Canada. The studies and sources reviewed provide a diverse understanding of the situation affecting people with disabilities regarding employment and, on a larger scale, social inclusion. There are many different definitions of disability used in studies and by authors. This study uses the World Health organization’s definition of disability, who defines it as “an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitation, and participation restrictions”, which aligns with the conceptual framework used for this study (World Health organization, 2011a, p. 7).

The researcher acquired literature through the University of Victoria search engine Summon 2.0 as well as Google Scholar. Search terms that were used included “people with disabilities,” “workforce,” “Canadian workforce,” “positive effects of,” “accommodation” “employees with disabilities” and “employment.” Additional sources were gathered from references given in sources initially consulted. Government sources were gathered from Federal and Provincial Government websites as well as through Summon 2.0.

2.1 People with Disabilities, Canadian Legislation, and Government Programs:

Different levels of government have implemented many different programs and policies to increase the number of employees with disabilities in the workforce (Arim, 2015, p. 4). It is well recognised by the provincial and federal governments within Canada that “in order to maximise its human resource potential, Canada will likely need to look toward groups that are currently under-represented in the labour force” (Collin, Lafontaine-Emond, & Pang, 2013, p. 9). Statistics Canada’s latest Canadian Survey on
Disability conducted in 2012 states that 13.7%, or 3.75 of the 27.5 million Canadians aged 15 or older have a disability (Arim, 2015, p. 6). Disability is not evenly distributed across the Canadian public, with women being more represented (15%) than men (13%) (2015, p. 9). As people often acquire disabilities with age, most Canadians with disabilities are older. While only 10.1% of working aged Canadians (15-64) have a disability, 33.2% of adults aged 65 or older have a disability (2015, p. 8). Statistics Canada categorised disabilities into four severity classes, with 32% of people with a disability having a mild disability, 20% a moderate disability, 22.5% a severe disability, and 26% a very severe disability (2015, p. 9). The employment rate of people with disabilities in Canada varies depending on age and other factors and will be discussed in greater detail in Section 2.2 (Turcotte, 2014, p. 3).

Within BC, 14.8% of British Columbians aged 15 or older have a disability, or roughly 546,760 of BC’s 3.7 million people (Arim, 2015, p. 6). Of all British Columbians, 4.8% of those aged 15-24 have a disability, 12.3% of those aged 25-64 have a disability, and 34.5% of those aged 65 or older have a disability. Table 1 displays a breakdown of gender and age of working aged people with disabilities within BC. It is noted that women have a higher rate of disability than men within BC.

Table 1: Adults with disabilities by sex and age group, (Statistics Canada, 2013, p. 27).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total aged 15 and over</th>
<th>Total With Disabilities</th>
<th>% with Disabilities</th>
<th>Males With Disabilities</th>
<th>% of Males With Disabilities</th>
<th>Females With Disabilities</th>
<th>% of Females with Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 to 64</td>
<td>334,800</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>152,500</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>182,290</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 24</td>
<td>28,190</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>14,370</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>13,810</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 44</td>
<td>80,160</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>34,080</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>46,080</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 64</td>
<td>226,450</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>104,040</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>122,400</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>211,960</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>92,790</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>119,170</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74</td>
<td>94,320</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>47,910</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>56,410</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and over</td>
<td>117,640</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>44,890</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>72,760</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.
Within the BC Public Service, people with disabilities are underrepresented in every occupation, region, and ministry (BC Stats, 2013, p. 18). As of 2013, people with disabilities made up 3.2% of the BC Public Service, while 6.9% of the available workforce have a disability (2013, p. 3). Representation differs across each ministry and provincial organization, demonstrated in Table 2. In previous years, there has been reported greater outflow of employees with disabilities than there has been inflow. From 2011 to 2013, only 2.3% of new regular, or permanent, employees to the BC Public Service have a disability and 4.4% of employees leaving the BC Public Service have a disability. Likewise, for auxiliary, or temporary, employees only 1.3% of employees hired have a disability, while 1.5% of auxiliary employees who left the BC Public Service have a disability (2013, p. 22). Put simply, people with disabilities are underrepresented within the BC Public Service and recent employment trends are furthering this gap.

Table 2: BC Public Service People with Disabilities (BC Stats, 2013, p.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BC Ministry or Agency</th>
<th>% of regular employees who self-identifies, by organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Development and Innovation</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Gas Development</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Education</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Family Development</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and Mines</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs, Tourism, and Labour</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech, Innovation, and Citizen Services</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Public Engagement</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Public Service Agency</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Infrastructure</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest, Lands, and Natural Resources</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, Sport, and Cultural Development</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAO</td>
<td>Data Suppressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within Canada, the right to equal and fair employment for all Canadians is protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* created in 1982. Furthermore, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* of 1985 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability (Collin et al., 2013, p. 8; Equity and Diversity Directorate, 2011, p.8). In the federal context, the *Employment Equity Act* (EE) (1995) outlines the rights of employment of underrepresented groups in the labour market, which include Aboriginal Peoples, Visible Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities. The *EE Act* includes the Government of Canada’s intent to reduce the barriers to employment for people with disabilities. Along with the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) (2003), The *EE Act* is the federal legislative backdrop regarding employment and people with disabilities (Equity and Diversity Directorate, 2011, p. 8). Through the *EE Act*, the Public Service Commission of Canada monitors Employment levels for each group within the Federal Public Service. However, while the *EE Act* is applicable to private sector employers, it must be raised that the act is only enforced for Federal Public Agencies, crown corporations, and federally regulated industries (1995). Provincial and territorial public services are not held accountable by the *EE Act*, and are under the jurisdiction of the respective provincial or territorial government.

The Federal Government has enacted multiple supportive frameworks for the employment of people with disabilities in the private and public sectors. Created in 1997 and renewed in 2012, the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities has a three-year $30 million budget for small and medium sized businesses (Collin et al., 2013, pp. 5-6). This fund supports programs that assist people with disabilities in gaining and retaining employment through assisted training, work experience placements, and wage subsidies to employers (Government of Canada, 2008, p. 67). The Federal
Government created cost-sharing programs with each province except Quebec known as Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDA). These agreements fund programs and initiatives that “develop skills for unemployed individuals, including – but not limited too – persons with disabilities” (Collin et al., 2013, p. 5). Additionally, Federal and Provincial governments created Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (LMADP) which were signed by every province and territory except Quebec (2013, p. 5). The first LMADP began in 2004, with the latest agreements being signed in 2014. The LMADP includes a transfer of roughly $225 million annually to the participating jurisdictions, and the provinces and territories provide programs and services as well as report on program, labour market, and societal indicators (Government of Canada, 2008, pp. 65-66).

Federal and provincial governments have had a range of success in various employment programs developed for people with disabilities (Equity and Diversity Directorate, 2011). Separate from the EE Act (1995) that oversees Federal Public Service programs, the Provincial Public Service is accountable to three policies in promoting employment for the four underrepresented groups, as discussed in Section 1.4 (BC Public Service Agency 2014a; Government of BC, 2012; Government of BC, 2014a). The Employment Program of BC administrated by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation supports other employment programs such as the BC Centre for Ability Opportunities Fund and the Partners Program from the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (BC Centre for Ability, 2015; Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, 2015). Both of these programs receive their funding from the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, the Employment program of BC has 85 different Employment Services Centres across BC that offer appropriate employment services and supports to people with disabilities (Government of BC, 2014c, pp. 8-9).

Crawford (2012) reviews numerous sources examining what characteristics of effective employment programs for people with disabilities are. Based upon interviews with government officials, effective practices for employment programs of people with disabilities include: skilled and qualified personnel, diverse and specialised programs.
and functions, building upon the self-confidence of individuals to participate within society, individualised holistic counselling and planning, a focus on meaningful employment, and finding right fit between the needs of the employer and the employees skills set and abilities (2012, pp. 17-22). Crawford (2012) argues that coordinating services between different programs for people with disabilities is important, but that there was a mixed response from the literature and the officials interviewed on whether this coordination was necessary or not (p. 21).

Although they do not focus on people with disabilities, Heidrick, Kramers and Godin (2004) do an analysis of how to effectively evaluate employment programs. They focus on the concepts of job creation, job maintenance, and job destruction. These are defined respectively as jobs created as a result of the program or loans granted, jobs that continue as a result of a program or loan, and jobs that have been lost or replaced (2004, pp. 5-6). In regards to employment programs such as Work-Able, these definitions are important in understanding the long term impacts of the program on the BC Public Service. Heidrick et al. (2004) conducted a literature review on evaluations of employment programs, and found that 31% of studies reviewed were case studies, 25% percent were user or client based surveys, 10% were economic approaches, and cost/benefit analysis and modified cost/benefit analysis accounted for 8% and 7% respectively (p. 10). They argue that while case studies add depth to understanding, surveys add breadth, and recommend a combination of the two to understand how and what the impacts of a specific employment program is (2004, pp. 18-19). Heidrick et al. (2004) explain that the timing of evaluations is important and that summative evaluations may be taken at a later date to provide information regarding job creation and job maintenance (p. 8). This research on Work-Able is similar to a case study, where in-depth interviews were conducted to support the initial phases of the program and to ensure it is on track to achieve its objectives. A follow up summative evaluation would provide more information to determine if the program is successful in job creation and job maintenance for employees with disabilities as discussed in Section 7.
2.2 Factors Affecting Employment for People with Disabilities:

People with disabilities face many barriers in obtaining and retaining employment that people without disabilities do not face. Articles in business journals succinctly point out the need for businesses to change workplace culture to remove barriers and accommodate people with disabilities to benefit from a diverse and dependable workforce, and that unfamiliarity with accommodation leads to employers not making an attempt to accommodate (Gale, 2014; Brett, 2006). Factors and variables affecting the rate of employment for people with disabilities include gender, ethnicity, age, severity of disability, education, type of disability and stigma associated with it, conceptions of performance, employer’s acceptance of people with disabilities, the employer/manager’s previous interactions with people with disabilities, geographic location, the type of industry or occupation, and the size of the workplace. Many studies differ in focus, research questions, and methodology, and as Unger (2002) explains make it difficult to compare statistically measured results.

A Statistics Canada report outlines the relationships between education, disability, and employment and provides statistics that people with disabilities with higher educational attainment have an increased employment rate compared to people with disabilities with lower education (Turcotte, 2014). There is a correlation between the severity of the disability a person has, the education they have, and their level of employment. The more severe the disability and the less education a person has dramatically lowers their likelihood of securing employment (2014, p. 2). Table 3 provides statistics of people who are employed with mild or severe disabilities within Canada and their educational attainment. Turcotte (2014) uses the Canadian Survey on Disability’s definition of disability, which created a severity score to calculate the level of a person’s disability. They then created four severity classes, mild, moderate, severe, and very severe (2014, p. 10). Table 4 shows the disparity between people with and without disabilities and educational attainments within Canada as of 2011 (Arim, 2015, p. 15).

Turcotte (2014) shows that the difference in employment levels between university graduates with no disability and university graduates with a mild disability is
marginal while the difference between university graduates with no disability and university graduates with severe or very severe disabilities is far more significant (pp. 3-4). Turcotte (2014) defines “significant” as being greater than 5%. People with disabilities with a high school diploma or less have a significantly lower employment rate compared to those without a disability. Furthermore, “the [employment] differences between persons with disabilities and those without a disability were significantly smaller among those who had a higher level of education” (2014, p. 3). People with disabilities that have higher educational attainment, whether trades certificate, college diploma, or university degree, have a more similar employment rate with people without disabilities, although still lower. The exception to this is people with severe disabilities, who, regardless of educational attainment, have a significantly lower employment rate than people without disabilities (2014, p. 4). He concludes that “education significantly reduces the differences between persons with a mild or moderate disability and those without a disability” (2014, p. 9).

Table 3: Selected characteristics of employed people aged 25 to 64 with a severe or very severe disability, a mild or moderate disability, or without a disability, 2011 (Turcotte, 2014, p. 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Disability</th>
<th>Mild or Moderate Disability</th>
<th>Severe or Very Severe Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>percentage distribution</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a high school diploma</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades certificate or college diploma</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.
Table 4: Age-standardized highest level of educational attainment, by disability status, aged 25 to 64 years, Canada, 2011 (Arim, 2015, p. 15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>With Disabilities</th>
<th>Without Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary certificate or diploma below bachelor's level</td>
<td>40.50%</td>
<td>38.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor's level or higher</td>
<td>15.70%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An important discussion in the history of employment for people with disabilities is the development and growth of the social model perspective compared to the individual model or functional limitations perspective. The social model of disability outlines that people are not necessarily disabled by their impairments and draws on the idea that it is society that disables people by designing society to meet the needs of the majority of people who are not disabled (Oliver, 2013). The social model was articulated in an article by Oliver (1983) and politicised in U.K. and U.S. Society. Its main three points were the shift of analytical focus away from individual impairments to societal barriers, on taking a holistic approach, and to not deny specific individual considerations surrounding disability (Barnes & Mercer, 2005, p. 531). This was in juxtaposition with the more traditional functional limitations perspective which primarily focused on the disability an individual had from a medical perspective. The traditional perspective held that as individuals with disabilities were somehow limited in their capacity, social perceptions were that they were not expected and could not fully participate in society. As such, “the functional limitations perspective on disability encouraged politicians, professionals, and practitioners to view disabled people as a ‘problem’, who are dependent and in need of either ‘cure’ or ‘care’” (2005, p. 530). This perception still dominates in areas such as employment, where there are perceptions that people with disabilities are not able to participate due to limited capacities. As employment is a very important aspect of modern societies, absence of people with disabilities from the labour market dictates their wider social exclusion (2005, pp. 532-533). It must be noted that the Canadian Survey on Disability in 2012 was based on a
social model of disability, rather than the individual or functional limitations model (Turcotte, 2014, p. 10).

However, the social model has had its share of criticisms as well. Different discourses on disability claimed that the social model downplayed the experiences of people with disabilities, lessened the importance of medical treatment, and, due to its focus on institutional and societal barriers, was unable to account for social differences such as gender, minority group status, or sociodemographic status (Barnes & Mercer, 2005, p. 531). Oliver (2013) replied to these criticisms, stating that he did not think the individual model should be abandoned, but that the social model should be used when considering the social inclusion of people with disabilities (p. 1024). He continues by saying that “the social model has also barely made a dent in the employment system because… the solutions offered have usually been based on an individual model of disability” (2013, p. 1025).

Perceptions and biases held by employers and co-workers are a factor impacting the employment rates of people with disabilities. Much of the literature identifies that there is a cultural bias in workplaces held by co-workers and supervisors against employees with disabilities due to a myriad of factors (McLaughlin, Bell, & Stringer, 2004; Unger, 2002; Hernandez, 2000). Crawford (2012) lists “negative public attitudes and stigma associated with disability” as one of the factors leading to the challenges towards employment for people with disabilities (p. 4). Australian writer Bagshaw (2006) argues that talented and motivated workers are going to waste due to a lack of “disability confidence” of Australian employers, and that more has to be done to educate employers and the populace about disabilities and employment. Furthermore, Greenberg (2012) argues that societies globally have a lack of understanding of people with disabilities, leading to increased barriers to their inclusion in social activities. She argues that in many societies, attitudes held by individual people differ from the publicly espoused position of equal opportunity for people with disabilities (2012, p. 586). Fevre, Robinson, Lewis and Jones (2013) conducted research on the British Workplace Behaviour Survey of 2007-2008, analyzing employees’ with disabilities perceptions and experiences in the workplace. They found that employees with disabilities experienced
a higher rate of ill-treatment in the workplace, but that “from the employees’ point of view, it rarely looks as if they are being ill-treated because of their disability” (Fevre et al., 2013, p. 300). Reasons for this they argue are the consequences ill-treatment in the workplace has on health, the stigmatisation of disabilities, and how organizations respond to anti-discrimination legislation (2013, pp. 300-302).

Another factor is the culture or systemic organization of the workplace. Baumgartner, Dwertmann, Boehm, and Bruch (2015) gathered data from Germany in small and medium sized companies to analyse the effects formalisation and centralisation have on job satisfaction for employees with disabilities. Formalisation is the “degree to which rules, procedures, instructions, and communications are written down” while centralization “relates to the distribution of power within an organization” (Baumgartner et al., 2015, pp. 327-328). They found that a more formalized work environment did not have an impact on job satisfaction for employees with disabilities, and argue that this could be because more formalised workplaces may have better procedures and that other employees have more knowledge of the rules affecting employees with disabilities (2015, pp. 335-336). Their findings that decentralised workplaces create higher job satisfaction for employees with disabilities is attributed to employees having more participation in decision making and procedures that affect them (2015, p. 335). Overall, their research suggests that rules-based and procedural workplaces can be positive for employees with disabilities as long as an element of power and authority is administered down to the employee level. This study implies that these two factors of an employer affect how satisfied employees with disabilities will be in their workplace.

Within the U.S., Hernandez (2000) conducted a literature review on employer attitudes toward employees with disabilities as well as employer attitudes toward the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). The ADA was enacted in 1990 and amended in 2009 (Jasper & Waldhart, 2013). Hernandez (2000) divided employer attitudes into the categories of global attitudes and specific attitudes toward people with disabilities and employment. Global attitudes are general “evaluative responses… that typically do not involve declaring planned actions or intentions,” while specific attitudes “have a narrow
scope and may include a statement of intended behaviour” (2000, p. 5). She found that employer responses in studies were more positive if the questions and answers were framed along global attitudes and focused on disabilities in general without specifying a particular kind of disability (2000, pp. 6-7). Accordingly, more negative responses occurred if studies used specific attitudes and if the questions concerned a specific disability (2000, pp. 7-9). Hernandez (2000) argues that employer attitudes are generally supportive of employment for people with disabilities, but that the details and specifics of employing people with disabilities challenges employer perceptions and attitudes. This could be due to a myriad of factors, such as perceived stigmas and limitations associated with certain disabilities or a lack of understanding surrounding accommodations by employers.

The size, type of work, and culture of a workplace can greatly affect employment for people with disabilities. Hagner, Dague, and Phillips (2014) argue that “for employees with disabilities, the degree to which an individual fits within the social culture of his or her workplace is a key ingredient in that individual’s employment success” (p. 195). Their study on employment specialists in organizations led them to conclude that barriers to social inclusion in a work place can lead to isolation of employees with disabilities. They argue that job development and job support are integral in removing these barriers (Hagner et al., 2014, pp. 200-201). Fevre et al. (2013) argue that employees with disabilities face greater ill-treatment from their workplace than employees without disabilities. Thus, it is important to note that the culture of a workplace and the attitude of coworkers and managers can be a crucial factor in determining if the workplace is a positive place for people with disabilities to succeed.

People with disabilities are not employed proportionately across the same industries and occupations as people without disabilities. BC Stats, based on the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey of 2006, shows the breakdown of the labour market for Canada and BC and how the type of occupation is a factor affecting people with disabilities (2009, p. 57). Most notable for BC and Canada is that more people without disabilities were represented in management occupations, while people with
disabilities were more represented in sales and service occupations (2009, pp. 57-58). BC Stats (2009) identifies that there are regional differences within Canada and BC as to the types of employment gained by people with disabilities. In addition, attitudes and perceptions held by employers towards people with disabilities can differ depending on occupation type and context. For example, Jasper and Waldhart's (2013) study on employer attitudes on hiring employees with disabilities within the leisure and hospitality industry in the U.S. argues that the industry has unique characteristics that create unique barriers for people with disabilities. They conclude that even within the industry, the size of the organization has an impact on the difficulty employers perceive in hiring people with disabilities, with smaller businesses having more perceived difficulties (Jasper & Waldhart, 2013, p. 586).

The stigma associated with a type of disability is a factor that affects people with disabilities in acquiring and retaining employment. Disability type and the stigma associated with it play a central role as a mediator between disability type and employee acceptance (McLaughlin, Bell, & Stringer, 2004, pp. 309, 329). Unger (2002) reports that many studies found employers “expressed greater concern with hiring individuals with mental or emotional disabilities than individuals with physical disabilities (p. 8). Burge, Ouellette-Kuntz, and Lysaght (2007) commenced a poll in 2004 in Ontario on public attitudes toward people with intellectual disabilities and their inclusion in society, notably employment. They asked participants in what capacity should people with intellectual disabilities be employed, with the options being “should not work,” “special workshops with other people with intellectual disabilities,” “skilled job with workers without intellectual disabilities” and “unskilled job with workers without intellectual disabilities” (Burge, Ouellette-Kuntz, & Lysaght, 2007, p. 31). They found that 34% of respondents believe that a segregated “special workshop” employment practice is the most appropriate for people with intellectual disabilities. They argue that this is of particular interest in revealing attitudes towards people with disabilities, as this attitude purposefully excludes people with intellectual disabilities from social participation activities such as employment (2007, p. 32). Attitudes of the public or employers can be different regarding the type of disability and the social stigma attached to it and will impact an employee’s experience in the workplace.
Shier, Graham, and Jones (2009) conducted a study set in Regina and Calgary to examine the lived experiences of people with disabilities who were employed in a myriad of different fields. They found that social barriers could be broken down into the categories of employer discrimination, labelling, and the negation of human capital (2009, pp. 67-69). They conclude that having a disability acts as a barrier to retaining employment. Based on their respondents they argue that, contrary to other literature, people with disabilities are pressured to “voluntarily” leave the workforce due to a lack of support from employers to address personal care issues and illnesses that may arise due to disability and a lack of proper accommodations in the workplace (2009, p. 70). They conclude by recommending that “education of employers and companies was a common response by respondents with regard to providing a solution to the discrimination that they face in the labour market” (2009, p. 71).

There are many demographic, disability related, and social factors that impact people with disabilities securing and retaining employment. All of these factors are important in the way they impede people with disabilities, depending on their individual characteristics, the characteristics of individual workplaces, and overarching social norms and labour market realities. Overall, all of these factors act as barriers for people with disabilities that limit their labour market participation, and on a grander scale, limit their ability for social participation.

2.3 People with Disability and Labour Market Participation:

Involvement of people with disabilities in the labour market differs given many different factors. The literature reviewed indicates that while people with disabilities want to work, they face greater challenges when seeking employment and earn less than those without disabilities (Hale, Hayghe, & McNeil, 1998; Hogan, Kyaw-Myint, Harris & Denronden, 2012; Kidd, Sloane, & Ferko, 2000; Zwerling, Whitten, Sprince, Davis, Wallace, JD, & Heeringa, 2003). Although exact numbers differ, many studies found that employment rates for people with disabilities are generally less than half of that of people without disabilities (Hale, Hayghe, & McNeil, 1998; Hogan, Kyaw-Myint, & Harris, 2012; Kidd, Sloane, & Ferko, 2000; Zwerling et al., 2003). Studies also find that even when employed, people with disabilities face underemployment, or receive
lower level and lower paying jobs than a person without a disability would. Additionally, while accommodations have been shown to cost employers very little, there is still resistance by employers to hiring a person with a disability due to perceived costs associated with accommodation. The BC Public Service Agency defines accommodation as any action taken by the employer to “alleviate or eliminate the harsher impact of the requirement on the particular employee or group of employees that is related to the prohibited ground of discrimination” (BC Public Service Agency, 2008, p. 5).

Effective accommodations can greatly impact whether people with disabilities are able to retain employment with an employer. Foster (2007) used a social model approach and conducted an exploratory study in the U.K. examining how employers and workplaces socially construct barriers that limit and hinder people with disabilities. She argues that up to date most studies analyze employer opinions and that very few studies focus on the experiences of people with disabilities within the workplace (2007, p. 69). Respondents from her study did not cite formal policies and practices as having an influential impact on successful negotiations of adjustments, and she states that “the single most influential factor was the attitude of individual line managers or heads of departments” (2007, p. 79). If accommodations are dependent on the goodwill of superiors, it could be a sign to a greater failure of human resource initiatives and policy implementation within the respondent’s organization. Many studies speak to the need for education and awareness of employers about employment practices regarding people with disabilities (Crawford, 2012, pp. 28-32; Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009, pp. 70-71). In his literature review, Crawford (2012) questions provincial and territorial officials and finds that “staff expertise and beliefs in the strengths and capabilities of people with disabilities are important enablers” in regards to obtaining and retaining employment (p. 32).

Most accommodations cost roughly $500 or less, with many requiring flexibility and change within the workplace environment as the only accommodation needed (Cantor, 1996). In a study conducted by the Canadian Abilities Foundation in 2004, people with disabilities view workplace accommodations as an important part in
successful employment (Canadian Abilities Foundation, 2004, pp. 3-4). They found that 70% of people with disabilities interviewed required some form of accommodation (2004, p. 3). They report that the employers they interviewed perceived accommodations as a costly measure and acknowledged that it impacted their hiring decisions. This perception is in opposition to the annual estimated cost of accommodations for people with disabilities, as shown in Table 5. They state that “notwithstanding this broad-based need for at least some level of workplace accommodation, the costs are seen as relatively reasonable” (2004, p. 3).

Table 5: Annual costs of workplace accommodations by severity of disability (Canadian Abilities Foundation, 2004, p. 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity of Disability</th>
<th>% of Disability Severity by Cost of Accommodation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under $500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Canadian Abilities Foundation, Neglected or Hidden Survey, 2004, p. 3).

In a systematic review of studies on workplace accommodations, Nevala, Pehkonen, Koskela, Ruusuvuori, and Antila (2015) examine 76 articles and 11 different quantitative and qualitative studies, rating their quality and analyzing workplace accommodation types and usage. Accommodations that they found regarding work schedule and organization include accommodation of work schedules, flexible or modified work schedules, modified work tasks or requirements, modified routines, teleworking, reduced work-pace, training of skills, and self-advocacy or adaptation of roles (Nevala et al. 2015, p. 435). Physical environment accommodations included adapted furniture and floor mats, a place to rest, accessible parking facilities, railings, ramps, handles, accommodating bathrooms, and locking systems. Assistive technology included dictation-based word processing programs, ergonomic keyboards, memory aids, voice recognition software, and computerized phone systems (2015, pp. 435-436). There are a nearly limitless number of accommodation types, which vary in use depending on a mixture of barriers and facilitators to assist accommodation. They conclude that “The key facilitators and barriers of employment were found to be self-
advocacy on the part of disabled persons, support of the employer and community, the amount of training and counselling disabled persons receive, and flexibility with respect to work schedules and work organization” (2015, p. 444).

Dong, Oire, MacDonald-Wilson, and Fabian (2013) note that although research has shown that accommodations improve the employment and retention prospects for people with disabilities, employees are still hesitant to ask for accommodations and employers are reluctant to give them. Their exploratory research looks into how important specific factors are as rated by employees with disabilities, employers, and employment service providers. The top five factors rated by all stakeholders include “supportiveness of the employee’s direct supervisor, employer’s support for requesting accommodations, communication between the employee and employer, employers’ understanding of disabilities and ADA eligibility, and the extent to which the accommodations are matched to job requirements” (2013, p. 185). Ultimately, the more aware and educated the employer and employee are regarding accommodations and the more open the communication between the employer and employee, the more likely accommodations are going to be successful. They also found that employers more likely to provide accommodations scored “employee’s knowledge of reasonable accommodation procedures in the organization” and “perceived fairness of the accommodation by coworkers” at a higher rate (2013, p. 187). Likewise, employees who are more willing to request accommodations score the importance of “ease of use of the accommodations” and “extent to which the accommodations are matched to job requirements” as higher than those less likely to request accommodations (2013, p. 187). It is interesting to note how willingness to disclose one’s disability and request accommodations impacts perceptions regarding the ease of implementing the accommodation and how effective it will be. While the context is different, many of the factors outlined by Dong et al. (2013) apply to the labour market situation regarding accommodations in Canada.

Zwerling et al. (2003) commenced a study on responses from the U.S. National Health Interview Survey on Disability conducted 1994-1995. Many employees with disabilities reported requiring little accommodation, depending on their employment and
disability context, and thus many reported as not having received an accommodation (Zwerling et al., 2003, pp. 522-523). Of the 4937 respondents, only 16% reported needing an accommodation and 78% reported that if they did need an accommodation that they received it (Zwerling et al., 2003, p. 520). They found that multiple factors dictated who was more likely to receive accommodations, with college graduates, older workers, full-time workers, and self-employed workers more likely to receive accommodations compared to lower educated, younger, and part-time workers. (2003, p. 522). In an Australian study, Hogan et al. (2012) states that accommodations are few and are often managed by employees instead of the employer (p. 2). Hogan et al. (2012) hypothesis that people with disabilities face lower wages and lower employment rates due to a lack of communication between employee and employer, and that employees with disabilities may be self-screening themselves out of jobs due to stigmas (p. 7). He also found that the disparity between people with disabilities and without disabilities is greater or lesser depending on disability type and severity, concluding that “people with disability continue to experience disadvantage… and the degree of disparity differs according to a range of disability characteristics” (2012, p. 8).

People with disabilities are more likely to suffer layoffs, be looking for work, or be in part time employment. Hale, Hayghe, and McNeil (1998) found that people with severe disabilities are far more likely to be unemployed and have less education than those with moderate disabilities, but that those with moderate disabilities have only a slightly greater unemployment rate compared to people without disabilities. Similarly, people with disabilities face more layoff time and spend more time looking for work, with those with greater severity of disability having a higher percentage of layoff (Hale, Hayghe, & McNeil, 1998, pp. 6-7).

It is very common for people with disabilities around the globe to have a lower wage than people without disabilities (World Health Organization, 2011b, pp. 238-239). BC Stats outlines the wage differential between people with and without disabilities, based on the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (2009, p. 61). Table 6 displays the breakdown of wages for people with and without disabilities within Canada by age. Likewise in both the U.K. and the U.S., people with disabilities have faced
historically lower wages and employment rates than people without disabilities (Kidd, Sloane, & Ferko, 2000; Hale, Hayghe, & McNeil, 1998). Once again, wages are impacted by different contextual and socio-demographic factors affecting people with disabilities. Baldwin and Marcus (2006) find in their econometric study on the American National Health Interview Survey of 1994 that people with mental illness disabilities face lower wages. They argue that the wage differential is quite significant, and conclude that “the econometric measure of stigma is consistent with workers’ self-reports of their experiences in the labour market” (Baldwin & Marcus, 2006, p. 390). Similar to other studies, they observe that “the problem is not the workers but their work environment” and recommend “educating employers, changing employment policies, providing sensitivity awareness training for supervisors and coworkers…” (Baldwin & Marcus, 2006, p. 392).

Table 6: Average Income of People with and Without Disabilities in Canada by Age Group (Statistics Canada, 2006, pp. 8-9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Total income of people with and without disabilities in Canada</th>
<th>With Disability</th>
<th>Without Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 15-24</td>
<td>$10,005</td>
<td>$12,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-34</td>
<td>$23,087</td>
<td>$33,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 35-44</td>
<td>$29,765</td>
<td>$45,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45-54</td>
<td>$29,137</td>
<td>$50,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 55-64</td>
<td>$27,862</td>
<td>$44,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Total Income Aged 15 and Over</td>
<td>$28,503</td>
<td>$37,309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is more common for people with disabilities to be employed in part-time or temporary work (World Health Organization, 2011b, pp. 238-239). People with disabilities are more likely to be in jobs with less schedule flexibility, with less benefits, less insurance and pension plans, and with less opportunities (Schur, Kruse, Blasi, & Blanck, 2009, p. 383). For example, in the U.S. in 2001, 44% of people with disabilities who worked had part-time work, compared to 22% of people without disabilities (Schur, 2003, p. 597). Schur, Kruse, Blasi, and Blanck (2009), in their study conducted on 14 different companies in the U.S. from 2001 to 2006, found that employees with disabilities generally have lower wages, less benefits, less opportunities, and less
decision making abilities facing their own accommodations (pp. 394-397). These factors impact perceptions held by employees with disabilities and “the unfair treatment perceived by workers with disabilities is only partially captured by disparities in pay and work organization variables, indicating they also perceive unfair treatment in other areas” (Schur et al., 2009, p. 397). They find that workplace environments that have a higher level of perceived fairness and responsiveness have a positive impact on employees with disabilities’ perceptions of the employer (2009, pp. 400-401). Overall, they find that equal wages, opportunities for job and skills development, job security, participation in decision making, and employee benefits all impact the perceived level of fairness and responsiveness of the employer. Employers with lower levels of fairness generally have employees with disabilities with lower levels of job satisfaction, loyalty, willingness to work hard, and consequently have higher turnover intentions (2009, pp. 401-402).

The ability for workplaces to have positive work environments and accommodate people with disabilities impacts the success, longevity, and participation of people with disabilities in their job. Jasper and Waldhart (2013) provide an overview of studies that show the benefits of hiring people with disabilities for the organization and for creating a positive work environment. These include reducing business costs by decreasing the likelihood of litigation, lowering turnover costs by having increased employee loyalty, having improved services, and having a more diverse and welcoming workforce (Jasper & Waldhart, 2013, pp. 581-582). Unger (2012) outlines in her literature review that many employers perceive employees with disabilities to benefit their workplace by giving their workplace a positive public image, by being dependable, and by creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce (p. 8).

In addition, conflict within the workplace can be difficult for employees with disabilities, due to common power imbalances and factors discussed above. Conflict can take many different forms and is multi-faceted. Deutsch (1973) outlines how conflict can be “misattributed” or “displaced”, “contingent” on certain factors, or falsely attributed (pp. 12-13). He also describes that conflict can be latent or manifest, as conflict between two individuals or communities does not necessarily express itself in direct
actions and can be underlying. Conflict can express or manifest itself as a dispute over a particular event or incident, but be representative of a much larger latent conflict. In regards to people with disabilities, individual disputes within the workplace regarding a single incident may speak to a bigger more concerning conflict between the individual and the organization. These latent conflicts could be the denial or lack of accommodations or the insensitivity of co-workers towards an individual’s disability but could be expressed in individual conflict between an employee and a manager.

Power imbalances are often present in conflicts involving people with disabilities. Mayer (2012) defines “two general categories of power: structural and personal” (p. 72). Due to the factors and labour market situation outlined above, people with disabilities often do not have structural power in relation to their employers. Addressing structural power imbalances is difficult as “changes in structural power usually require systemic change” such as changing an organization’s processes or workplace culture (Mayer, 2012, p. 73). Changing workplace cultures is a slow and difficult process, requiring the education and skill development of the workforce and the society at large. Work-Able’s objectives to build capacity within the BC Public Service as well as the PSA’s emphasis on fair and equitable hiring processes are working to address the power imbalances often faced by people with disabilities.

2.4 International Outlook on Employment and People with Disability

There are numerous pieces of legislation and policy in different nations with the intention to reduce barriers for services and employment for people with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by Canada in 2010, outlines the global situation faced by people with disabilities, calls for the rights of people with disabilities to be guaranteed, and aims to create global networks to protect these rights (United Nations, 2006). The CRPD outlines eight general principles:

a. “Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons;”

b. Non-discrimination;

c. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
d. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;

e. Equality of opportunity;

f. Accessibility;

g. Equality between men and women;

h. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities” (United Nations, 2006, article 3).

The CRPD requires signatory states to fulfill certain obligations, including aligning legislation and laws to be non-discriminatory, include a disability component in all relevant policies and programmes, and refraining from acting inconsistently with the CRPD (World Health Organization, 2011b, p. 9). CRPD signatories include Australia, China, Canada, members of the European Union, Brazil, India, the U.K., and the U.S.

The World Health Organization and World Bank (2011b) produced the World Report on Disability, outlining common barriers facing people with disabilities with recommendations to address them for different types of organizations. They report on the uniqueness of experiencing disability, how physical and organizational environments create barriers for people with disabilities, and how negative attitudes and stigma can be combated by personal contact and social marketing (2011b, pp. 4-6). The report highlights the negative attitudes of employers toward people with disabilities, and that “the work disincentives of benefit programmes, together with the common perception that disability is necessarily an obstacle to work, can be significant social problems” (2011b, p. 248).

Internationally, the World Health Survey undertaken in 51 middle and higher income countries reports that employment rates are 52.8% for men with disability and 19.6% for women with disability, compared to 64.9% and 29.9% for men and women respectively with no disabilities (World Health Organization, 2011b, p. 237). While these numbers are different from Canada’s, the trends are similar, with people with disabilities having a lower employment rate than people without disabilities and women with disabilities having a lower employment rate than men with disabilities. The World
Report on Disability finds that people with disabilities are more often employed in part-time and lower paid employment (World Health Organization, 2011b, p. 238). There has been a move toward supported employment opportunities over employment quotas, as there is little documented evidence that quotas regarding employment make meaningful change for people with disabilities. Supported employment opportunities are “a person-centered model involving the interests and skills of the individual” and the “aim is to find a match that will lead to viable longer term employment and a life-long career” (World Health Organization, 2011b, p. 243). Work-Able meets the description as a supported employment opportunity program. They list eight disabling barriers that are explored in Section 3 and make up the conceptual background of this research project, as well as nine corresponding recommendations to address these barriers. Notable recommendations in alignment with Work-Able include investing in “specific programmes and services,” “involve people with disabilities,” “improve human resource capacity,” and “increase public awareness and understanding” (World Health Organization, 2011a, pp. 17-19).

Similar to Canada’s Employment Equity Act, within the U.K. and the U.S. there is legislation put in place to assist people with disabilities in securing and retaining employment. In the U.K., the Discrimination Disability Act of 1995 was the first piece of modern legislation to protect the rights of people with disability (Kidd, Sloane, & Ferko, 2000). In the U.S., the ADA outlines what is required of employers to accommodate employees with disabilities. However, “the responsibility for requesting accommodations falls on the employee with a disability, who must disclose the nature of the condition, indicate how it interferes with performing essential job functions, and suggest the types of accommodations that might mitigate its effect” (Dong et al., 2013, p. 183). The expectation for employees to approach employers for necessary accommodations is problematic due to stigmas surrounding disabilities and employer attitudes toward accommodating and hiring people with disabilities.

Greenberg (2012) argues that although the CRPD is in place, an effective enforcement and mediation/conciliation program needs to be established to ensure the protection of people with disabilities. She states that in many nations “there exists a
dissonance between public proclamations advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and the societal and private attitudinal biases held about persons with disabilities” (Greenberg, 2012, p. 586). There are also cultural differences in attitudes toward people with disabilities around the world (2012, pp. 589-591). Internationally, she argues that regardless of a government’s published intent there is a discrepancy between the laws and legal framework that aim to assist and protect people with disabilities and social reality. To meet the spirit of the CRPD, nations need “to address a history of systemic discrimination towards individuals with disabilities” and to implement “responsive mediation and conciliation forums to constructively address such discrimination” (2012, p. 602). By having a disability centred and educated mediation service, Greenberg (2012) argues that CRPD signatory nations can better protect the rights of people with disabilities and transform social perceptions. This would most likely be aligned with a transformative mediation style, which focuses on allowing both parties to empathise and understand the other’s interests, ultimately ending with a change in opinion and perspective (Nabatchi & Bingham, 2001, pp. 401-402).

The international outlook on employment for people with disabilities raises many systemic barriers and recommendations on how to move forward. The labour situation facing people with disabilities is a global challenge for all societies to shift towards the full inclusion of people with disabilities within society. As such, this research project has used all of the following literature discussed in the sections above to assist in its analysis of Work-Able. In particular, the World Health Organization’s World Report on Disability (2011b) was used to inform the creation of the conceptual framework, interview measures, and analysis. This is outlined in the following Sections.
3.0 Conceptual Framework

The World Health Organization’s *World Report on Disability* (2011b) is informed by the United Nations CRPD as well as the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health. It lists eight barriers that contribute to restricting participation of people with disability in society and the labour market:

1. Inadequate Policies and Standards: common gaps include lack of detailed and articulated strategies and a lack of financial assistance for people with disabilities and their families;
2. Negative Attitudes: attitudes held by societies towards people with disabilities act as a barrier to education, employment, health care, and social participation;
3. Lack of Provision of Services: lack of services such as health care and social support particularly affect vulnerable populations, such as people with disabilities;
4. Problems with Service Delivery: even when services are available, problems of accessibility and service delivery can act as a barrier;
5. Inadequate Funding: strategies, programs, and policies need to have adequate resources to be effective;
6. Lack of Accessibility: many built environments, transport systems, and work spaces are not accessible by people with disabilities;
7. Lack of Consultation and Involvement: Many people with disabilities are not consulted or included in decision making opportunities that directly affect them;
8. Lack of Data and Evidence: Research and programs aimed at people with disabilities have only begun relatively recently, and are not common discourse (World Health Organization, 2011a, pp. 9-10).

The *World Report on Disability* provides recommendations to address barriers for governments, non-profits, and service providers involved with people with disabilities, including addressing barriers to employment (2011a, pp. 12-20). Analysis of Work-Able uses the *World Report on Disability* (2011b) as a conceptual background to guide the research and interview measures. Of the eight barriers listed above, Negative Attitudes, Problems with Service Delivery, Lack of Accessibility, Lack of Consultation and Involvement, and Lack of Data and Evidence will inform five pillars for the framework of
the research. These pillars have been framed as Attitudes, Service Delivery, Accessibility, Consultation and Involvement, and Lack of Data and Evidence. The first four pillars informed the research questions while the Lack of Data and Evidence pillar informed the purpose of this research.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework from the World Health Organization’s *World Report on Disability (2011b)*: Identified Disabling Barriers.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of the four barriers identified by the World Health Organization transformed into conceptual pillars to examine Work-Able. Each pillar represents a set of barriers experienced by people with disabilities. Each category created from the interview results was aligned with one of the four pillars. The pillar Lack of Data and Evidence informs the other pillars and the whole research project, as more data and evidence will help address barriers to employment for people with disabilities. The conceptual framework has acted as the conceptual underpinning to the interview measures and guided the research. Interview measures were aligned to one
of the four pillars with the aim of revealing experiences associated with each barrier (appendix A). As outlined in the methods section below, this framework guided the research in achieving the general aim of analysing Work-Able and revealing the experiences of participants in the program.
4.0 Method
4.1 Research Design

This study was a formative evaluation on the Work-Able program. Formative evaluations are done prior to or during the activity/program/project that is being evaluated (Scriven, 1991, pp. 168-169). Formative evaluations can be conducted prior to the activity that is being evaluated, and this is known as pre-formative or preproduction research (Scriven, 1991, pp. 168-169; Quick, 2014, p. 506). Alternatively, it can be conducted while the activity is ongoing to inform and improve upon the future of the project or program (Frechtling, 2007, p. 3). This study was conducted in line with the latter understanding of formative evaluation. It was the intention and objective of the research question to glean important information regarding Work-Able’s objectives from the first cohort of participants of the program. By analyzing the data gathered from the participants as well as the literature, the study was able to make initial evaluations and recommendations for Work-Able as it progresses in continuing years. In this sense, this evaluation of Work-Able is seen as more of a process rather than an event (Frechtling, 2007, p. 5)

The critical incident technique (CIT) was the research method used in this study. Critical incident items are defined as critical or important events, experiences, occurrences, incidents, factors, or sentiments (Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, Amundson, 2009, p. 266). This method is based off of Flanagan’s (1954) five major steps, which have been added upon from over 60 years of literature following Flanagan’s initial publication (Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, Amundson, 2005; Britten, 2014). These five steps include ascertaining the general aims, creating plans and specifications, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and interpreting and reporting the data. Butterfield et al. (2009) state that the modern CIT has been improved upon by including a “wish list” component as well as a nine step validity checklist, and label this technique as the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) (p. 267). Wish list items are defined as actions, behaviours, people, supports, information, programs, etc. that were not present at the time of the critical incident that the participant believes would have been helpful (Butterfield et al., 2009, p. 267).
First, the general aims of the study were identified, which are the main actions or components of the activity to be studied (Butterfield, et al. 2009, p. 268). Flanagan (1954) articulates that the general aim is “the functional description of an activity [that] specifies precisely what it is necessary to do and not to do if participation in the activity is to be judged successful or effective” (p. 336). The activity or phenomena being studied is the Work-Able program and the experiences of those involved with the program. Work-Able is expected to contribute to the objectives set within the Work-Able project plan listed in Section 1.1. As such, the general aim of the program is to promote positive experiences regarding the recruitment and accommodation processes for people with disabilities within Work-Able and the BC Public Service.

Second, plans were made to identify the types of critical incidents that were to be recorded. This included pre-interview work to accurately record the place, the person, the conditions, and the activity of each critical incident, and its relevance and effect on the general aim (Flanagan, 1954, p. 338). The primary researcher and observer of the interviews was the author of this study. Butterfield et al. (2009) states that the specifications of the qualifications of critical incidents need to be deliberated on before interviews commence (p. 269). These specifications informed the interview guide (appendix A). Each question in the interview guide is situated towards one or more of the four pillars of the conceptual framework in Section 3 or is situated to identify wish list items. The types of experiences that are observed concern the employment and accommodation of the employee hired through the Work-Able program. Critical incidents identified during the data analysis stage were gauged on how they affect or are related to the Work-Able program as well as how they relate to employment of people with disability and disability accommodation.

Third, data was collected through a set of interviews with program participants to be able to analyse and evaluate if and how Work-Able was meeting its objectives. Upon the recommendation of Butterfield et al. (2009), a background to the study and the relationship to the general aim of the study was given to each participant at the beginning of the interview (p. 269-270). The interview guide and questions were connected to the general aims of the study and the four pillars of the conceptual
framework established for this research. They were designed to avoid leading questions and assumed that the participant were experts in their own experiences (Flanagan, 1954, p. 342). Interview questions were practiced prior to the interview, and the interviewer practised maintaining focus on and not interrupting the interviewee (Britten, 2014, pp. 11-14). Participants were respected and given space and opportunity to clarify any aspect of the interview process at the beginning and end of the interview. During the interviews, the researcher took notes on a template for each interview question. These notes were then digitised. Each interview was also audio-recorded, and shortly after each interview the researcher listened to the recording and made notations on the digitised interview template. The last two steps of the CIT are discussed in Section 4.4.

This study used a standardised open-ended interview design as described by Patton (2002, pp. 344-347). Standardised open-ended interviews require carefully worded questions designed before the interview, and probes are kept to a minimum to have less impact from interviewer judgement. Patton (2002) explains that the standardised open-ended interview design is beneficial for credibility reasons as it allows for easier reproduction. Each participant received the same questions and probes, which may produce different responses, reveal different critical incidents, and steer the interview in a different direction accordingly. However, due to this structure, it does not let the interviewer pursue unforeseen topics as effectively as a more informal or conversational interview style would (2002, pp. 345-347). This ensured that the research question and sub questions outlined in Section 1.3 were explored and that adequate insight was gained on whether Work-Able is on track to meet its objectives. It also ensured validity in regards to identifying critical incidents across different participant experiences, as each participant received the same interview guide and questions (Butterfield et al., 2009, pp. 269-270).

4.2 Sample

This study used a purposeful sampling technique to gather appropriate interview candidates. As outlined in the ECIT, data saturation can be achieved through the identification of an adequate number of critical incidents, rather than through copious interviews (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 479). As this research is guided to provide
analysis for the Work-Able program, a “homogenous” purposeful sample is identified (Emmel, Seaman, & Kenny, 2013, p. 39). Emmel, Seaman, and Kenny (2013) describe “homogenous” sampling as a “strategy with the purpose of investigating a group or sub-group in considerable detail” (p. 39). The sample is homogenous in that the sampled participants are involved in one capacity or another with Work-Able. The three subgroups interviewed include the nine employees hired under Work-Able (group 1), the nine supervisors of the employees (group 2), and the nine mentors paired with each employee (group 3). The Work-Able program lead was also interviewed.

4.3 Interview Measure

None of the questions asked any participants about the disability of any intern. The researcher only learned the specific disability of an intern if they voluntarily chose to disclose that information during the interview. Each interview question was aligned with one of the four pillars, Attitudes, Service Delivery, Accessibility, and Consultation and Involvement (appendix A). Consent to interview was gathered from each participant prior to the interview (appendix B).

4.4 Method of Analysis

The latter stages of the CIT outline how to analyse and present the data collected; the fourth and fifth step of Flanagan’s (1954) technique. Fourthly, once the data was collected and all interviews conducted, it was analysed to identify critical incidents relating to the general aim of the Work-Able program. Butterfield et al. (2009) outline three steps in analysing the data (pp. 270-274). First, the frame of reference for the data has to be set, or, how the data is to be used. For this study, the data is used to answer the research questions outlined in Section 1.3 and to offer recommendations for the improvement and progression of Work-Able. Critical Incidents and wish list items were identified by reviewing all of the interview notes and were entered into a template for recording and organization purposes. A coding scheme was created for each critical incident and wish list item, with each critical incident and wish list item being given two codes to indicate positive and negative experiences. Interview notes were reviewed again and all relevant information regarding a critical incident or wish list item were identified.
The next step of analysing the data was to group the critical incidents into categories based on similarities determined by the researcher. New documents were created for each category and every critical incident and wish list item within that category were copied into the document for ease of analysis. After categories were finalised, operational definitions were given to them. Additionally, the level of specificity or generality of the study was chosen. Put simply, generality or specificity implies if the study’s results are able to be generalised or if they are specific to an individual situation. As this study was a formative evaluation to assist Work-Able in its inaugural year, interview questions and analysis were focused on the Work-Able program specifically. This study is more specific in nature, and while some generalisations are made in the findings and discussion sections regarding employment programs for people with disabilities, there are limitations to making these generalisations. This deliberation on the specificity of the data is important, as “the purpose for which the data are being collected influences the formation of the categories and their level of specificity” (Butterfield et al., 2009, p. 272).

Additionally, this study analysed a set of questionnaires titled “Reflecting on My Disability Awareness” that were presented to participants during disability awareness seminars titled "Intentional Conversations" given by the Work-Able program lead prior to the program starting (appendix D). The questionnaire was designed by the Work-Able program lead to gauge participant’s knowledge of employees with disabilities in the workforce pre and post session. The questionnaires were analyzed using a simple time series analysis technique, where general changes of perception and knowledge regarding people with disabilities were recorded before and after the session (Yin, 2014, pp. 150-155). As the pre and post seminar questionnaires were taken in a very short time frame and are identical, they match Yin’s (2014) requirement of being traced in detail and with precision (p. 151). Yin (2014) states that time series analyses are able to match an observed trend to a theoretically significant trend specified before the observation (p. 151). As such, simple mean analysis was taken on the questionnaires to see if the sessions resulted in an increase of disability awareness with the participants, as this was the goal of the “Intentional Conversation” session. The results of analysis of the questionnaires can be found in appendix C.
4.5 Credibility Checks

Lastly in Butterfield et al.’s (2009) five stages to the ECIT, credibility checks were built into the interview process or were taken after interviews were analysed. These nine credibility checks were created and expanded upon within the University of British Columbia’s psychology department during the 1990’s and early 2000’s (Butterfield et al., 2005, pp. 485-486). Along with the identification of wish list items, Butterfield et al. (2009) argue that these nine credibility checks are what make the critical incident technique “enhanced.” A definition of the checks and how they were or were not used follows:

1. All interviews were audiotaped for descriptive validity and accuracy. Notes from the interview recordings were taken and added to the digitized written notes made during the interviews. Some direct quotes were transcribed.

2. Interview fidelity was sought by having prompts built into many of the interview questions to be used during the interview (appendix A). Interview questions were reviewed by the project supervisor as well as the Work-Able program lead to ensure appropriateness and fidelity.

3. Have another observer look over 25% of the interview notes and identify their own critical incidents. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and due to having only one researcher, another observer did not review 25% of the interview notes to identify critical incidents.

4. Achieve exhaustiveness by interviewing enough participants to ensure that new categories arise. The sample of this study was purposive, and only selected participants directly involved with Work-Able. As such, a second invitation to participate was made to ensure that as many possible participants could be interviewed. However, exhaustiveness is argued to be achieved as the last two of the 10 categories were identified in the 6th interview analysed. The following four interviews analysed identified only two new critical incident items and one wish list item and no new categories.

5. The rate of occurrence and distribution of critical incident items and wish list items was tallied to properly analyse interviews. Categories were checked to see how many critical incident and wish list items were within each and how many
participants had incidents within each category. This ensured categories had enough support by number of incidents and participation rate to make them valid.

6. Have 25% of the critical incidents identified placed into categories by another observer. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and due to having only one researcher, another observer did not place 25% of the critical incident items identified into categories.

7. The respective categories and critical incident items and wish list items were emailed to each participant to ensure that interviews were interpreted as intended by the participants. This ensures that participants “have been honoured and accurately reported” (Butterfield et al., 2009, p. 276). This is in line with the conceptual pillar of Lack of Consultation and Involvement concerning people with disabilities. This credibility check is to ensure that their voices are heard in the research that ultimately concerns them. All participants were asked if the critical incident items and wish list items accurately reflected their experiences. Participants responded to change the name of one critical incident item and to clearly define what a critical incident item is.

8. Categories were reviewed by the project supervisor as well as the Work-Able program lead to ensure validity and appropriateness to the project. Butterfield et al. (2009) recommend having two experts in the field review the categories after they have been cross-checked with the participants (pp. 277-278). It is argued that the project supervisor is an expert on the critical incident technique and the Work-Able program lead is an expert on the subject matter. Both provided feedback on the categories and the interview analysis.

9. Theoretical agreement is achieved by examining the assumptions of the study and comparing it with the literature at large. The literature review informed the conceptual framework in Section 3, which in turn shaped the interview questions. This was done intentionally to ensure theoretical agreement could be achieved. Additionally, the assumptions of the study are examined in the limitations Section. Butterfield et al. (2009) promote comparing the findings and categories created with the literature, which is provided in the discussion section.
All of the above methods informed the interview and analysis process. By using the ECIT and open-ended interviews informed by the conceptual framework, this project produced interviews that were oriented towards understanding the experiences of participants within the program. These interviews were analysed in accordance to the ECIT and the conceptual framework, and the findings are outlined in Section 5.
5.0 Findings

Interviews of Work-Able participants were analysed to discern if the Work-Able program is meeting the objectives outlined in its project charter (BC Public Service Agency, 2015b, p. 6). Of the 27 people contacted, 10 responded and participated in interviews. Five were from group 1 (interns), three were from group 2 (supervisors), and two were from group 3 (mentors). Following Butterfield et al.’s (2009) steps outlined in the ECIT, 36 different critical incident items and wish list items were identified. Critical incident items and wish list items were numbered based on when they were chronologically identified during the analysis phase. They were coded to identify if the critical incident was positive, negative, or a wish list item. Ten categories were created after the identification of critical incident items and wish list items within each participant group was conducted (Butterfield et al., 2009, pp. 272-274). The categories were numbered based on the order of identification. Each category was given an operational definition made up of quotes surrounding incidents. The breakdown of all critical incident and wish list items, their rate of occurrence, the date they were categorised, and tracking if new categories emerged was recorded.

There were 24 different critical incidents and 12 different wish list items identified. Independent incidents within each different critical incident item were identified if the event, experience, or sentiment was judged as being unique and independent. The number of incidents within each critical incident or wish list item was totalled and assigned to a category. When discussing critical incident items and categories, this report will use “a few” to refer to two or three participants, “several” will refer to four or five participants, and “many” will refer to six or more participants. At times, the exact number of participants is referred to. Wish list items had a lower rate of incident occurrence and were spread out amongst fewer participants than critical incident items. Additionally, the Work-Able program lead was interviewed and results from that interview will be discussed throughout.

5.1 Attitudes

The Attitudes pillar conceptually concerns the beliefs about and lived experience of attitudes towards people with disabilities within BC society and within the BC Public
Service. Overall, all participants expressed that people with disabilities are not well supported and face many stigmas within society. Outlined in Table 7 is the operational definitions given to categories 1 and 6 and their corresponding critical incident items. Responses from participants reveal their perceptions of the attitudes held by people within the BC Public Service and British Columbian society at large towards employment for people with disabilities. The Attitudes pillar also reveals how supported interns felt and supervisors’ and mentors’ experiences in supporting interns.

Table 7: Categories, operational definitions, and critical incident/wish list items aligned with Attitudes pillar.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Critical Incidents/Wish list Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: Barriers to employment within society.</td>
<td>“There is still a negative stigma towards people with disabilities… you’re kinda scared to apply for different jobs… [and] some of the best accommodations are small things. I really do feel for the struggle that [they] must have”</td>
<td>1: Barriers in gaining previous employment; 7: Accommodations in previous employment/schooling; 15: Wish list for greater societal support services; 27: Knowledge of barriers to employment for people with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category 6: Reception of other BC Public Service employees to Work-Able interns.</td>
<td>“It is quite crucial to have these conversations [about disability] on a regular basis. If I wasn’t able to have that kind of openness… it would make it hard to be an accommodating employer. I think I’ve lucked out. [It has been a] positive experience… I’ve learned so much.”</td>
<td>10: Unfamiliarity with Work-Able across BC Public Service; 11: Educational incidents regarding attitudes and people with disabilities with others; 12: Self-disclosing nature of disability and employment and accommodations; 18: Supportive team, supervisor, and colleague attitudes; 32: Supporting Work-Able intern.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Within Category 1, critical incident items 1, 7, and wish list item 15 only contained incidents from interns, while item 27 contained incidents from all of the supervisors and mentors interviewed. All of the interns had negative experiences in obtaining employment or accommodations from previous employers or during their studies at
university, with the exception of one participant. A few participants shared experiences of barriers to employment from past employers and workplaces. One participant said that “As someone with a disability, you’re kind of scared to apply for different jobs, or, you don’t know when to disclose, and that’s like a really big issue.” Another intern relayed their perception of how managers view employing people with disabilities as requiring extra time and money, which hinders career progress and employment.

Participants also shared experiences of barriers from university, where they met barriers in the academic system put up by individuals. While a few interns received support from disability resource centres at their respective universities, one intern, although supported by the disability resource centre, met barriers when individual professors fought the accommodations they requested, belittling them and stigmatizing their disability. A few participants articulated that they got no or limited support from their university. Another barrier was the inconsistency of disability identification and accommodation. One intern explained that the disability resource centre did not offer any accommodations, and another intern stated that their disability did not qualify for financial assistance from the institution or the national student loans program. All of these incidents reveal that some members of society articulate fairness by putting emphasis on identical treatment, rather than creating equitable opportunities to allow under-privileged groups the chance to have greater participation in society. Positive incidents were also identified, including timely and appropriate accommodations from a university’s disability resource centre or from individual professors. Accommodations with previous employers included a flexible work schedule or receiving additional time for projects.

Supervisors and mentors were asked about their knowledge of people with disabilities and employment. Responses included the belief that the BC Public Service does not have good representation of people with disabilities and that BC is not any more advanced than any other province, but that initiatives are underway. A few participants responded that they believe that their ministry or office is progressive in removing barriers and being accessible. One participant mentioned that most of their knowledge of people with disabilities and employment has been gained through Work-
Able. Another participant voiced that their empathy towards people with disabilities has deepened through supporting the intern in their office. The Work-Able program lead mentioned that there was a large variation of knowledge and experience regarding employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service. At a general level, supervisors and mentors all had some level of knowledge of the barriers within society and the BC Public Service for employees with disabilities.

Interns and supervisors commented on the support they received or were giving within their office or unit. One intern said that their role was confusing at first, as co-workers and supervisors did not know exactly what the interns were supposed to do. Another intern stated that their position is undefined and is lacking in direction and they find this to be overwhelming at times. Critical incident item 11 speaks to incidents between participants and other BC Public Service employees where the participant observed learning or a potential change in attitude. An intern said they designed and delivered a presentation for their ministry on people with disabilities, which was a positive experience. A mentor reported that they have learned about their co-workers’ level of knowledge and experience with people with disabilities and believe that awareness about people with disabilities needs to grow and assumptions challenged. Another participant was interested in the different perceptions and understandings held by co-workers regarding people with disabilities. One intern was approached by a co-worker who, although they had good intentions, was rude, forward, and uneducated about people with disabilities. The intern felt they have been able to educate that co-worker and that the co-worker’s knowledge has improved.

Many participants had experiences surrounding critical incident item 12. Several reported that they were introduced as an intern of the Work-Able program, which was viewed negatively, as it labelled them as having a disability even if the nature of their disability was not disclosed. It was identified by interns that greater care needs to be taken to ensure that interns are introduced to their offices and teams neutrally, and not as being involved with a disability employment program. Choosing to disclose their disability to their supervisor and the Work-Able program lead was positive for two of the interns, as they felt that they were able to receive more nuanced accommodations.
Several interns said that their supervisor and co-workers have been supportive, with one intern commenting that “everyone in my branch, they are just really nice people”. However, one intern stated that they feel that they have been left with no support, as their job is quite independent and their supervisor is often gone for long periods of time.

Supervisors had many negative comments about not being able to properly accommodate interns in a timely manner due to not knowing the disability. One supervisor said that providing support for the intern felt reactive, as they only learned of the need to accommodate after a problem occurred. Another commented that although the intern disclosed their disability “it’s not a requirement of the program, and I think it would be challenging as an employer to try and accommodate that if you didn’t, weren’t able to have those conversations.” Another participant explained that due to not knowing the disability type, they can only have conversations on how to support them best once a negative occurrence happens. However, they understood that disclosure before the offer of employment is made is problematic.

Supervisors and mentors commented that supporting the intern has been positive and rewarding. One mentor said it had been a “positive experience, has been a fantastic mentor-mentee relationship, in the sense that I have been inspired by my mentee. You know, I think I’ve learned so much just from our conversations and it has helped me to think about different things in different ways.” A supervisor stated that they have tried to expose the intern to as many experiences and work situations as they can, including working on an accessibility team. Additionally, three interns blogged about people with disabilities on the internal BC Government website to raise awareness and knowledge across the BC Public Service.

5.2 Service Delivery

The ability of Work-Able to provide effective and efficient service delivery has a big impact on its success. The pillar of Service Delivery includes categories 4, 5, and 9. These categories were created based on the themes of the services provided for the interns through Work-Able, which includes accommodations, meaningful work experience, and value for the team and ministry that the intern is working within. Table 8
shows the operational definition and critical incident and wish list items within each category. Category 4 is the largest in terms of both number of critical incident/wish list items and the individual number of incidents. The opportunity for employees to be adequately accommodated will greatly increase their ability to succeed and their desire and ability to retain employment in the BC Public Service. Ultimately, interns’ experience in receiving accommodations and meaningful work experience varied, but was mostly positive. The perceived value of the program for supervisors and mentors also varied.

Table 8: Categories, operational definition, and critical incident/wish list items aligned with Service Delivery pillar.

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Critical Incidents/Wish list Items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Category 4: Accommodation ability and process within Work-Able program.</td>
<td>“I feel very fortunate to end up in this position… easier to ask for accommodations. Been positive to provide the equipment necessary. Long waits for accommodations… that part was probably the biggest issue. There was customized equipment… and that was an absolute nightmare. Not having benefits is a very big deal.”</td>
<td>8: Accommodations within BC Public Service; 17: Wish list to have potential accommodations identified for interns; 19: Wish list to have sick or disability related time off/benefits; 23: Wish list to ensure all accommodations arranged prior to employee starting; 29: Wish list for additional information and education surrounding accommodation strategies/assistance; 35: Difficulty discerning between accommodating and performance management; 36: Wish list that individual ministry accommodation processes are streamlined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 5: Meaningful work experience.</td>
<td>“Work has been very great so far. Work is challenging, however I am learning lots. Job has been meaningful and beneficial for me. [Experience] has been less than thrilling.”</td>
<td>9: Autonomy, efficacy, and responsibilities in work experience; 20: Learning opportunities; 21: Job engagement and meaningful employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accommodations for interns, critical incident item 8, included both interns’ experiences of being accommodated as well as supervisors’ and mentors’ experiences in providing and supporting accommodations. Interns’ incidents surrounding their accommodations were mostly positive indicating that accommodations have been adequate, that supervisors and co-workers have been supportive, and that they have been able to request any accommodation they felt was necessary. One intern stated that “through the Work-Able program, it was easier for me to ask for accommodations and not feel judged. I was pooled together with people who were similar to me and know how it feels to struggle and work hard to hide our disabilities.” One participant had their accommodation arranged before they arrived, allowing them to begin their position positively. Additionally, they were unaware that the type of accommodation they received existed, and it has greatly improved their ability to work. Referring to other support they received from their branch office, they commented that “I think I’ve lucked out.” Other positive comments included “I feel really fortunate to end up in this position”, and “having the necessary accommodations helped me show what I am capable of and allowed me to apply my knowledge.”

Other participants, however, did not have their accommodations in place before their job started, resulting in delays of up to two months which was viewed negatively. This led to wish list item 23, that all accommodations are set up prior to the start date. The desire to have a list of potential accommodation types and options was raised by four participants in wish list item 17, as both interns and supervisors were unaware of the full breadth of accommodation options available. A list of potential accommodations would enable interns to identify accommodation strategies without disclosing the nature of their disability. One supervisor expanded that if the disability of their intern was not disclosed, it would have been very helpful to have potential accommodations identified.
so that both they and the intern are more aware of what options are available. An intern was concerned that their accommodation request to have deadline extensions and additional time was not initially well received by their supervisor. One barrier for interns raised by a few participants was that due to Work-Able positions being auxiliary, or temporary, status they do not have any extended health coverage, such as paid disability or sick leave. They felt this was a clear barrier for people with disabilities, as they mentioned that not having the ability to take paid sick leave, or “disability leave” can be quite damaging financially. They identified that people with disabilities may need to take extended leave due to their disability. It was also acknowledged that having access to extended health benefits can be essential for people with disabilities to be able to succeed, depending on the severity of their disability. However, it is understood that the benefits for auxiliary positions are subject to negotiations with the BC Government Employees’ Union.

Supervisors and mentors viewed the support from the Work-Able program lead in arranging for accommodations as invaluable. One supervisor said that this was a great learning experience, and that the accommodation question needs to be asked to all employees and new hires. Another participant found it positive that Work-Able had arranged to pay for and supply the accommodations. They commented that the normal accommodation process is lengthy and laborious. However, another supervisor, who had to order customised equipment, called the process “an absolute nightmare.” They said that there was a lack of clarity about whether Work-Able or the ministry would pay and who would acquire approval for the accommodation. This highlighted that the approval and funding process for accommodations is different in each ministry across the BC Public Service. The inconsistent process led to wish list item 36, to streamline individual ministry accommodation processes.

One participant had difficulty navigating between when to provide additional workplace accommodations and when to manage performance. In particular, they had difficulty providing on the job changes to the intern’s work schedule and organisation, stating that they were only able to react when a challenge arose, and attributed this to not knowing the disability type and accommodation options. This led to wish list item 29,
the wish for additional information and education surrounding accommodation strategies, particularly if the nature of the intern’s disability is not known. One suggestion was to provide tools and strategies for interns to identify accommodations for the supervisor and workplace to implement. The Work-Able program lead said that while arranging for physical accommodations went smoothly, providing workplace accommodations for invisible disabilities proved challenging. She commented that “it was extremely hard to understand or know what they need, and that has been a bit of a challenge.”

Within category 5, every intern had an incident from critical incident item 9, and this reflected how valuable and meaningful they considered their work experience. Any experience or sentiment around the level of autonomy, responsibility, how challenged they were, or opportunities to gain new skills were all included for this incident item. Two interns believed they had more responsibility than they had anticipated and possibly more than other interns. One elaborated that their work has been challenging, promoting growth and skill development, while the other stated that they have gotten great value out of their work, as they are able to inform policy decisions. Two other interns highlighted diversity in their work tasks, and their work on multiple projects. One participant said they have been given the flexibility to form their own work plan and been able to support the team by working to their own strengths. However, one intern found their work experience “less than thrilling”, and felt that they have been underutilised. They said that the position’s duties were not arranged ahead of time, and that their supervisor and mentor have different understandings of the intern’s roles and responsibilities. The participant concluded that they felt unsupported and in an undefined role. In addition, another participant suggested that it is important to ensure the supervisor of an intern position can provide daily support, and not be at too high of a managerial level.

Three interns raised incidents surrounding learning opportunities in their positions. The intern who identified having a negative work experience enjoyed the courses taken through the Learning Centre and learning about the BC Public Service. Another participant responded that “the work is challenging; however, I am learning
lots.” The third participant commented that they have been given many learning opportunities, such as workshops and working on different projects, and are supported by the whole unit. Critical incident item 21 primarily contains responses about whether the work experience so far has been beneficial. Two interns simply said that the experience has been positive. Two other interns elaborated that their work experiences allowed them to build on their capacities and gave them opportunities they would not have been able to receive otherwise. One said, “I believe that this job has been meaningful and beneficial for me so far. I am given opportunities that I would not gain from another job. I am able to do a variety of tasks that other jobs will not offer me.” Lastly, one intern stated that their job has been disappointing, and thinks that each ministry’s position should be clearly defined and supported. The results from this category show that Work-Able is providing meaningful work experience to four of the five interns interviewed. Providing meaningful work experience is important to meet Work-Able objectives in accessing an under-utilised labour pool and for informing best practices in retaining employees with disabilities.

Experiences raised by participants in category 9 indicate the perceived value of Work-Able in increasing BC Public Service employees’ skill set or capacity to support and coach employees with disabilities. All of the incidents for this category are from supervisors and mentors. A few participants had positive incidents surrounding the value added for the ministry and office that the intern was working in. Positive elements include having a fresh perspective, providing learning opportunities for interns and co-workers, and the high quality of work from the interns. A participant in the mentor role spoke positively of their ability to have regular check-ins with their mentee to ensure that any additional issues are raised. One participant commented that they wished there had been more emphasis on the employer benefits within the program objectives, as they were unsure if the program had added any value to their office from strictly a cost/benefit analysis. Nevertheless, the majority of participants found that Work-Able provided value for their ministry or office and it was mentioned that the program was quite sophisticated for its first year. Several participants voiced their appreciation for support provided by the Work-Able program lead.
Supporting a Work-Able intern was highlighted positively by three participants. One supervisor commented that they tried to get the intern as much experience across the ministry as possible. A mentor said that their mentorship arrangement is great and that they have been able to support the intern in their own way. However, they also mentioned that it has been difficult to navigate between performance management and job mentoring. Another mentor said that after discussion with their intern, “check-ins” were purposefully informal. They stated that mentoring the intern has inspired them personally.

Several participants said that the program has brought learning opportunities for their teams. One participant mentioned how there is much to learn from people with disabilities regarding accommodations, as one individual could be putting up barriers for another without realising it. They stated there has been a learning curve for the whole team. Another participant said that they have been able to use the tools provided for them through Work-Able and have created new tools for themselves to assist in future accommodations. Lastly, a participant brought up that the knowledge they have learned by supporting the Work-Able intern has made them aware that accommodation questions need to be asked to all employees to better assist them. They believe this experience has supported how they manage all of their employees.

5.3 Accessibility

The pillar of accessibility concerns how accessible a program or organization is regardless of a person’s disability. It includes categories 2, 3, and 10, which are provided with their operational definitions and corresponding critical incident and wish list items in Table 9. These categories reflect how accessible the Work-Able application and interview processes are. Category 10 was situated within the Accessibility pillar due to the potential of Work-Able to inform accommodation practices and disability awareness within the BC Public Service. Interns commented on the positive and negative aspects of the application process and of how accessible they felt the program was. Supervisors’ and mentors’ comments were generally positive about the Work-Able recruitment process, but also revealed greater insights on accessibility within the BC Public Service.
Table 9: Categories, operational definition, and critical incident/wish list items aligned with Accessibility pillar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Critical Incidents/Wish list Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 2: Disability orientation of Work-Able application process.</td>
<td>“I had applied to the government before… and not had accommodations. Both the job requirements and descriptions were detailed and clear. I definitely think that they tried to make it accessible. The application process was actually really daunting. I want us to be an inclusive society.”</td>
<td>2: Interest in Work-Able due to opportunity/potential; 3: Process of applying to Work-Able program positions; 6: Wish list to have more organized, coordinated, and simultaneous approach to application process; 16: Wish list for greater information about government and hiring process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3: Disability orientation of Work-Able interviews.</td>
<td>“I believe that the Work-Able program provides a barrier free recruitment option. I felt really safe in that room. Very accommodating… in the interview process [and] the positive part was being allowed accommodations. [There was] passion and commitment demonstrated by all the candidates. The academic reference letter… I found that to be a useless tool.”</td>
<td>4: Accommodations for the interview; 5: Interviewing for Work-Able; 28: Process of interviewing candidates for Work-Able.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 10: Ability to inform the BC Public Service regarding people with disabilities and employment.</td>
<td>“It’s being able to be supportive and recognize that they’re individuals. [It] is taking that insight and providing it to the public service.”</td>
<td>33: Effect of the “Intentional Conversation” session; 34: Communication of the value and need for Work-Able and visibility on people with disability; 11: Educational incidents regarding attitudes and people with disabilities with others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Category 2 concerns participants’ experiences in accessing and applying to Work-Able. All of the interns were positively interested in the program due to the opportunity it provided. One intern commented that “in the past, I always seemed to get an interview, but never was successful due to my disability and not having accommodations”, and so was interested in the program due to its disability orientation. Others thought the program would provide meaningful employment, or were attracted to the self-identifying aspect of the program. Supervisors and mentors were interested in the program to gain knowledge and to increase their skill-set or capacity. One participant remarked that “I want to support diversity, and I want us to be an inclusive society.” Another compared the program to the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program and stated their desire to develop new knowledge and to improve their capacity as a leader in their organization.

Interns identified many negative incidents regarding the process of applying to Work-Able positions. One common complaint was the amount of time it took to apply to the program as well as to the various job postings for each Work-Able position. Interns who were employed while they were applying voiced that it was difficult to do the numerous applications and take-home assignments. One intern was thankful that they had not been employed at the time, during which they had to complete four essays in one week. “The application process was actually really daunting” remarked another intern. One intern applied to eight different Work-Able positions, and each application took roughly one hour. A common theme was anxiety or stress about the length of time it took for the application process to be completed. However, it is recognised that the timeline is standard for government hiring processes. One intern recognised this, remarking “now that I look back at it, I understand government. Now that I am in government, I recognize that it was also daunting because I did not know [the process].”

The Work-Able program lead noted that the lengthy application process is challenging for candidates and government hiring processes can be difficult for those unfamiliar with it. There were also negative incidents surrounding the uncoordinated interview timeline for the different positions, and how this created difficulty for applicants. A participant felt that “it was really frustrating. Because, you know, you’re
going to say yes because you want a position, but it might not have been the one you want the most.” Another expressed that panel interviews are intimidating and the option of having a one-on-one interview would have been appreciated. Participants felt positively about the materials given for job applications, such as that the job descriptions were accurate, the qualifications grid straightforward, and the assignments given appropriate.

Interns and supervisors involved with applicant interviews wished they had known more about the application process from the outset, captured in wish list item 6. A few supervisors expressed that they wished to know the results of the pre-screening process conducted by the Work-Able program lead, and to have been consulted with the results. One participant clarified that, while viewing the pre-screening results would be helpful, they recognised that it would add an administrative burden and potentially not be useful. Another participant mentioned that they did not find the reference checks in the pre-screening process to be useful, and wished they could have commenced their own reference checks. Additionally, wish list item 16, to have an informative resource for interns while they are applying to the program, is recognised as a result of participants’ unfamiliarity with government hiring processes. One intern recommended providing some of the orientation materials for candidates as they apply.

Interns talked positively on their accommodations for the interview, captured in category 3. There were no negative incidents regarding accommodations for the interview. A few simply said that they felt they were accommodated and others expanded, commenting “I felt really safe in that room. They made it really clear that I could take the time that I needed to answer the questions or, you know, if I needed anything to accommodate my disabilities they would have it there for me, so I definitely felt empowered.” Several interns commented on how helpful it was to receive the interview questions ahead of time and how supportive it felt to have been flown in for the interview. Participants felt the interview itself was not as intimidating as previous interviews they have experienced. One participant expressed that having the Work-Able program lead in the room was reassuring, as they felt it was someone they knew. Another stated that “personally, I found that the interview process for the Work-Able
program to be less stressful for me. For the first time, I had accommodations, which helped me to be more cheerful and confident in talking to my points.” One intern concluded that “I believe that the Work-Able program provides a barrier-free recruitment option.” However, one intern did mention that having to travel for the interview was inconvenient as they had little time to arrange with their employer at the time to miss the day.

Supervisors and mentors had primarily positive experiences with the interview process. Positive incidents included support from the Work-Able program lead in providing assessment materials as well as knowledge and skills in interviewing and accommodating people with disabilities. One supervisor commented on how helpful this was to have, and “that was the beauty of working with [the program lead], because she is so organized, so it was really a seamless process.” A few participants, including the Work-Able program lead, mentioned how they were very pleased with the qualifications and quality of applicants. One felt that Work-Able candidates were supported through the hiring process, commenting that they feel the normal government hiring process is not barrier free for people with disabilities. Flexibility within the hiring process to create assessment materials and interview questions was also mentioned as a positive aspect. Another participant expressed annoyance with normal government hiring processes and how it is not conducive to getting the best results out of candidates, whether they have a disability or not.

However, while some supervisors and mentors discussed flexibility positively, others identified that the individual interview process for each position was unsupportive. One supervisor stated that they were unaware of the process of how candidates got selected to be forwarded on for interviews for each position. As they had interviewed candidates later than others, they felt that they did not get the best candidates since some had already accepted jobs. Additionally, it was observed in two situations the mentor or supervisor role for the Work-Able intern was used as a learning experience for a BC Public Service employee who had never interviewed or supervised before. The Work-Able program lead said that supervisors and mentors wanted to make Work-Able as successful as they could.
Category 10 concerns the Work-Able objective of educating BC Public Service employees about people with disabilities and accommodations. While this category also aligns with the pillar of service delivery, it was placed within the pillar of accessibility to highlight the importance Work-Able places on creating a more accessible BC Public Service. All five participants from groups 2 (supervisors) and 3 (mentors) raised incidents surrounding the “Intentional Conversation” session held prior to interns starting. Participants found the session very informative, and every incident was positive. They particularly appreciated learning about the distinction between equality and equity, about challenging assumptions and dispelling myths, about allowing for reflection of beliefs, and that people have varying awareness levels of people with disabilities. Additional analysis of the “Intentional Conversation” session is gathered from analysing questionnaires completed during the session (appendix C). All of the participants were very supportive of people with disabilities entering the workplace, and one participant commented “no one asks to have a disability of any sort, and so it’s being able to be supportive and recognize that, you know, that they’re individuals like we are and they just have some additional challenges that they are dealing with, and what can we do to support those in a positive work environment.”

The incidents raised by a few participants reveal the different levels of awareness within the BC Public Service regarding people with disabilities. One intern said that their negative interaction with a co-worker resulted in an improvement of that employee’s knowledge and awareness of how to approach people with disabilities about their disability. Another participant said they have become more aware of others’ assumptions of people with disabilities and see the need for greater knowledge of disability and accommodations throughout society. They stated “having gone through this experience, it’s really understanding that it is quite critical to have these conversations on a regular basis, that people are stating their assumptions.” The same participant believed there is a great need for the Work-Able program, and a greater conversation regarding people with disabilities needs to occur across the BC Public Service. They pointed out that each ministry has a unique culture and the Work-Able program will have to address different issues in changing the attitudes of BC Public Service employees.
One participant raised the importance of the perspective offered by the Work-Able interns and commented that “I think the Work-Able Internship program is taking that insight and providing it to the public service, and looking at opportunities to make sure that we’re being a workforce that represents broader society.” Another articulated that they and their team have learned a lot through their interaction with the program and this is necessary for the ministry. Overall, participants raised primarily positive incidents regarding the impact Work-Able is having on themselves and others in informing on and raising awareness of employees with disabilities.

5.4 Consultation and Involvement

The last pillar, Consultation and Involvement, focuses on interns’ experiences regarding their intention and belief in gaining employment with the BC Public Service. Additionally, any suggestion or theme raised by interns that will help future interns in gaining and retaining employment was also raised under this pillar. Categories 7 and 8 have the fewest incidents, but as articulated in the *World Report on Disability* (2011b), consultation with people with disabilities is very important when regarding programs that involve them. Interns suggested how the program could better support them in retaining future employment within the BC Public Service. They also raised concerns about potential conflict that could occur and how best to engage in dispute resolution. Table 10 outlines the two categories, their operational definitions, and the critical incident and wish list items aligned with this pillar.

Table 10: Categories, operational definition, and critical incident/wish list items aligned with Consultation and Involvement pillar.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Critical Incidents/Wish list Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 7: Ability of Work-Able program to create future opportunities for people with disabilities.</td>
<td>“There is a greater sense of satisfaction in the work I am doing. I would highly consider the BC Public Service as a potential employer. I think that is where the program is”</td>
<td>13: Future ability to gain employment in BC Public Service; 14: Wish list to have alternative post-internship hiring options for interns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 8: Ability of Work-Able program to resolve expressed and latent conflict for people with disabilities.</td>
<td>“The name Work-Able… I find it limiting subconsciously. If we have a bad experience around our disability… I think there needs to be an advocate for interns… someone you can go to for advice.”</td>
<td>22: Wish list to have advocacy program/group for people with disabilities in the BC Public Service; 24: Wish list to change the name on program to have a more positive connotation; 25: Mechanism for addressing conflict with co-worker or supervisor; 26: Wish list to have avenue to send sentiments and concerns of program to leadership.</td>
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Category 7 includes incidents around the Work-Able objective to inform best practices for the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities and to increase the number of employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service. Several interns indicated they were interested in pursuing work within the BC Public Service following the internship. They all noted that the accommodations and support provided, the flexibility in career options, and the nature of the work are very attractive employment elements. One intern commented that their work was very meaningful and they had “a greater sense of satisfaction in the work I am doing. I feel like I am directly serving the people of BC and I am surrounded by other people who are really engaged.” One supervisor stated that they are supporting the intern in how to apply to future positions internally. However, there were two negative incidents from two interns surrounding the internal application process after interns complete their internship. Both participants said that they are unsure of how successful they will be in the future internal applications, as they will have to compete against all other internal candidates and this causes anxiety. This led to wish list item 14, as both participants desired an additional hiring option to support them transitioning into the BC Public Service after the internship.

While category 8 is the smallest category, with six individual incidents raised by two participants, the incidents are important enough to warrant a separate category. Two interns suggested changing the name of the program. They felt the name was
condescending, implying that they were not able or prepared to work before the program, and that it made others question if she or he is able to do the work.

One intern felt that there is no accountability if the interns have a bad experience with a supervisor or co-worker. They mentioned that the Work-Able program lead is unable to assist the interns and suggested that there should be an advocate or representative to assist the intern with any workplace conflict. Possible suggestions they include are a union representative or neutral third party not associated with the program. The participant also commented that most of the current interns are young women, and may be further stigmatised against or have their concerns unaddressed. The other intern identified the wish to have an advocacy program for people with disabilities within the BC Public Service, suggesting that perhaps these individuals would be able to advocate for the interns, facilitate education throughout the BC Public Service, and provide assistance during the process for future internal job applications. Another comment was that there is no meaningful process or avenue for feedback on what employees with disabilities are experiencing within the BC Public Service.

The four pillars above outline the potential barriers that people with disabilities may face when obtaining employment and acquiring accommodations. This section has laid out the responses of interns, supervisors, and mentors to the interview questions (appendix A). Their experiences reveal the different elements of Work-Able and offer different perspectives of the program’s inaugural year. The ramifications of these findings and how they affect Work-Able are discussed in Section 6 and recommendations from them are displayed in Section 7.
6.0 Discussion

The aim of this research was to analyse Work-Able, identify any barriers in the recruitment and accommodation processes, as well as to ascertain if the program was expanding the capacity of the BC Public Service in the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities. The following discussion examines the interview findings and the literature review conducted within each of the four pillars. The discussion argues that Work-Able is successful in providing a recruitment program that is oriented towards removing barriers for people with disabilities and is well established to address barriers. It also argues that the program’s first year has allowed supervisors and managers to improve their knowledge and capacity to support employees with disabilities.

Securing employment for people with disabilities can be challenging due to a myriad of factors. This is supported by the interview findings, as positive and negative incidents discussed reveal the nuanced and individual experience of employment for people with disabilities. Interview findings also reveal areas where Work-Able can address concerns and further reduce barriers for future cohorts of interns. Following the discussion, recommendations from this research are made for future years of Work-Able, including a follow-up evaluation in five years. It will be important to measure whether Work-Able has helped to increase the number of employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service. Heidrick et al. (2004) outline the importance of job creation and job maintenance in regards to employment programs for people with disabilities. The follow-up evaluation will be essential to evaluate if Work-Able has been able to create a sustainable recruitment process for employees with disabilities.

6.1 Attitudes

The critical incident and wish list items analysed in the pillar of Attitudes reveal assumptions and conceptions of employment for people with disabilities. The attitudes held by individuals within society can be a limiting or enabling factor for people with disabilities to participate in the workforce. Some studies list negative attitudes held by supervisors and managers as the single most hindering factor (Foster, 2007). Interns highlight that they faced barriers in previous work and education due to people’s
attitudes. Their experiences also reveal that the perception held by some employers is that people with disabilities are a financial burden. This stigma is highlighted as being very damaging for people with disabilities and is reflected in low employment and underemployment rates (Baldwin & Marcus, 2006; Fevre et al., 2013; Hale, Hayghe, & McNeil, 1998; Kidd, Sloane, & Ferko, 2000; McLaughlin et al., 2004; Zwerling et al., 2003). Stigmas and attitudes differ depending on disability type and what accommodation is needed (Burge, Ouellette-Kuntz, & Lysaght, 2007). This helps explain why wish list item 15, the wish for greater societal support services, was raised by four participants. While this is a societal issue, Work-Able is able to help educate the BC Public Service and provide opportunities to learn directly from employees with disabilities.

The support of an employee’s direct supervisor and communication between employees and employer were listed as two of the top five factors influencing the success of accommodations (Dong et al., 2013, p. 185). Four of the five interns felt supported by their supervisor and mentor. Interns felt positive in their interactions with co-workers or felt that they were able to educate and raise awareness about people with disabilities. Interns suggest that supervisors not be in too senior of positions so that they can commit the time to properly support the intern. The Work-Able program lead also commented that she wished that she could have made supervisors aware about the time commitment necessary to properly support and coach interns. This prompted a change for the upcoming cohort to arrange for a forum for previous supervisors and mentors to share their experiences with upcoming supervisors and mentors. The literature supports the necessity for supervisors and employers to be supportive, engaged, and knowledgeable about accommodations and employment for people with disabilities (Crawford, 2012, pp. 28-32; Shier et al., 2009, pp. 70-71; Foster, 2007, p. 79).

Supervisors’ and mentors’ understanding of the labour market situation facing people with disabilities is generally correct. Described in Section 2.1, the overarching situation facing people with disabilities and employment within BC is negative, with only 3.2% of the BC Public Service self-identifying as having a disability (BC Stats, 2013, p.
3) Overall, it is recognised that the supervisors and mentors interviewed are supportive of the interns, and several expressed the desire and need to learn more to better support employees with disabilities and remove barriers. This is a boon for the program, as negative attitudes or perceptions can be very damaging for employees with disabilities (Crawford, 2012). The education and capacity building that supervisors and mentors receive is important in ensuring that barriers caused by negative attitudes and assumptions are removed (Shier et al., 2009, p. 71).

6.2 Service Delivery

The Work-Able interns expressed that they were properly accommodated. However, a few interns had some difficulties in arranging and receiving accommodations. There were discrepancies in the length it took to get accommodations set up, and several interns had accommodations set up prior to their start date and others had to wait for up to two months. Mentors and supervisors had a range of experiences and difficulties in arranging for accommodations. It was expressed by a few supervisors and mentors that difficulties often arose when they were unaware of how best to support and accommodate the intern and their disability in their position and work context.

Accommodations for employees with invisible disabilities raise the issue of intern’s awareness of accommodations available to help support them. People with disabilities are not always aware of the accommodation options available to them, and if the employer is unaware and unable to provide these, this could act as a barrier in providing those accommodations to the employee in a timely manner (Nevala et al. 2015; Dong et al., 2013). It was identified by interns, supervisors, and the Work-Able program lead that greater support for interns would assist them in being able to identify necessary accommodations to support themselves. Dong et al. (2013) warn that employees with disabilities can be reluctant or unaware of how best to request accommodations due to stigmas against disabilities. Assistance and guidance on how to identify what accommodation is required is important in empowering the employee and for them to be successful (Nevala et al., 2015). Therefore, it was identified within wish list items 17 and 29 to have comprehensive accommodation resources available
for interns to be able to more effectively communicate their needs to their supervisor. This issue also is connected to critical incident item 12 discussed in the attitudes pillar. A recommendation is provided in Section 7 to offer an information session to assist interns in identifying accommodations and approaching supervisors without disclosing the nature of their disability. The Work-Able program lead stated that she intends to include a session in the orientation on methods to assist interns in recognising what accommodations they need and how to request them. This session will help address this issue and provide adequate assistance for interns to identify and request the accommodations they need. Interview findings and the literature support offering this resource and accommodation during the orientation session.

As expressed in the literature, many people with disabilities are employed temporarily or part-time and are less likely to receive benefits which make it harder for employees to retain employment (Schur et al., 2009, pp. 394-397; Shier et al., 2009). Work-Able interns raised that having auxiliary, or temporary, status and no extended health or payed sick leave was problematic in supporting them through the internship. This could cause financial hardship if an intern is forced to take time off due to their disability and only has BC Medical Services Plan coverage. This could impede their ability to retain employment or succeed due to disability related concerns, as discussed by Schur et al. (2009, pp. 394-397). It could also impact their desire to pursue employment with the BC Public Service.

Work-Able was able to provide meaningful work experience for four of the five interns interviewed, which is a potential indicator that the program will be successful in increasing the number of employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service. This will in turn inform best practices on the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities across the BC Public Service. Employers that have greater perceived fairness in providing benefits, learning opportunities, and participation in decision-making will improve the employees’ job satisfaction, loyalty, and intention to maintain employment (Schur et al., 2009).

The incidents related to the value provided for the client ministries are overwhelmingly positive and demonstrate that Work-Able has been able to provide an
effective program for these offices to hire, support, and mentor employees with
disabilities. Supervisors and mentors all commented on the benefits received for their
offices and workplace from their involvement with the program. Jasper and Waldhart
(2013) and Unger (2012) find that people with disabilities bring diversity, loyalty,
dependability, and inclusiveness to the workplace. This sentiment was echoed by
supervisors, who expressed that Work-Able was a learning opportunity for all involved.
Work-Able is increasing supervisor and mentor capacity to support and accommodate
employees with disabilities in the interview process and in the workplace.

6.3 Accessibility

The pillar of Accessibility concerns physical and workplace factors that may
create barriers for people with disabilities from gaining and retaining employment. While
government hiring processes are fair and equitable, they can be unfortunately
complicated and lengthy. To ensure that this does not act as a barrier, transparency and
communication can help assist people with disabilities through this process. Hogan et
al. (2012) hypothesized that one element of why people with disabilities face lower
employment rates is that they self-screen themselves out of jobs. While this would be
difficult to measure, communication between the employer and any potential employee
is critical in breaking down any barrier they might face. Participants offer that resources
such as a list of common government acronyms, a workshop or online resource to help
candidates navigate government application processes, or other online information
would help applicants orient themselves to applying to the BC Public Service. Nevala et
al.’s (2015) findings support this, as they state that key facilitators for employment
include self-advocacy on part of the person with a disability, support of the employer,
and the amount of counselling and training the person with a disability receives. These
options are offered in Section 7.

A few interns expressed that if the timeline of the application process was
communicated transparently, it could ease the anxiety and stress of waiting for
applicants. Thus, it is recommended in Section 7 to transparently communicate the
hiring process and timeline to Work-Able applicants. Participants recognised that
government hiring processes are designed to ensure fair and equitable processes and
thus have to follow due process. It was highlighted that providing information to assist applicants’ understanding of the application process would be helpful. One wish list item included providing some of the orientation material in the job poster to assist candidates with their application. This will help address candidate’s unfamiliarity with government hiring processes and help prevent it from acting as a barrier.

As a program, Work-Able must be able to effectively and consistently offer barrier-free interviews. All of the interns spoke positively of their experience in the interview. Supervisor and mentor experiences were mixed surrounding the flexibility of timelines for conducting interviews and choosing candidates. It appeared that greater transparency of the pre-screening process was desired. Using the mentor or supervisor role as a learning opportunity for a BC Public Service employee who is new into supervisory tasks appears to be a very successful practice. It imparts knowledge of accommodation and disability awareness for these employees as they begin these new roles. Education of supervisors and managers of employees with disabilities was identified as being essential in removing barriers in a workplace, as discussed in Section 2.3 (Shier et al., 2009; Foster, 2007; Crawford, 2012).

Supervisors and mentors had mostly positive experiences regarding Work-Able. Additionally, interns have reported that they had positive experiences educating and informing other BC Public Service employees about people with disabilities. This is supportive of Work-Able meeting its objective of increasing capacity in the BC Public Service. This will ultimately assist the BC Public Service to become accessibility confident and in recruiting and retaining people with disabilities. As Shier et al. (2009) find in their study, supervisor support and awareness regarding accommodation was highlighted as a solution to removing barriers. Dong et al. (2013) and Foster (2007) also argue that one of the most important factors is the awareness and supportiveness of managers and supervisors. Additionally, supervisors and mentors found the “Intentional Conversation” disability awareness session to be valuable for themselves and their teams, and is discussed in appendix C. The Work-Able program lead concluded that her desire is for Work-Able to have a legacy of improving the BC Public Service’s ability to hire and retain employees with disabilities.
6.4 Consultation and Involvement

The *World Report on Disability* (2011b) recommends consultation with people with disabilities regarding decision-making that affects them (pp. 264-268). While several interns expressed that they wished to pursue employment with the BC Public Service following the internship, a few stated that they were worried about the feasibility of gaining a new position. As all interns will have in-service status for five years following the completion of the internship for the purposes of applying to positions, there was concern about being successful in an internal competition. One intern suggested creating an option for hiring managers to easily transition interns into positions once they have completed the internship. It was also found that interns felt labelled as having a disability through their association as a Work-Able intern. The name of “Work-Able” for the program was highlighted as giving the wrong connotation of what the program is and implies that interns were previously unable to work. This surrounds the greater issue of labelling and stigmas surrounding people with disabilities and employment (Crawford, 2012, p. 4; McLaughlin et al., 2004).

A few interns mentioned that having an advocate within the BC Public Service would support employees with disabilities. As demonstrated in the employment statistics in Sections 2.2 and 2.3, people with disabilities may have a greater need for an advocate if institutional or personal conflict arises. Whether conflict between two individuals is expressed or is latent, it can lead to dysfunctional workplaces, particularly if there is a power imbalance (Mayer, 2012, pp. 72-73). However, it is understood that addressing any latent conflict and power imbalances between employees with disabilities and the employer is challenging. Work-Able is addressing the larger conflict faced by many people with disabilities within society by providing knowledge, skills, and opportunities for people with and without disabilities. It is not designed as a venue to mediate or resolve individual conflicts. Ultimately, Work-Able interns need to be provided with available resources. It is suggested that interns be offered resources and information regarding processes for acquiring a union advocate from the BC Government Employees’ Union and, if need be, information on conflict resolution processes within the BC Public Service. The Employee Accessibility Advisory Council is suggested to have an increased role in offering peer support.
6.5 Limitations

While commencing the research, the primary researcher and author of this report identified limitations with the project. It is noted that interns who were interviewed may favorably view the program in regards to the application and interview process due to being successful candidates. Barriers for unsuccessful candidates may not have been gathered due to the fact that only successful candidates were interviewed for this research. Additionally, only five of the nine interns were interviewed, and the experiences of those not interviewed may have differed dramatically from those who were. Therefore, this project may not have identified certain barriers that applicants encountered. Likewise, only three supervisors and two mentors were interviewed. Although the interview guide used a standardised open-ended interview design, interviewee responses could still have been influenced by the interviewer’s judgement and bias during the interview (Patton, 2002, pp. 344-347). The primary researcher’s judgement and bias could also have impacted the analysis of the interview data. This study was designated as a specific examination of the Work-Able program, and as mentioned by Butterfield et al., (2009) this limits its generalisability to other situations. While there was discussion connecting the program to aspects of the situation facing people with disabilities within BC and Canadian society, the participants interviewed and the questions asked were done so within the context of Work-Able.
7.0 Recommendations

The following seven recommendations resulted from analysis of the interview findings. Each recommendation has one or more recommendations or options to consider to support and improve upon elements of Work-Able.

1. Recommendations to increase knowledge and practice of inclusive workplace behavior:
   - Introduce interns into their positions by their name and role rather than as a Work-Able intern to avoid them being labelled as having a disability before they begin their position. Include this information in the training orientation with supervisors and mentors.
   - Include an information session during the Intern orientation for interns to identify and practice how to request accommodations to their supervisor while not disclosing the nature of their disability. As mentioned in Section 6.2, the intent is to be able to create capacity for interns in engaging managers to properly acquire accommodations.
   - Provide orientation session to new supervisors and mentors to meet with previous year’s supervisors and mentors to share positive and negative experiences and feedback on supporting the intern. The literature and participants’ responses promote providing managers with support, knowledge, and resources, as discussed in Section 6.1.

2. Recommendations to streamline application and interview process:
   - Provide hyperlink to Work-Able webpage on the advertised job posting.
   - Communicate transparently the application process timeline and recruitment steps in the job posting. Many applicants were not familiar with the government hiring process requirements and timelines and this caused concern, as indicated in Sections 5.3 and 6.3.
   - Host an information session to provide information for new applicants on the application process and timelines. As discussed in Section 6.3, support during the hiring process is a facilitator for people with disabilities in gaining employment.
- Offer option to hiring managers to be involved in initial screening processes. This is offered as a recommendation to address concerns supervisors’ and mentors’ had regarding the recruitment process.
- Provide regular updates on recruitment stages and communicate updates to supervisors and mentors.

3. Recommendations to utilize the Employee Accessibility Advisory Council:
- Invite the Employee Accessibility Advisory Council to be available for interns as peer support. Discussed in Section 6.4, the Council can assist interns in providing information and access to resources.
- Ensure all interns are aware of conflict resolution resources in the BC Public Service. For example, union steward in their ministry, conflict resolution coaches, information on My HR, and access to Homewood counselors. This is to give interns the capacity and ensure they are able to adequately address any conflict they may experience.

4. Recommendations to improve the process of acquiring accommodation:
- Develop training module to provide information and resources outlining the process of accommodations for supervisors and mentors.
- Provide accessibility information on MyHR for BC Public Service employees and applicants. Both of these recommendations are in response to participants’ experiences surrounding identifying and arranging for accommodations outlined in Section 5.2 and 6.2.

5. Recommendations to offer additional resources for interns upon completing internship to facilitate retention within the BC Public Service:
- Ensure interns access career coaching and other resources on employment within the BC Public Service while in their internship. Offer additional resources from the PSA to support interns after they have completed the internship to assist them in gaining employment with the BC Public Service.
- Offer job application training sessions near the end of the internship to assist intern applications to internal competitions. Presented in Sections 5.4 and 6.4, this is in response to interns’ concerns in retaining employment with the BC Public Service following the internship.
• Explore with the PSA retention strategies that would assist interns in retaining employment with the BC Public Service. This recommendation is offered in response to participants’ suggestions to explore other hiring options to facilitate interns’ retention in the BC Public Service.

6. Recommendation for a summative evaluation of Work-Able within five years:
   • Conduct a summative evaluation to gather essential statistics to evaluate the program’s long-term success in creating jobs for people with disabilities within the BC Public Service. Potential statistics to be gathered include the number of interns Work-Able has hired, the number of interns who have secured employment within the BC Public Service following their internship, and the average length of time between the internship and when interns obtain BC Public Service jobs.

7. Recommendations for “Intentional Conversation” disability awareness session from internal working paper (appendix C):
   • Include questions within the questionnaire about people with disabilities and privacy surrounding their disability. Follow this up with an element in the disability awareness session about privacy surrounding disabilities and the right for people with disabilities to withhold or disclose the nature of their disability.
   • Include additional training sessions and online educational resources regarding employment and people with disabilities in the workplace.
   • Administer future questionnaires for the “Intentional Conversation” session through online survey software. Participants could fill out the pre-session questionnaire prior to coming to the session and fill out the post-session questionnaire afterwards. This will allow the Work-Able program lead to easily do simple analysis on the questionnaires to discern how effective future sessions are and get further feedback. In addition, it will reduce the administrative burden and carbon footprint of entering data and printing questionnaires.
8.0 Conclusion

The objective of this research was to evaluate the inaugural year of Work-Able to determine if it is meeting objectives stated in its program charter. As is evident from the background and literature review, the BC Public Service aims to improve its ability to recruit and retain people with disabilities and to reflect BC society. Analysis of the interview data through the four pillars of Attitudes, Service Delivery, Accessibility, and Consultation and Involvement reveal where Work-Able was successful in removing barriers for people with disabilities and where further work is required. Overall, the different elements of the program were viewed mostly positive by the participants. Concerns raised by participants and the literature review informed the seven recommendations made in Section 7. As such, this evaluation concludes that Work-Able is on track to meet its objectives and the recommendations made will assist the program in increasing the number of employees with disabilities within the BC Public Service. To be able to measure this, a summative evaluation in five years is recommended to properly gauge whether the program has increased the number of employees with disabilities in the BC Public Service.
9.0 Bibliography


Canadian Abilities Foundation, (2004). *Neglected or hidden: Connecting employers and people with disabilities in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: Canadian Abilities Foundation.


10.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide and Questions

Intro Script: Thank you for participating in this research on the Work-Able Graduate Internship program. The purpose of this research is to provide an initial evaluation of the program to ensure that it is on track to meet its objectives.

The research will do so based on the experiences of those involved with the program, which includes yourself. This will help us find strengths, weaknesses, and common themes in the program so far.

The interview will ask questions around the following categories: general questions, the recruitment process, the interview process, the accommodation process, the job experience, and concluding questions. The questions in these categories are informed by the frameworks of attitudes, accessibility, service delivery, and consultation outlined in the *World Report on Disability* that inform this research.

I will provide you with some definitions of terms that may be used by me during this interview. *Barriers* refer to any service, policy, action, or lack thereof that may hinder, prevent, or dissuade a person with a disability from gaining employment or advancing in a workplace. *Accommodation* refers to any action taken by the employer to assist the employee during their work.

Table A1: Interview questions for group 1, employees hired through Work-Able.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context: General Questions:</th>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me about this research or the interview? • Regarding the purpose, objective, and nature of the research. 2. Have you experienced any barriers to activities such as employment, education, or volunteering? These could include applying for a job, gaining assistance in a classroom, or participating as a volunteer. Please explain your experience. (attitudes, accessibility) • I do not need to know the context of the barrier, but rather your experience. 3. Is there anything that you believe would have</td>
<td>Experience with previous employers and employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Context:</td>
<td>Questions:</td>
<td>General Aim:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>been helpful to have during this situation? (consultation, wish list item)</td>
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</table>
| The Recruitment Process: | 1. How did you learn about the Work-Able Graduate Internship program? (accessibility, service delivery)  
   - For example: through an advertisement, the B.C. Public Service Agency website MyHR, a colleague, or word of mouth.  
2. What made you interested in applying for the program? (service delivery)  
3. Tell me about your experience in applying to Work-Able? (service delivery)  
4. What was a positive experience about the application process? (service delivery)  
5. What was a negative experience about the application process? (service delivery)  
6. Is there anything that you believe would have been helpful to have during the recruitment process? (consultation, wish list item) | Experience surrounding the application process |
| The Interview Process: | 1. Tell me about your experience in interviewing for Work-Able? (service delivery)  
2. What was a positive experience about the interview process? (service delivery)  
3. What was a negative experience about the interview process? (service delivery)  
4. Do you believe you were adequately accommodated during the interview? (accessibility, service delivery)  
5. Are there any changes to the interview process that you believe would have been helpful to have? (consultation, wish list item) | Experience surrounding the interview process |
| The Accommodation Process: | 1. Tell me about an experience where you believed that you were not adequately accommodated by a previous employer? (attitudes)  
   - I do not need to know the context of the accommodation, but rather your experience.  
2. Tell me about an experience where you believed that you were adequately accommodated by a previous employer? (attitudes)  
   - I do not need to know the context of | Experience surrounding the accommodation process |
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<tr>
<th>Context:</th>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the accommodation, but rather your experience.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Tell me about the experience in obtaining any accommodations with the B.C. Public Service? (accessibility)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• I do not need to know the context of the accommodation, but rather your experience.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. What has been positive about this experience? (accessibility, service delivery)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. What has been negative about this experience? (accessibility, service delivery)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Are there any changes to the accommodation process that you believe would have been helpful to have? (consultation, wish list item)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. What has been your experience in your current position so far? (attitudes)</td>
<td>Experience of employment acquired</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Do you find the experience meaningful and beneficial so far? Can you give me an example of a positive experience and a negative experience? (consultation)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concluding Questions:</td>
<td>1. Overall, do you believe that Work-Able provides unique opportunities to persons with disabilities for meaningful employment? Why or why not? (consultation)</td>
<td>Experience with Work-Able program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Overall, do you believe that Work-Able provides a barrier free recruitment option for persons with disabilities? Why or why not? (service delivery)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Would you consider the B.C. Public Service as a potential employer following your internship? If so, why? (consultation)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Do you have any questions concerning this research?</td>
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Table A2: Interview questions for group 2, supervisors of employees hired through Work-Able.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context:</th>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>labour situation of persons with disabilities? (attitudes)</td>
<td>Please provide a brief outline of the knowledge you have concerning British Columbia.</td>
<td>Experience with recruitment of persons with disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The Recruitment Process: | 1. How were you informed of Work-Able as a recruitment option? (accessibility, service delivery)  
2. Why were you interested in being involved with Work-Able? (attitudes) | Experience surrounding the interview process |
| The Interview Process: | 1. What was your involvement in the interview process? (service delivery)  
2. What was a positive experience about the interview process? (service delivery)  
3. What was a negative experience about the interview process? (service delivery)  
4. Are there any changes to the interview process that you believe would have been helpful to have? (consultation, wish list item) | Experience surrounding the accommodation process |
| The Accommodation Process: | 1. How was the experience in setting up any necessary accommodations for the employee hired through Work-Able? (accessibility)  
   • I do not need to know the specifics of the accommodation, but rather your experience.  
2. What has been positive about this experience? (accessibility, service delivery)  
3. What has been negative about this experience? (accessibility, service delivery)  
4. Are there any changes to the accommodation process that you believe would have been helpful to have? (consultation, wish list item) | Experience with Work-Able program |
| Job Experience: | 1. What has surprised you, if anything, in a positive way about the Work-Able program? (attitudes, service delivery)  
   • Please do not discuss details of the employee’s job performance.  
2. What has surprised you, if anything, in a negative way about the Work-Able program? (attitudes, service delivery)  
   • Please do not discuss details of the employee’s job performance. | Experience with Work-Able program |
### Context: Concluding Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How did your understanding of the labour situation of persons with disabilities change after the “Intentional Conversation” session held prior to the program? (attitudes)</td>
<td>Experience with Work-Able program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How has your understanding of the labour situation of persons with disabilities changed from your understanding prior to your involvement with Work-Able? (attitudes)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Overall, do you believe that Work-Able provides opportunities to persons with disabilities for meaningful employment? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Do you have any questions concerning this research?</td>
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</table>

Table A3: Interview questions for group 3, mentors of employees hired through Work-Able.

### Context: General Questions:

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<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me about this research or the interview?</td>
<td>Experience with Persons with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Regarding the purpose, objective, and nature of the research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What is your current understanding of the labour situation of persons with disabilities? (attitudes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Please provide a brief outline of the knowledge you have concerning British Columbia.</td>
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### Context: The Recruitment Process:

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<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How did you learn about Work-Able? (accessibility, service delivery)</td>
<td>Experience with recruitment of persons with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why were you interested in being involved with Work-Able? (attitudes)</td>
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### Context: The Accommodation Process:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your perception of how the employee hired through Work-Able has been accommodated? Do you believe it is adequate?</td>
<td>Experience surrounding the accommodation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are there any changes to the accommodation process that you believe would have been helpful to have? (consultation, wish list item)</td>
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</table>
### Experience with Work-Able program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Experience:</th>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                | 1. What has surprised you, if anything, in a positive way about the Work-Able program? (attitudes, service delivery)  
  - Please do not discuss details of the employee’s job performance.  
  2. What has surprised you, if anything, in a negative way about the Work-Able program? (attitudes, service delivery)  
  - Please do not discuss details of the employee’s job performance.  
  3. Tell me about the time you spend with the employee hired through Work-Able?  
  4. What is a positive experience you have had with the Work-Able employee? (attitudes, service delivery)  
  5. What is a negative experience you have had with the Work-Able employee? (attitudes, service delivery) | Experience with Work-Able program |

### Concluding Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concluding Questions:</th>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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</table>
|                       | 1. How did your understanding of the labour situation of persons with disabilities change after the “Intentional Conversation” session held prior to the program? (attitudes)  
  2. How has your understanding of the labour situation of persons with disabilities changed from your understanding prior to your involvement with Work-Able? (attitudes)  
  3. Overall, do you believe that Work-Able provides opportunities to persons with disabilities for meaningful employment? Why or why not?  
  4. Do you have any questions concerning this research? | Experience with Work-Able program |

### Table A4: Interview questions for the Work-Able program lead.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context:</th>
<th>Question and Notes:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| General Questions: | 1. Has you understanding or thoughts of the employment situation for people with disabilities changed or developed since when Work-Able was launched?  
  2. What, if anything, surprised you concerning participant’s perceptions and involvement with the “Intentional Conversations” session | Experience with employment programs |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context:</th>
<th>Question and Notes:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Recruitment Process:</strong></td>
<td><strong>you developed and presented? (attitudes)</strong></td>
<td>Experience surrounding the establishing the recruitment process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Were there any specific positive experiences with hiring managers throughout the hiring process? What was/were the experience(s)? (attitudes)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Particularly regarding attitudes toward persons with disabilities or the hiring process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Were there any specific negative experiences with hiring managers throughout the hiring process? What was/were the experience(s)? (attitudes)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Particularly regarding attitudes toward persons with disabilities or the hiring process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Were there any other positive or negative experiences during the process of posting job postings or advertising the internship? (accessibility)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Is there anything you would have liked to have or would have done differently that you feel would have been beneficial in creating job positions and recruiting candidates? (service delivery, consultation, wish list item)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Interview Process:</strong></td>
<td>1. Were there any positive aspects or experiences with the interview process? What was/were the experience(s)? (accessibility)</td>
<td>Experience surrounding establishing and administrating the interview process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Were there any negative aspects or experiences with the interview process? What was/were the experience(s)? (accessibility)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Were there any specific positive experiences with hiring managers throughout the interview process? What was/were the experience(s)? (attitudes)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Particularly regarding attitudes toward persons with disabilities or the hiring process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Were there any specific negative experiences with hiring managers throughout the interview process? What was/were the experience(s)? (attitudes)</td>
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### Context:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question and Notes:</th>
<th>General Aim:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Particularly regarding attitudes toward persons with disabilities or the hiring process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Is there anything you would have liked to change that you feel would have been beneficial in the interview process? (service delivery, consultation, wish list item)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### The Accommodation Process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question and Notes:</th>
<th>Experience surrounding establishing and administrating the accommodation process</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How was the experience in arranging accommodations for interns? What went well? What did not work well? (service delivery)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Were there any specific positive experiences with hiring managers and staff in arranging for accommodations for the interns? What was/were the experience(s)? (attitudes, service delivery)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Particularly regarding attitudes toward persons with disabilities or the hiring process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Were there any specific negative experiences with hiring managers and staff in arranging for accommodations for the interns? What was/were the experience(s)? (attitudes, service delivery)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Particularly regarding attitudes toward persons with disabilities or the hiring process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there anything you would have liked to have or would have done differently that you feel would have improved the accommodation process? (service delivery, consultation, wish list item)</td>
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</table>

### Job Experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question and Notes:</th>
<th>Experience with interns hired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What has surprised you, if anything, in a positive way about how the Work-Able program has progressed? (attitudes, service delivery)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Please do not discuss details of any of the intern's job performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What has surprised you, if anything, in a negative way about how the Work-Able program has progressed? (attitudes, service delivery)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Context:</td>
<td>Question and Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please do not discuss details of any of the intern’s job performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Concluding Questions: | 1. Is there anything you would like to add concerning your experience in establishing and administrating the Work-Able program? (consultation)  
2. Is there anything you wish you could have done differently with the program in its inaugural year? (consultation, wish list item)  
3. Do you have any questions concerning this research? | Experience with Work-Able program |
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Work-Able: A Graduate Internship Program Evaluation

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Work-Able: Graduate Internship Program Evaluation that is being conducted by Cameron Carswell.

Cameron Carswell is a Masters of Arts in Dispute Resolution (MADR) candidate in the department of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria. He is not employed by the B.C. Public Service. You may contact him if you have further questions by emailing cmcarswe@uvic.ca or calling 778-678-0895.

As a graduate student, Cameron is required to conduct research as part of the requirements of his MADR degree. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Barton Cunningham. You may contact him at 250-721-8849.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to analyze the Work-Able Graduate Internship program and its participants to discern whether the program is meetings its objectives in reducing barriers to the recruitment, retention, and accommodation for persons with disabilities within the B.C. Public Service. The research will focus on whether the program’s service delivery model is achieving the desired effects and meeting the objectives laid out in the Work-Able Project Charter. The research aims to produce recommendations on what is working and what has room for improvement for the program. The B.C. Public Service Agency Work-Able program coordinator is Odette Dantzer.

All information collected during the interview will be solely viewed by Cameron during his research. Cameron’s supervisor, the Work-Able program coordinator, and the reviewers of this research will only see the end result of Cameron’s research; they will not see any interview material. If any excerpts are shared, all identifying information such as names, positions, locations, or personal details will be removed so that the information is anonymous. The final report will be distributed to those involved at the University of Victoria and to those involved at the Public Service Agency.

Importance of this Research

This research is important in assisting the B.C. Public Service and the Work-Able program. The inability to remove barriers from the workplace can result in a loss of expertise, knowledge and skillsets within the B.C. Public Service. The B.C. Public Service aims to increase the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities. Work-Able is a program to assist in the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities in the B.C. Public Service.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your involvement with the Work-Able program.
What is involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include participating in a qualitative interview of about 45-60 minutes in length. The time and location will be arranged between Cameron and yourself upon consenting to participate. The questions are centered on Work-Able, including the recruitment process, the interviewing process, the accommodation process, the job experience, and general questions.

With your permission, an audio-tape will be used to record the interview and handwritten notes will be taken. A transcription from the recording and the notes will be made at a later time. This transcription will be used for the research and will be destroyed after the research is complete.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the time spent to respond to the invitation for participation, scheduling the time and place of the interview, and for the time in the interview. If the interview is held during work hours, the participant will be inconvenienced of their work time and will need to acquire permission to have the interview during working hours.

Risks

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include social or emotional discomfort. Due to the personal nature of disabilities and the stigma associated with disabilities and employment, some questions may cause potential discomfort. Cameron and his supervisor have taken care to ensure that the questions you will be asked have been formulated to prevent any potential social or emotional discomfort. Additionally, to deal with these risks the following steps will be taken: If for any reason you feel uncomfortable the interview can be stopped. Cameron will then inquire if you wish to continue at a later time or if you do not wish to continue in the study. If you do withdraw from the study your data will only be used in the research if you give permission. Otherwise it will not be used and will be destroyed.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include benefits to the B.C. Public Service and society at large. This research aims to be able to make recommendations to the Work-Able program to improve its service delivery, reduce barriers to employment within the B.C. Public Service for employees with disabilities, and to promote human resource capacities to promote the retention of employees with disabilities.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. Your involvement in the Work-Able program will not be affected whether you participate or not in this research. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will only be used in the research if you give permission. Otherwise it will not be used and will be destroyed.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity, Cameron will not disclose any information of yourself to anyone, including his supervisor and the Work-Able program coordinator. In the final report, all data will be presented anonymously. Participants will be anonymous and pseudonyms or anonymous language will be
used in the presentation of the research’s findings. Cameron’s supervisor and the reviewers of the final product will only have access to any excerpts taken from the interviews, which will be anonymized.

Confidentiality

Due to the small size of the potential participants selected to be interviewed, the Work-Able program coordinator contacted you for the initial invitation to participate to ensure your confidentiality. Cameron only learned your identity when you contacted him to participate. Cameron will not disclose who participates and who does not participate in this research to the Work-Able program coordinator. This is due to her involvement with the Work-Able program and to protect the confidentiality of all participants.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by ensuring data is kept in a safe place at all times and stored in a manner in which participants cannot be identified. Interview audio recordings will be downloaded to the researcher's computer and stored in a password-protected file, upon which the recording on the audio recorder will be deleted. Notes from the recordings will be made, and they too will be stored in a password-protected file. Paper records will be digitized and then destroyed. Participants will be given a code to ensure that transcriptions and any other documents remain anonymous. The names and information that these codes relate too will be stored in a password-protected file. Any necessary paper records such as consent forms will be stored with the principle investigator until the research in concluded, after which they will be destroyed.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways. It will be disseminated to the Work-Able program coordinator and members of the B.C. Public Service Agency, Cameron’s supervisor, members of the defence committee (second reader and chair), and to participants of the study if they wish. Results will be discussed with the aforementioned as well as any attendees during the defence of this project. Copies of the final report will be kept with Cameron, the University of Victoria, and the B.C. Public Service Agency.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be kept for five years after the defence of the project or until the publication of an academic article by Cameron and the project supervisor. All electronic files will be deleted permanently and any paper documents, including this consent form, will be physically destroyed through shredding or other proper disposal.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study:

Cameron Carswell
MADR Candidate
University of Victoria
cmcarswe@uvic.ca
778-678-0895

Barton Cunningham
MPA Supervisor
University of Victoria
bcunning@uvic.ca
250-721-8849

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).
Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

_________________________  ___________________________  ___________
Name of Participant           Signature               Date

To be filled out if you withdraw your participation in the research. PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT:

I consent to the use of my data if I withdraw my participation from the study: __________________ (Participant initials)

I do not consent to the use of my data if I withdraw my participation from the study: ______________ (Participant initials)

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.
Appendix C: Internal working paper on “Intentional Conversation” questionnaire analysis

There were a total of 176 pre-session questionnaires and 144 post-session questionnaires analysed. It was hypothesised that the post-session questionnaires would have a higher mean and mode than the pre-session questionnaires. The questionnaire was self-reported and had 17 questions on awareness about people with disabilities, skills in working with and supporting people with disabilities, and knowledge of available resources for people with disabilities (Appendix D). Each question was rated from 1 – 5 based on the respondent’s awareness, knowledge or skill. When respondents answered in between two numbers, the researcher averaged out the answer between the two numbers indicated. This happened very infrequently; roughly 0 - 2 times per question for both the pre-session and post-session questionnaire set. Additionally, some questions had no answer, with an average of 2 – 3 unanswered questions for each question for both the pre-session and post-session questionnaire set. Table C1 shows the mean for each question and the difference between the pre-session and post-session. Every question had a higher mean in the post-session questionnaire set, with the increase ranging from 0.18 to 1.4.

Table C1: Pre-session and post-session questionnaire mean comparison and difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Session Mean (out of 5)</th>
<th>Post-Session Mean (out of 5)</th>
<th>Difference of Pre and Post Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 8</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 9</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 10</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 11</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 12</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Pre-Session Mean (out of 5)</td>
<td>Post-Session Mean (out of 5)</td>
<td>Difference of Pre and Post Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 13</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 14</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 15</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 17</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “Intentional Conversation” disability awareness session was designed to help increase disability awareness and capacity of BC Public Service employees, particularly those involved with hiring and working with an employee hired through Work-Able. As Work-Able lists this as an objective of the program, it is important to ensure that the session is raising awareness and educating participants. Crawford’s (2012) interviews show how government officials believe it is important to have skilled and qualified personnel when hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. As every question had a higher mean in the post-session questionnaire set, it is suggested that the “Intentional Conversation” session resulted in an increase in disability awareness, skills, and knowledge of the participants. While some of the questions only saw a marginal increase, eight of the questions saw a mean increase of over 1 point. These include questions 1, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 (appendix D).

The comments gathered from the questionnaires provide some constructive feedback as well as demonstrate participants’ understanding of disabilities and employment within the BC Public Service. Pre-session comments include a desire to know more about people with disabilities and employment as well as the belief that they need additional knowledge and skills to adequately accommodate people with disabilities. Some comments indicate that they do not have that capacity, asking “how can we accommodate them without the knowledge?” or “I’m not sure how to help accommodate non-visible disabilities.” Other comments indicate that participants do not believe there are very many barriers within the BC Public Service, or that “everyone is different – we all need our own accommodations/give and take.” Others challenge the questionnaire, with one participant stating that “you’re making assumptions that government employees have never worked with people with disabilities, or are insensitive and uncaring. This questionnaire is indicative of your attitude towards all
government workers – that we are insensitive and stupid.” Other comments are supportive and excited to be involved with Work-Able. Examples of these comments include “I believe it is beneficial to have people with disabilities in the workplace” and “I am looking forward to expanding my knowledge and experience.”

Post-session comments were generally positive, with participants appreciating the conversations and information around language and people with disabilities, accommodations, and barriers in the workplace. There were over 20 comments indicating that the participants appreciated the session and/or were looking forward to their involvement with Work-Able. Other comments indicated that while the session was informative, they feel that they still have a lot more to learn, or that the session made them feel uncomfortable as they perceive there are barriers in their workplace. Some suggestions included having more online resources or more services offered to BC Public Service employees with disabilities. A couple comments were negative for multiple reasons, as the respondents believed that either the session should not have been so heavily focused on disability as all employees should be treated equally, or the opposing view that the discussion on disability cannot begin unless the disability is known. One comment indicated that electronic survey software would be able to make the session more environmentally friendly, or “green.” Additionally, there were 32 more pre-session questionnaires than post-session questionnaires. This could be due to participants that had a negative experience in the session not completing a post-session questionnaire, and could have skewed post-session results more positively. Some comments in both the pre-session and post-session focused on the vagueness or confusing nature of certain questions, such as “I found a couple statements/questions difficult to rate as they were a bit too general.”

Hernandez (2000) found that employer responses to questions were more positive if the questions and answers were general and not associated with a specific case (pp. 6-7). This could be the case for the non-specific questions within the questionnaire. Some respondents indicated that certain questions were too vague, and that they needed more specificity to be able to answer. According to Hernandez’s (2000) findings, this would indicate that those respondents have a more specific attitude
towards people with disabilities and employment, and that there support for people with
disability would be more influenced by factors such as perceived stigmas and their
understanding of accommodations. Education of employers and co-workers is crucial
according to Shier, Graham, and Jones’ (2009) recommendations based off of the lived
experiences of people with disabilities in the labour market in Calgary and Regina.
Based on the analysis of these questionnaires, it is argued that the “Intentional
Conversation” session raised participants’ understanding of people with disabilities and
employment within the BC Public Service. Education of employers and coworkers is
identified in the literature as essential in creating an accommodating and accepting
workplace culture for people with disabilities, and can assist them in retaining
employment (Shier et al., 2009, pp. 70-71; Crawford, 2012, pp. 28-32). Overall, this
training session is aligned with the Work-Able objective of increasing capacity of hiring
managers and mentors to support and coach employees with disabilities.
Recommendations based off of these questionnaires are suggested in Section 7.
Appendix D: Reflecting On My Disability Awareness Questionnaire

Date: _______________  Please Circle: Pre  Post

This questionnaire helps us understand how effective our conversation could be at building awareness, introducing skills you can enhance, and sharing helpful resources.

Your answers are important and will help influence the collective efforts we are taking in building a more inclusive and respectful workplace for employees with disabilities.

We will request you to complete the questionnaire twice – once before and once after the intentional conversation. Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think.

Please answer honestly by circling a number along the scale 1 2 3 4 5.

Note: Please do not put your name on questionnaire as Work-Able will be collecting them to be included as part of an evaluation of the program.

**Awareness: This section asks questions to find out how much you know about disabilities and the BC government workplace.**

1. How much would you say you know about disabilities in the workplace?

   Not Very Much………………………………….…………A Lot

2. How comfortable would you be if you had to talk to your work group about the challenges facing people with disabilities when they look for jobs?

   Not Very Comfortable……………………………………..Very

3. How likely do you think it would be that a person with a disability could become the manager of your unit?

   Not Very Likely…………………………………………….Very
4. How much do you currently know about the range of possible accommodations for various types of disabilities?
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Very Much…………………………………………….A Lot

5. How comfortable would you be if you were responsible for introducing a person with disability into your workplace?
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Very Comfortable……………………………………..Very

6. How often do you think people with disabilities typically need help (or accommodations) in the workplace to do their job?
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Very Often…………………………………………….Often

Skills: This section asks questions to find out what skills you might have when it comes to working with and supporting a colleague with a disability.

7. How ready would you be if your supervisor asked you to mentor a co-worker who has a disability?
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Very Ready…………………………………………….Very

8. How much do you currently know about the sort of language people with disabilities prefer when talking about disabilities?
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Very Much…………………………………………….A Lot

9. Do you think you would be able to contribute to a conversation on improving the workplace for people with disabilities?
   1 2 3 4 5
   No Way……………………………………………………….I Could Do It
10. How ready would you be if you were asked to sit on an interview panel if the candidate uses a wheel chair?

1  2  3  4  5

Not Very Ready..........................................................Very

11. Do you think you could list 4-5 categories of disability, and give examples of how each may require an accommodation on the job?

1  2  3  4  5

No Way.................................................................I Can List 5

12. If your supervisor asked you to tell her/him where to find the best information for accommodating disabilities, could you do it?

1  2  3  4  5

I'd be Starting from Scratch.................................Yes

Resources: This section asks questions to find out what you know about the kinds of resources available to support people with disabilities in the workplace.

13. Do you know who to contact within BC government that help with questions about issues of employment and disability?

1  2  3  4  5

Don't Know Any.........................................................All of Them

14. How many types of job and workplace accommodations do you think you could name?

1  2  3  4  5

Don't Know Any.........................................................A Lot

15. How ready would you be if you were the person responsible for making sure a person with a disability got the right accommodation if she/he needed it?

1  2  3  4  5
Not Very Ready..............................................Very

16. How likely is it that you would search online for workplace accommodation solutions if you supervised a person with a disability and you noticed they were having some problems?

   1  2  3  4  5

   Not Very Likely............................................Very

17. How ready are you in doing something about building a more effective and respectful workplace that is inclusive of persons with disabilities?

   1  2  3  4  5

   Not Very Ready..............................................Very