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# Literature Review

Employment Inclusion and Disability

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## ***Literature Review***

### **Employment inclusion and disability**

Disability is linked with poverty the world over, but the exclusion of people with disabilities from the workforce persists. Despite the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* having been “signed by 159 countries to include the nearly one billion people living with disabilities,” lack of access to meaningful work remains a reality (Grills, Varghese, Hughes, Jolly, & Kumar, 2016, p. 338). “In 2010, the labour force participation rate for people with disabilities in Canada was 57.1 percent compared to 80.5 percent for people without disabilities” (Prince, 2014, p. 7, see also Prince, 2017). In both Cameroon and India, people with disabilities were “substantially less likely” to have been involved in work in the past 12 months than people without disabilities (Mactaggart, Banks, Kuper, Murthy, Sagar, Oye, & Polack, 2018, p. 7). High unemployment rates are also observed in India (Berry & Kymar, 2018; Ramachandra, Murthy, Shamanna, Allagh, Pant, & John, 2017), Italy (Ferrucci, 2014), South Korea (Park, Gi Seo, Park, Bettini, & Smith, 2016), the United States (Baker, Linden, LaForce, Rutledge, & Goughnour, 2018), and elsewhere. According to Ferrucci (2014), people in Italy with disabilities state they experience discrimination in their job searches (40.6%) and in the workplace as well (38%) – discrimination is identified as a major barrier in other countries as well (including Canada, according to Crawford, 2011).

Some analyses include consideration of other factors in combination with disability as related to employment rates. For instance, with regard to gender an Indian study showed that “36% of males compared to 10% of females with disability were employed” (Ramachandra et al., 2017, p. 36). Other studies examine the types of work that are most

available to people with disabilities: people with disabilities were often seen to be more likely to have irregular (i.e. seasonal) work (Mactaggart et al, 2018) and in Italy, as elsewhere, most people with disabilities are employed in the service sector, followed by commercial and food service jobs – and then industry (Ferrucci, 2014).

Type of disability is also the focus of many studies related to employment: according to one study, of those with disabilities, people for whom the onset was later in life, and people with physical limitations or multiple limitations, are the least likely to be working (Mactaggart et al, 2018). In Canada, as many as 40% of disabilities are invisible, and as our population ages, the number of workers and job seekers with invisible disabilities will continue to grow (Prince, 2017). Across the board, people with intellectual disabilities face the greatest barriers to employment (Ramachandra et al., 2017). This is despite the fact that research shows workers with intellectual disabilities are typically reliable and capable, and that employers report many benefits to hiring them including low turn-over, profitability, and productivity (Backrach, 2015).

There is some evidence that things are changing over time: Berry and Kymar (2012) observe that approaches to work inclusion in India are shifting from charitable to rights-based – leaning towards full participation in all aspects of society, including employment. When looking to Italy in particular, Ferrucci (2014) notes the younger generations have been benefiting from more inclusive education – and that higher educational outcomes do correspond with better employment outcomes. That said, barriers continue to exist.

### ***Employment inclusion and people with intellectual disabilities***

Crawford (2011) defines intellectual disability (sometimes called developmental disability) as involving “significant limitations in intellectual functions and behaviours required for

everyday social life and in practical skills that most people perform without major difficulty” (p. i). At the time of a 2006 survey, 1-3% of Canadians had intellectual disabilities (IDs).

In the 1950s, sheltered workshops became commonplace, and continue to be valued by many families and individuals with intellectual disabilities (Blick, Litz, Thornhill, & Goreczny, 2016). Community-integrated employment emerged in the 1980s. It provides people with intellectual disabilities opportunities to earn wages and work in the community of people with and without disabilities (though often not receiving employment benefits, career advancement, or an adequate number of work hours to make a living). That said, integrated employment is reported to offer a sense of belonging that extends outside of the workplace and is deeply valued, and is preferred by both individuals with IDs and their families over sheltered workshops and adult day programs, in part due to an increase in choice and control (Blick et al, 2016). There was no significant difference among the three groups when it came to satisfaction with daily life. Lysaght, Cobigo, and Hamilton (2012) found that while social inclusion has been explored by a great deal of research, it has been mostly considered as increased *presence* in the community – there has been little attention paid to the subjective experiences of people with intellectual disabilities themselves, and also little attention paid to the various “subjective components” of inclusion, such as trust, reciprocity, satisfaction, choice, friendships, etc (p. 1347).

Despite wide promotion of integrated employment, the uptake remains relatively low: an American study indicates that “fewer than one in five adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities hold a paid job in the community” (Carter, Brendetson, & Hobbs Guiden, 2018, p. 146), and instead either receive unemployment or work in segregated settings. In Canada, people with IDs are six times more likely than others to have never been employed. Accessible transportation, discrimination, lack of training, and other

factors are contributing conditions (Crawford, 2011). However, there are a “constellation of mutual benefits” of disability inclusive employment (Carter, Bendetson, & Hobbs Guiden, 2018, p. 145) with positive short and long term implications for people with disabilities, their employers, and the community at large.

## Theoretical influences

According to Backrach (2015), the medical model of disability has informed most efforts to increase employment rates to date. Interventions informed by this model are generally vocational rehabilitation and supported employment approaches that focus attention and change towards individuals with disabilities themselves. Likewise, Morrow, Wasik, Cohen and Elah Perry (2009) observe that neoliberal capitalism focuses on individualized, medical, and clinical approaches to disability, which precludes attending to important social science knowledge bases – impeding the implementation of socially responsible models. Thibedeau and Davis (2016) concur, framing employment with fair wages and community integration as a civil rights issue, and support an “employment first” approach to addressing current inequities (p. 280). Thus, these authors emphasize the importance of interventions that locate the onus for change in the social and political landscape – not individual job-seekers.

Contextualizing the discussion in contemporary British society, in which capitalist values and austerity measures make employment and employment support increasingly precarious – particularly for people with disabilities – Bates, Goodley, and Runswick-Cole (2017) “demand nuanced theoretical responses encapsulated by a critical disability studies approach” (p. 160), deeply informed by feminist and queer theories. These theories “recognize the psychological impacts of oppression” and move us towards possibilities for organizing society, institutions, and workplaces differently (p. 160). They shed light on the fact that the precariousness of life – in this case employment – is felt more heavily by people who are *already* marginalized, and offer analytics and concrete strategies for altering this structural reality. A first step is to recognize vulnerability as part

of being human, and the labels of ability/disability as social constructions that lead to viewing certain lives as more vulnerable (and less valuable) than others.

### ***A social model of disability***

A social model of disability shifts the intervention focus from potential employees to potential employers, policy makers and the broader social world (Bachrach, 2015). Despite evidence that once hired, people with disabilities often make excellent employees, employers still tend to presume they are unemployable or will underperform. A social model of disability suggests that efforts need to be made to *address material, environmental, and attitudinal barriers to their employment*. Ferrucci (2014) believes the social model of disability has effectively informed policies and legislation in the direction of work inclusion – in Italy and around the world. (The idea that facilitating participation in the labour market will reduce reliance on the state has also been part of the push for more inclusive employment.) However, Kuznetsova and Yalcin (2017) observe that while the social model has alleviated some barriers, and contributed to the development of legislation (such as anti-discrimination legislation) that has been widely taken up in Nordic countries, exclusion from meaningful work for people with disabilities is a reality.

Writing from a Canadian context, Nicholas, Mitchell, Dudley, Clarke, and Zulla (2018) offer “a conceptual model for determining and nurturing the employment ecosystem for individuals with ASD” (p. 264) - grounded in the review of one particular program. All of the elements of the ecosystem (individual, family, community, supports, employer, policies, etc.) work together to contribute to employment outcomes *throughout* the stages of a positive employment experience, including: accessing, engaging in, retaining, and

advancing within/adapting to a job. These authors demonstrate that when appropriate supports are mobilized, employment outcomes improve, and benefits extend throughout the ecosystem as well.

### **Implications for disability work inclusion**

Policies have now been put in place in many countries to promote integrated employment and support the rights of people with ID to meaningful work, but there is a general consensus among researchers that the agendas are not adequately implemented or monitored (Baker, et al., 2018; Bates et al., 2017; Beyer, 2012; Crawford, 2011; Ferrucci, 2014; Kitching, 2006; Kuznetsova and Yalcin, 2017; Morrow et al., 2009; Park et al., 2016; Prince, 2016). Observations include the fact that policies related to inclusive employment are disjointed and widely varied (Prince, 2016); there is not yet a coherent framework to offer guidance (Beyer, 2012); there is a lack of effort made to connect potential employers with the resources that would enable them to hire inclusively (Prince, 2016); there are no meaningful targets in place (Ferrucci, 2014) and when they are, they are rarely enforced (Bates, et al., 2017); little attention is paid to retention within existing goals and strategies (Ferrucci, 2014); there is great controversy over the possibility of hiring quotas (Baker, et al., 2018); and when hiring quotas do exist, there are still often unfair wages and working conditions, unwelcoming workplace cultures, and discrimination (Park et al., 2016). Hiring quotas (as they are currently implemented) also have little impact among small businesses with few employees (Ferrucci, 2014).

Crawford (2011) makes public policy recommendations that address these barriers, such as: incentives and other forms of support for employers to be able to provide needed

accommodations and supports, developing local level initiatives to create cohesive services (such as transportation), and encouraging and financially supporting post-secondary institutions and other training programs to provide inclusive education, and recruit accordingly. Prince (2016) adds to this list improving transition planning for youth and modernizing labour market agreements. Both of these authors write from a Canadian context. (see Appendix C: Linkages for more information on Canadian policies and programs supportive of addressing these barriers).

Changing the narrative about disability in the workplace is also important: recognizing both the social and economic value of inclusion can contribute to a long-term vision with stable employment opportunities – even in times of austerity (Bates et al, 2017). Kitching (2006) observes that sectors in which employment is less inclusive at this point (ie. construction) may see slower progress, since there is little first-hand experience to debunk stereotypes. Policy must continue addressing “the structural and cultural barriers that create/reinforce disadvantage” (p. 881). In particular, policies should pay more attention to the demand (employer) side of the labour equation, rather than placing efforts only on the supply side. Meier, Celis, and Huysentruy (2016) suggest that important lessons about disability mainstreaming can be learned by looking to successes and challenges of gender mainstreaming in the workplace.

Ferrucci (2014) asserts that laws alone will not create inclusion, and culture shifts are needed. He proposes we look at both disability and work differently, in order to bring about this change. Similarly, Kuznetsova and Yalcin (2017) argue that more effective than national legislation, are targeted corporate policies and sustainability programs at the company level. Companies with these in place are more likely be inclusive employers.

### ***Company policies and specific practices***

In terms of supported employment, research shows it is important that the emphasis not only be placed on hiring, but the entire work experience (from job-seeking through to promotion and retirement). Knaeps, DeSmet, and Van Audenhove (2012) present a model (for people with severe mental illness) based on seven principles: “1) zero exclusion, 2) integration with mental health treatment teams, 3) start from consumers’ preferences, 4) rapid job search, 5) competitive employment as a goal, 6) time-unlimited follow-up, and 7) benefits counselling.” (p. 13-14). This model has proven successful in Europe and the US, even in places with different benefits and health care systems. Importantly, Wehman, Brooke, Green, Hewett, and Tipton (2008) also recommend “building long term relationships and partnerships with the businesses community” (p. 53) – they observe that focusing on one individual at a time has not proven an effective or efficient path forward and organizational partnerships are vital.

However, company specific policies and practices should also attend to the environment as a whole. Baker, et al. (2018) suggest a number of paths forward: acknowledging and discussing disability in all its diversity – rather than collapsing all into a single category – is seen as an important step. Having open discussions and sensitivity training increases visibility and decreases stigma (and may help employers discover they likely already employ people with invisible disabilities without knowing it). Using assistive technologies, including information and communication technologies, can also enhance participation and combat negative stereotypes. Ensuring environments – including architecture, transportation, and digital spaces – are accessible enables employees to be productive and efficient – as does flexibility, such as accommodations like telework.

Recommendations include “developing a marketing plan or inclusive brand for employees with disabilities to alter many employers’ negative behavioral and psychological responses” (Baker et al., 2018, p. 661). Narratives that personalize individuals with disabilities and the benefits their inclusion brings have also been shown to help overcome a tendency towards social avoidance that increases misperceptions and exclusion. In the sections below, there is further elaboration of successful and safe integrated employment models that *design inclusion in* from the ground up (see in particular Kaletta, Binks & Robinson, 2012 for thorough evidence-based research).

### ***Employer attitudes and practices***

Literature suggests that low employment rates for people with disabilities may be due in part to employer (mis)perceptions of people's abilities to perform on the job and of the costs related to hiring people with disabilities (Baker, et al., 2018). Very few employers are aware of their policies that directly relate to hiring people with disabilities, and less than half (in a study by Ramachandra, et al., 2017) knew about the disability act.

According to Fraser, Ajzen, Johnson, Herbert and Chan (2011) there is a discrepancy between seemingly positive attitudes about the idea of hiring people with disabilities and a reluctance to actually hire them. Companies tend to protect their public image by foregrounding 'success stories' and concealing information that demonstrates a lack of attention to inclusive hiring – particularly for people with disabilities (Kuznetsova, 2016). Employers are concerned about safety and productivity, knowledge related to hiring and retention, and identifying workplace supports and accommodations. Larger companies are more likely to hire people with disabilities, and more likely to be influenced by statistical or other information that speaks to the benefits of doing so (while small companies seem more concerned about costs and liability, despite evidence). Some of the factors that sway companies to hire or consider hiring people with disabilities include a disability focus as part of their diversity hiring strategies and training related to accommodations and supports for workers with disabilities (Fraser, et al., 2011).

Research shows that actually employing people with disabilities helps to “change employers' attitudes, promote future hiring and retention of such employees and, consequently, create an inclusive corporate culture” (Kuznetsova, 2016, p. 179).

Employers reported benefits to hiring people with disabilities, such that: they were good employees, it helped their bottom line, it was good for their branding, and it “adds to organizational learning” (Ramachandra et al. 2017, p. 38). Indeed, after five years of research at a Walgreens distribution center, data showed that employees with disclosed disabilities made significantly *fewer* worker’s compensation claims than those without disabilities, and turnover was significantly less among this cohort. Their costs for medical treatment were 67% less, costs for indemnity/time off were 73% less, and their expense costs were 77% less (Kaletta, et al., 2012).

Rashid, Hodgetts, and Nicholas (2017) note that relationships, a strength-based approach, and an appreciation of the labour of people with developmental disabilities (rather than seeing their work as volunteerism or charity) are contributing factors to work inclusion. They highlight the fact that employers are “key partners in this equation” (p. 3511) and education, knowledge-building and ongoing support are needed to dispel myths and change practices.

### ***Organizational culture change***

In a Taiwanese study, Hsu, Huang, and Ososkie (2009) highlighted some concerns about integrated employment, which include “safety concerns, attitudes of co-workers, dissatisfaction with jobs found” (p. 21), lack of social relationships, negative previous experiences, lack of experience, and even “physical and mental appearance” (p. 23). And in a study conducted in India by Ramachandra, et al. (2017), findings indicate that attitudes of coworkers, when not positive, were a major barrier for many participants (p. 38). 75% of participants reported that their workplaces were accessible, but many of them said more training as to how to use the facilities would be beneficial.

In the successful Walgreens initiative noted above (Kaletta et al., 2012), three commitments the business made *up front* included: 1) partnering with social service agencies to assist with initial screening and training on an ongoing basis, 2) building a physical workplace that would be conducive to a range of abilities and needs, and 3) creating a welcoming and inclusive culture from day one, with safety as an explicit top priority. Changes over time at this distribution center have also led to increased attention to ‘fit’ between the particular employee’s skills and the job opportunity (rather than pigeonholing employees with disabilities into certain positions), as well as more thorough training that extends beyond tasks and safety instructions – particularly for employees for whom this is their first work experience. According to Prince (2017), part of an inclusive workplace culture involves being proactive about reducing the fear applicants may have about disclosing a disability. Employers can do this by providing accessible information up front about competencies required for the job to reduce uncertainty and build confidence, specifically asking about special requirements in interviews, and responding with appropriate accommodations when disabilities are disclosed.

Leadership that is excited about disability inclusive development is a key asset, and ensuring people with disabilities are part of the process is of vital importance (Grills, et al., 2016). Commitment needs to be strong, as competing agendas can interfere with a disability focus, even after change has been implemented. Other recommendations include strategic partnerships between occupational therapists and Human Resource professionals in order to facilitate inclusive employment (Berry and Kymar, 2012). Sulewski, Ciulla Timmons, Lyons, Lucas, Vogt, and Bachmeyer’s (2017) research yields similar findings. Importantly, all of these recommendations can be extended to ensure attention is paid to supporting employees with disabilities to and through retirement

(Brotherton, Stancliffe, Wilson, & O'Loughlin, 2016). Hargreaves and Walker's (2014) study demonstrates how a number of factors come together to create the conditions for inclusion: 1) the law (which now is providing more infrastructure to promote disability inclusion and increasing the responsibility of employers to uphold this right), 2) professional regulation (which is based on regional and federal legislation, and upholds rights of both employees and consumers), 3) universities (the education system is also now more inclusive and accommodating to diverse needs and capacities, and curriculum is also reflecting this shift), and 4) placement providers. Grills and colleagues (2016) concur that change in the direction of disability inclusion at an organizational level is a process (not just an outcome) and requires concerted efforts that extend beyond the organization itself (including government).

### ***Hiring, retention, and promotion***

Opportunities for both interviews and promotions are often refused to people with intellectual disabilities, and changing jobs or positions within a job is very challenging for those who do obtain employment (Crawford, 2011). For people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (or others with behaviours that are accompanied by stigma, or for whom novel experiences are challenging) finding and retaining work can be quite difficult (Seaman & Cannella-Malone, 2016). Another barrier is a mismatch between education/skills and employment opportunities (Baker, et al., 2018). This may in part be due to stereotypes that preclude a deeper look at the talents of prospective employees, and is particularly important when it comes to retention. “Employers appear to be unaware that the majority of employees with disabilities require no workplace accommodations; and if required, the average cost associated with providing accommodations is relatively low” (Baker, et al., 2018, p. 662). Research shows that employers with prior experience with disabilities are more likely to use inclusive discourses and practices during interviews (Vedeler, 2014). In a Taiwanese study (Huang & Chen, 2015) it was found that if a disability type was unfamiliar to the employer, this was a particular barrier to getting hired.

Despite the emphasis on environmental change advocated by the social model of disability and related policies, most of the interventions in a review on employment supports by Seaman and Cannella-Malone (2016) focused on job tasks, with “just a fraction related to job retention, and an even smaller number targeting pre-employment skills” (p. 488). These authors recommend training on ‘soft skills’ as a start. It is worth noting that research on supported employment consistently demonstrates that “intervention time decreased over time” (Wehman, Brooke, Molinelli Brooke, Ham, Schall,

McDonough, Lay, Seward, & Avellone, 2016, p. 70). Research suggests that accommodation costs are not as high as employers anticipate (particularly when consider in contrast with accommodation costs for other employees) and that productivity is often higher among employees with disabilities (Hartnett, Stuart, Thurman, Loy & Carter Batiste, 2011). Furthermore, the coworkers of the employees who have been accommodated also tend to benefit when hiring practices are more inclusive.

There seems to be awareness in both rural and urban communities that it takes community-wide efforts to improve disability inclusive hiring practices (including raising awareness, implementing tax incentives, training employers and more) (Bumble, Carter, McMillan, & Manikas, 2017). Community, corporate, and university partnerships could better facilitate an effective hiring process. Supported employment programs, workforce analytics which use accessible software (to analyse workforce performance), and other forms of outreach are ways this mismatch between skill and job opportunity can be overcome (Baker et al., 2018).

Hartnett, et al. (2011) observe that while much has been written about hiring people with disabilities, there has been less attention paid to retention. West, Targett, Wehman, Cifu, and Davis (2015) identify a range of strategies to support job retention including: attending to fit between the person and the position, having a disability 'champion' within the organization, supporting the employee to build a personal network of relationships, seeking out businesses with explicitly inclusive workplace cultures, ongoing and open communication, and recognizing employers need support too. These findings are echoed in a range of other studies (Brown, Kessler, & Toson, 2016; Huang & Chen, 2015). That said, Cimera (2012) reminds readers that changing positions is not necessarily a bad thing for the employee or their employer, particularly given people tend to earn more and

cost less the second time around. Promotion or change should also be supported, in addition to retention.

### **Social enterprise: A promising model**

Hsu, Huang, and Ososkie (2009) define social enterprises as “non-profit organizations that participate in commercial activities to fulfill and even broaden the social missions of their organizations” (p. 20). And according to Tan (2009) social enterprises provide “higher quality work experience compared to sheltered employment, while creating a supportive atmosphere that may be lacking in competitive employment” (p. 53). Prince (2014) sees the social economy as a potential opportunity for intellectual disability work inclusion (see also Buhariwala, Wilton & Evans, 2015; Lanctot, Corbiere, & Durand, 2012; and Morrow, et al., 2009).

Cooney (2016) found that the sheltered workshops of the past enjoyed a certain kind of stability, due in large part to the fact that they receive state funding to subsidize money generated (p. 454). This stability has been disrupted, in part due to activism and demand for higher wages and greater integration. Reorganization and new responses are now emerging – including worker owned cooperative social enterprises, but have yet to establish a level of stability. There is optimism about their ability to offer good working conditions, higher pay and benefits, job satisfaction, opportunities for skills training, and greater job security. A Spanish study found that social enterprises (that were also sheltered workshops for people with disabilities) had a track record of continuing to create jobs in Spain even during an economic crisis, and are described as representing “a full-grown and stable business mass” (Bellostas, Lopez-Arceiz, & Mateos, 2016, p. 369). Not only did this study find a positive relationship between social and economic value (i.e.

these social enterprises produce both), but it also found a *causal* relationship (i.e. the social value contributed to the economic value).

Challenges for social enterprises with people with disabilities include: finding start up funds, generating enough revenue to pay fair wages, balancing economic and social aims (Cooney, 2016), and resisting the replication of paternalistic or oppressive patterns in workplaces (Prince, 2014). Another challenge is the fact that given the (often) part-time nature of this work, it may not be enough to lift people out of poverty – exacerbated by the fact that employment beyond a certain level may interfere with financial aid eligibility for workers with disabilities (Buhariwala, Wilton & Evans, 2015). Katz (2014) recommends that social enterprises that employ people with disabilities: 1) ensure the setting integrates employees with and without disabilities, 2) pay fair wages, 3) offer choice to employees about whether or not to work there, and 4) provide regular skill assessment that leads “to the opportunity for advancement and promotion where appropriate, or, with the skills developed, movement to another job with another employer” (p. 138). She also recommends the social enterprise is well-supported by its parent organization (but has its own management structure), has a good business plan and competent people to implement it, and tracks both successes and challenges over time (related to economic and social impacts).

### **Safety and risk management**

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) defines vulnerability as “exposure to workplace hazards without the ability to mitigate the hazards through policies and procedures, awareness, and/or empowerment” (Breslin, Lay, Jeth, & Smith, 2018, p. 2138). Given the OHS mandate is to support the health and safety of every worker, and that it is the

responsibility of the employer to uphold standards (facing fines for breaches), assumptions about safety and risk lead to reservations about hiring people with disabilities (Haynes, Black, & Shackelford, 2007). When employers are not knowledgeable about the capacities of people with disabilities, they may err on the side of exclusion. Even though employers are expected to make accommodations for employees with disabilities, OHS regulations can, at times, serve as a disincentive to doing so. This is where advocacy and partnerships (in part, to educate employers) can be vital. “A key component to ensuring safety for employees with disabilities in the manufacturing workplace is understanding the employees’ abilities” (p. 45). Safety in the workplace is a primary concern for family members of people with disabilities (Carter, Bendetson, & Hobbs Guiden, 2018), and also for employers (Lysaght, Sparring, Ouellette-Kuntz & Marshall. 2011).

Perhaps for these reasons, there are differences by sector when it comes to disability inclusive hiring practices (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2015). Manufacturing and construction are less likely to employ people with physical or mental disabilities, and companies in the information services industry are more likely (than leisure and hospitality). Companies in goods-producing industries are also less likely to actively recruit people with disabilities, indicating that this is a sector in which more advocacy may be needed.

However, five years of research into the safety of a disability inclusive Walgreens distribution center indicates that these safety concerns are unfounded (Kaletta, et al., 2012). All employees, with and without disabilities, were required to meet safety training requirements, and offered supports and accommodations to do so successfully. The

most dangerous job in the center – operating the lift – actually saw low frequency of incidents, as well as no lost work time or injuries due to the job. Significantly, team members with disabilities had 34% fewer incidents than those without. “Anderson’s performance can be attributed to the building’s technology, strong safety culture and a management commitment that includes a daily focus on safety issues and incidents” (p. 68). Further, the “lost-day average per case for employees who had disclosed a disability was 40% less than for the rest of the population” (p. 68). A study by Lysaght, Sparring, Ouellette-Kuntz and Marshall (2011) offers very similar conclusions – workers with IDs were in fact less likely to experience serious injuries in the workplace than other workers, and far less likely to take time off due to injury in the workplace. Breslin, et al. (2018) point to a need for better attention to policy development and safe workplace cultures and practices as inclusive hiring continues to be made a priority.

### **Disability inclusive research practice**

Current employment practices, policies, and funding structures related to people with intellectual disabilities are often based on outdated models, and must adjust accordingly. In order to effectively do so, Cooney (2016) recommends more research on existing integrated employment practices and demonstration projects, and their implications.

Many authors also insist that this research must center the perspectives and experiences of people with intellectual disabilities themselves (Lysaght, Cobigo, & Hamilton, 2012). Too often they are excluded from research that directly impacts them (McDonald, Conroy, & Olick, 2017). Capri and Coetzee (2012) claim that excluding people with intellectual impairments from participating in research is a form of discrimination, a violation of human rights, and unethical. Research shows that adults with IDs and their caregivers see

keeping research participation opportunities from them as more harmful than do family, friends, or ethics review board members. Adults with IDs see direct recruiting as favourable - and research shows it to be more effective than other approaches (McDonald, et al. 2017).

There are many benefits of participation in research such as: resisting the “scientific silencing” of people with intellectual impairments (Capri & Coetzee, 2012, p. 2), pride in having contributions credited, gaining awareness of capabilities, and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to a body of knowledge that impacts them and others – “effecting political and social processes of change” (p. 2). However, there are barriers to people with IDs who wish to participate in research as well. These include: obtaining consent (ensuring understanding while avoiding coercion), potential lack of education on intellectual impairments among members of ethical review panels, lack of attention to context when it comes to capacity to consent, and inaccessible information about the research and lack of accommodation in the informing process (making genuinely ‘informed’ consent difficult to obtain) (Capri & Coetzee, 2012). A social model of disability encourages reconsideration of what needs to exist for meaningful consent to be obtained by research participants with intellectual impairments.

Based on his own experience conducting research with participants who have IDs, Haines (2017) offers some ways forward, beginning with topic and design: he recommends meaningfully consulting a *range* of stakeholders and accepting feedback and advice from the start. Second, it is paramount to avoid coercion in recruitment and obtaining consent. This can be done in a number of ways, including only contacting potential participants directly once they have expressed initial interest to a trusted contact (after receiving the invitation to participation through this third party). Consent should always be considered

provisional and an ongoing process, which involves reading nonverbal cues and offering opportunities to withdraw. When recruiting adults without capacity to consent, drawing on people who know their communication patterns and capacities is necessary and ethical - and when capacity is not present, drawing on them to act in their best interest (based on existing legislation). In order to do this, care must be taken to determine whether risks outweigh benefits. Even if explicit consent is not given, it is still important to look for assent throughout the research process, and respond accordingly.

Third, Haines (2017) recommends using a range of data types, developing a trusting relationship with participants, and attending to power dynamics (including participant 'voice') during the data collection process. And finally, during dissemination of findings be sure to provide enough detail to contextualize (without providing identifying details). Ensure portrayals are respectful of those being represented, and deeply consider the complicated question of anonymity and/or other ways of protecting the dignity of participants.

## **Conclusion**

For the first time, people with significant intellectual disabilities are outliving their parents, and as a society we must collectively be ensuring their needs are met throughout the lifespan (Brown, Kessler, & Toson, 2016). Tracing a history of advocacy that has drawn attention to quality of life for this population, and the shifts (including policies and legislation) that have followed, Brown et al. (2016) demonstrate how increasing integration has benefited individuals and society. Turning to employment in particular, they note that work exclusion is often not due to a lack of capacity on the part of individuals, but a lack of meaningful support.

A social model of disability has guided a great deal of policy and legislation toward the aim of improving this situation, but more needs to be done for effective implementation (Bachrach, 2018). There is now a body of research that debunks myths and stereotypes (Baker, et al., 2015), offers effective strategies based on evidence (Kaletta, et al., 2015), and proposes hopeful possibilities such as social enterprise models (Buhariwala et al., 2015). Collectively, this research cautions about ongoing challenges such as discrimination and outdated conceptual models of disability (Morrow, et al., 2009), and promotes approaches that are built on meaningful partnerships (Sullivan Sulewski, et al., 2017), have a view to the long-term (Brotherton, et al., 2016), and center the perspectives and experiences of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Carter, et al., 2018). This is relevant in relation to both employment *and* research practices (McDonald, et al., 2017). It also demonstrates that when disability inclusion is built in from the start and meaningfully resourced in an ongoing way, businesses, individuals, coworkers, and communities benefit both socially and economically (Meier, et al., 2016). A social enterprise model that is grounded in current research and evidence is emerging as a very promising structure through which these aims can be accomplished (Katz, 2014).

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