

Manitoba Access Awareness Week
(MAAW) 2021 May 30 - June 5

Beyond COVID-19: Creating a Culture of Accessibility in the Workplace



FREE WEBINAR

Keynote Speaker

Featuring **Yazmine Laroche**

Deputy Minister, Public Accessibility,
Government of Canada

Panel Discussion

Featuring **Manitobans with Disabilities**

A discussion on workplace barriers & solutions

Thursday, June 3, 2021

2 to 3:30 PM. CDT.

MORE INFORMATION: AccessibilityMB.ca

Manitoba Access Awareness Week

Thursday, June 3rd, 2021 from 2 to 3:30 PM CDT

For more information, please visit www.accessibilitymb.ca

Speakers

- Erika Vas (MAO)
- Yutta Fricke (MAO)
- Honourable Minister Rochelle Squires (Manitoba Government)
- Deputy Minister Yazmine Laroche (Government of Canada)
- Rosalie Best (MLPD - Moderator)
- Erika Rodeck (Panelist)
- Bill Tucker (Panelist)
- Samantha Rayburn-Trubyk (Panelist)
- Josh Watt (Panelist)

Chapters

- 00:00:00 – MAO Logo
 - 00:00:08 – Beginning on Webinar from Erika Vas
 - 00:02:02 – Moment of Silence
 - 00:03:20 – Webinar Outline
 - 00:04:50 – Rochelle Squires introduction and opening remarks
 - 00:09:45 – Introduction of Yazmine Laroche
 - 00:10:45 – Keynote Address, Yazmine Laroche
 - 00:40:45 – Overview of The Accessibility Standard for Employment
 - 00:48:06 – Accessibility Standard Resources
 - 00:52:05 – Introduction of Panel
 - 01:27:20 – Panel End
 - 01:28:12 – Contact Info and Thank You
 - 01:32:48 – End of video
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[Webinar Begins]

Erika Vas (MAO) at 00:00:08

All right, hi everyone, and thanks for joining us today. I'll just wait half a minute for all of us to get logged in and settled.

Aaniin, Boozhoo, Tansi, Wotziye, Ho/Han, Tanshi, Tunngasugitsi. The MAAW 2021 webinar is located on treaty one territory, the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, & Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We at the MAO encourage you to reflect on the history of the land that you are watching from today.

So, for technical assistance, please contact the MAO at if you want to call to 204-945-7613, Toll-free at 1-800-282-8069 extension 7613, or email the MAO at mao@gov.mb.ca. And if you do encounter technical issues, not to worry this webinar is being recorded and it will be online later. And we also have a poll, at the end of the

webinar and we encourage you to participate, for those who are calling in you may submit your request for the questions and submit your answers by phone or by email by contacting the MAO. So now, without further ado, I would like to introduce our MC for this afternoon and the Executive Director of the Manitoba accessibility office Yutta Fricke.

Yutta Fricke (MAO) at 2:00

We wish to take a moment to acknowledge the horrific discovery of the remains of 215 indigenous children at the former residential school in Kamloops. We recognize that this adds to the trauma of indigenous peoples everywhere. In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, we express our deepest regret and acknowledge the need to take action in meaningful and tangible ways, let us take a moment of silence to share a collective grief for the loss of these precious children.

[Moment of silence]

Welcome to our second online celebration of Manitoba Access Awareness Week, my name is Yutta Fricke and I'm the Executive Director of the Manitoba Accessibility Office formerly the disabilities issues office and it's my pleasure to welcome you here today on behalf of both the office. And the Manitoba accessibility advisory network, which is a group of public sector and non-profit organizations that have helped us to plan this event today.

I'm going to begin by offering a bit of an outline of our event, which will begin momentarily with greetings and open room opening remarks from Minister Squires from the Manitoba government. This will be followed by a keynote address by Deputy Minister, Yazmine Laroche from the government of Canada. Then, I will offer a bit of an overview of the accessibility standard for employment, which is kind of the foundation of today's webinar. That will be followed by one of our highlights a panel discussion of magnet opens with disabilities who share their own experiences of barriers and solutions in the workplace and offer their advice for creating a culture of accessibility. Finally, we'll have closing remarks and as Erica mentioned earlier, there will be an opportunity to respond to a few poll questions so we hope you'll hang on for that.

I welcome the pre-recorded greetings from the Honorable Rochelle Squires Minister of families and Minister responsible for accessibility. Rochelle was elected MLA for Riel in 2016 and 2019. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and communications from the University of Winnipeg and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia, and a journalism degree from Red River College. She and her husband, Daniel have a combined family of five children or possibly seven because I can't read it, and one grandson. So welcome Minister Squires.

Rochelle Squires at 5:40:

Hello, Bonjour, so I'm pleased to bring greetings to the participants of today's webinar on behalf of the province of Manitoba and to proclaim May 30 to June 5 as Manitoba Access Awareness Week. Manitoba has also proclaimed June as the deaf, blind awareness month and brain injury awareness month, each with its own accessibility priorities.

I would like to acknowledge that this webinar is being hosted on treaty one territory the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, & Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Metis Nation.

Manitoba Access Awareness Week is proclaimed annually in conjunction with national accessibility week to raise awareness of accessibility barriers experienced by mountains with disabilities and to promote the removal of these barriers, as we continue to navigate through this pandemic, we continue to prioritize progress in other important areas with regard to accessibility.

Today I'm especially proud to inform our audience about the establishment of the Manitoba Accessibility Fund. The Manitoba government thanks the Winnipeg Foundation for hosting for \$20 million endowment fund, which will make it possible to distribute over \$500,000 in annual interest earned. The grants of up to \$50,000 will support Manitoba municipalities, non-profit organizations, and businesses in promoting combined with the standards under the accessibility from Manitobans to act.

The Manitoba Accessibility Office will continue to develop and distribute tools and information for general guidance on the implementation of Manitoba's accessibility

standards. In response to a request from our stakeholders, the newest addition to the toolbox is an online learning platform that allows organizations and their employees to access training anytime from anywhere. This learning model module and accessible customer service are live as of today and will soon be followed by another module. Both include video messages knowledge checks and certificates to mark successful course completion. The government recognizes that there are many aspects to creating an accessible inclusive society with income security among the top priorities.

I am proud to show the historic step Manitoba is taking, with the introduction of bill 72 the disability support act. This bill sets the stage for the creation of a new framework that will allow individuals living with disabilities to apply for a basic disability support payment. The focus of today's webinar is on much larger populations of Manitobans with disabilities who aspire to become or are already part of our workforce. As we plan for a gradual return to work, we hope that some pandemic lessons stand the test of time, including kindness respect for front-line workers, and workplace accommodations that nurture a strong and diverse workforce.

Thank you to our keynote speaker Deputy Minister Yazmine Laroche, who will speak about her efforts to create a culture of accessibility in the workplace. Also, thank you to our Manitoba panelists for sharing your experiences about workplace barriers, including your knowledge and expertise. And thank you to the organizers of today's event or members of the amount of accessibility advisory network. Finally, and most significantly, my thanks go to Manitoba's many accessibility champions, including businesses non-profit organizations. And members of the Manitoba disability community, for your ongoing efforts to make Manitoba an accessible and inclusive province for everyone. I wish you an informative webinar and success successful now till the access Awareness Week Thank you, merci beaucoup.

Yutta Fricke (MAO) at 00:09:21:

Thank you very much for those opening remarks minister Squires if we could go to the next slide please, I want to note too that Minister squares named a whole lot of resources if you go to our homepage accessibilitymb.ca, you will see new resources and will be connected to many pages of additional resources, some of which I will name today as well.

Next, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, someone who I heard speak and found incredibly passionate and knowledgeable. The deputy minister Yazmine Laroche. Who is the deputy minister of public service accessibility, since 2018 and is the Deputy Minister champion for federal employees with disabilities. She's responsible for overseeing the efforts of the Canadian public service to meet the requirements of the accessible Canada act.

Ms. Laroche has over 25 years of experience in public policy program design and delivery, communications, strategic planning, and corporate management, having served in a variety of federal government departments. She's also an alumnus of Carleton University, which is known for its accessibility, and the past chair of the Board of Muscular Dystrophy Canada. She was awarded the Queen Elizabeth second diamond jubilee medal in recognition of returnable work and your efforts on behalf of people with disabilities welcome Deputy Minister Laroche.

Yazmine Laroche at 00:10:45:

Thank you so much Yutta. Je suis ravie d'être ici avec vous aujourd'hui. I'm really honored, let me first acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Ottawa. Which is on the traditional unseated territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg peoples. This matters hugely. I think it's important for all of us to think about the terrible consequences of colonialism, particularly in a discussion around accessibility and disability inclusion. When we know that even though 20% of Canadians identify as living with one or more disabilities that percentage is much higher in indigenous communities and so it's really important for us to acknowledge, acknowledge that, and think about the land that we occupy.

I'd also like to recognize off the top that Manitoba was the second province in Canada to have an act, the Accessibility for Manitobans Act that provides a process to remove barriers affecting people with disabilities. So this morning, this afternoon I should say. I'd like to bring you up to date on some of the things that we're doing in the Canadian public service to eliminate barriers. Both inside our public service, and in other federally regulated workplaces.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself and my role. I am the first Deputy Minister of Public Service accessibility in the federal government. I'm also the first federal deputy minister with a visible disability. In a very long time, I'm the only one. So I'm very proud to be in this role. I'm honored to be able to have this job and to have these responsibilities, it makes me think back to when I was a little girl and my wonderful father who used to tell me that I could be anything that I wanted to be. Now I can't say that my childhood dream was to become a deputy minister. But I didn't know I wanted to make a difference. And here I am a few decades later and I'm a deputy minister in the federal government. And my job is all about advancing disability inclusion right across the federal public service and federally regulated organizations across the country.

And yes, I still want to make a difference and I'm really happy that I get the chance to do that in this job. I bet that many of you also have stories about overcoming obstacles about changing people's perspectives. Maybe you were once told by your parents that you could be anything you wanted to be and here you are making a difference so congratulations on the great work that you're doing.

In the Federal Government, a lot has happened in the last few years, with accessibility and inclusion moving up on the agenda. I'd say in general we've moved beyond a, I'm using air quotes here a duty to accommodate mindset. To thinking about how do we remove barriers to participation, so that people can participate fully and this isn't just about our employees it's also about clients. My office, the office of public service accessibility was established in 2018. With a mandate to get the public service ready to meet or exceed the requirements of the accessible Canada act and its landmark legislation I really believe it's going to create the most significant progress for people with disabilities across the country. It mirrors provincial legislation like Manitoba's because it requires organizations to remove barriers to full and equal participation in society.

But we're a federation, and so the federal law applies to what we call the federally regulated sectors so who does that include. Starts with the government of Canada, including department agencies and crown corporations, it includes the Canadian forces and the RCMP. It includes parts of the private sector that are regulated by the Federal Government. Well, that includes the banks, the Federal transportation network, such as airlines rail, road, and marine transportation providers across provincial or international

borders. As well as the broadcasting and the telecommunications sectors so that's big that's a big chunk of our economy. That's a big chunk of business across the country.

This is a very powerful and far-reaching piece of legislation it's actually going to change the way we do business as a federal government and my hope that is going to lead to an improvement of the lives of people with disabilities right across the country. And my office is set up in an organization called the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and why this is important is that it's a central agency that radiates policies and procedures that affect the government and some of the federally regulated sectors.

So, what did we do when we were created well the very first thing we did was to engage with employees with disabilities and allies. To listen to understand where the biggest barriers and challenges were and to go develop a plan that would guide our work. Then, two years ago really just two years ago, last week we launched nothing without us, which is the accessibility strategy for the public service of Canada. And it has five goals that are designed to help us achieve our modest and ambitious vision to become the most accessible and inclusive public service in the world.

So, these goals really focus in on the five biggest issues that were identified through our engagement process, the first is all about employment, not surprisingly. You know, when I said 90% of Canadians live with a disability, the representation rate right now in the Canadian public service is 5.2%. And we know we need to do better, we need to do better to recruit, we need to do a better job of retaining. And we also need to do a better job of promoting people with disabilities, as I mentioned I'm the first person with a visible disability to be at this level. And we want to make sure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to have the best possible careers.

The second pillar is all about the built environment. We own a lot and we lease a lot of buildings across the country. And I can tell you from personal experience, their accessibility varies considerably. And so, if we're going to try and recruit people, we need to make sure that our buildings work for them.

The third pillar is about making information and communications technology usable by everybody. We purchase, we design, we run a lot of technology, and not surprisingly, a lot of it doesn't mean basic accessibility standards and again that sends a message

about whether we believe people belong. Whether we think they matter. The fourth is all about how do we help public servants to design and deliver accessible programs and services.

We know from surveys that we've done that Canadians with disabilities, give us lower scores on service delivery. And so we're working hard to change that to make sure that, that people will be happy with the kinds of services that they get, that we are providing accessible programs and services.

The fifth pillar is probably the hardest and it's, the most important and it's called building a culture of accessibility within the public service. We know from our public service employee surveys that employees with disabilities report, the highest levels of harassment and discrimination. Really feeling that they don't belong, we need to change that if we're ever going to be able to attract and retain great talent into the public service.

So we have started some initiatives I've been on the job for two and a half years, and I can say that progress is being made, but much more needs to be done. I mentioned some of the work we're doing around employment I what I didn't mention was that the government also when they introduced the legislation committed to hiring 5000 new employees with disabilities by 2025 and so we've created an internship program we have a special program for summer students with disabilities.

We're making it easy to take students that are graduating and hire them right into the public service. We're doing very targeted recruitment and working with partners to identify top talent. And one of the things that we've done is to try and fix the experience for employees in the public service, were championing what we call the tell us once approach to deal with employees accommodation needs.

That was one of the biggest pain points that was identified in our surveys and in our research. It can be really hard for somebody to get just the basic tools and equipment that they need to do their job. What we discovered was that every time somebody changed jobs they had to kind of start from square one again. Because we didn't have a process that allowed people to take their equipment or their tools with them to their next job. So we've created something called the workplace accessibility passport and that

makes it easier to identify the barriers and the supports that are needed. And it goes with the employee from job to job it's right now it's in its pilot project phase, but it's been adopted already by more than 20 federal government departments and agencies.

And our goal is to turn it into an online tool that will be available to everybody in the next two years. So that's a piece I'm very, very happy about other things that we're doing we've developed a catalog of the most commonly requested adaptive devices. And we're also streamlining the procurement process we're making it easier to get stuff that people need and we've created a centralized library of adaptive technologies that people can borrow, and this is specifically to support people who may not be coming on as permanent employees, but maybe there's summer students, maybe they're coming in to do a contract it's a way of getting them the tools that they need, as quickly as possible.

And so I think we're making a considerable amount of progress there. And I have to say, though, that we still have a way to go, I mentioned the results on harassment and discrimination in our public service employee survey. One of the things that we just found because the 2020 results have just come out is that in this last survey. More people have identified as living with a disability in fact we've seen a 2% increase. Now that may be because we expanded the definition of people with disabilities to be consistent with the Federal legislation. I also think it's because we've done so much work in the last two years, around awareness-raising and talking about it. So the public service employee survey we got to almost 9% now our official measures come from a different, a different measurement tool so it's going to be interesting to see if the next time we do our formal self-identification survey if that 5.2% number has changed as well.

With respect to enhancing the built environment, one of the things that I find so interesting. Is that we're taking advantage of code so in our federal public service context, most of our employees are working remotely right now there are some, of course, you have to work in the physical office, but many don't. And so, our colleagues who are responsible for managing our built environment are taking advantage of these relatively empty offices to actually accelerate accessibility improvements. And they're already thinking about what do we need to do when people start coming back to the workplace to make sure that they'll have what they need.

The other interesting aspect of coven relates to our third pillar information and communications technology. So the people who manage all of our techs, had a very ambitious three-year plan to roll out Microsoft Office 365 across the entire public service now we're talking about 250,000 public servants across the country. There was a three-year plan then COVID hit and everybody had to work from home and needed to be equipped to work from home that three-year plan turned into six weeks. And within six weeks they'd rolled out this new tool which has so many accessibility features built right into it, so all of a sudden. It made it so much easier for our employees with disabilities to collaborate and to participate. That same Organization has a really great program called the accessibility, accommodation, and adaptive computer technology Program.

We like acronyms and we call it AAAPT that they're a wonderful resource and they have all kinds of services that are designed to help people with disabilities. And they're available to support any department or organization and they give workshops and seminars on how do you create accessible documents it's just a great group. We're also about to launch a new directive so as I mentioned I'm at the Treasury board and my colleague, one of my deputy colleagues, there is the chief information officer. And they're about to introduce a new directive that is going to align our it standard, with the European standard, which is considered the gold standard in terms of acquiring or developing its solutions, and that is going to really make a difference because everybody's going to have to meet that standard.

I mentioned the challenges around service delivery well our big service organization called service Canada they've actually developed an accessibility roadmap. That will help them meet or exceed the requirements of the accessible Canada act and they're making huge changes to their service centers their training staff on accessibility and they're reviewing the way they communicate so we're really seeing some very interesting changes happening, then I mentioned culture change, I talked about how challenging that is.

One of the things that we're doing is working with our Canadian school public service, so they provide a lot of the learning and training for federal public servants. And they, we've been co-hosting with them in a series called spotlight on accessibility and again here's the thing that COVID has changed.

So before COVID, we were doing them in person and you don't get a lot of people at in-person events well now we've switched to everything being virtual. And we've gone from maybe having a few hundred people well now we're having thousands of people participating, which is amazing, in turn, when you're really trying to change a culture you're trying to raise awareness and understanding. And the last thing that we've done is we've created an online accessibility hub. And that's run out of my office and it's where all federal public service employees can find tips guidance tools, best practices on how you remove barriers.

So that's just a few of the things that we're doing and, as I mentioned I'm pretty pleased with the progress we've made in just two and a half years. And so, the Foundation is definitely in place, and I think it's helping us to lead by example, to improve the conditions for people with disabilities.

I want to talk a little bit more about COVID because there are a lot of unintended consequences. When I look at what we've learned about COVID and what we've learned about how all of a sudden, a whole lot of people had to cope. With an environment where they didn't necessarily have the tools that they need to work, they were they didn't feel as equipped as they could be and they had to figure out how to do it. I think it started to create a greater understanding of some of the challenges that people with disabilities face. And as we now start to think about our transition eventually out of COVID and think about the kind of country kind of public service that we want to create we were increasingly aware that people with disabilities have to be a part of that effort.

So I want to talk a little bit about the numbers. Not just population but let's talk about this from an economic perspective, so a wonderful man called Rich Donovan. I don't know if you've heard of him he's a former Wall Street trader and he's the CEO of the return on disability group and he's estimated that within a worldwide population of about 1.85 billion around the world. People with Disabilities constitute a market, the size of China and the European Union combined. And then, when you add in friends and family to that's another 3.4 billion potential consumers who have some kind of connection to disability. Altogether when you put that together they control over \$13 trillion in annual disposable income.

Here in Canada, as I mentioned we're about 22% so that is a market think about those 6 million people that's almost the size of the populations of Manitoba Saskatchewan and Alberta combined. And this number according to a report from TD economics, and I quote here is set to rise to one in four over the next two decades fueled by aging. So think about that we're going to get up to 25% others say that will be up to 30% by 2030.

As our understanding of disability grows and, frankly, as many people start to age into disabling conditions. So, you know that in Manitoba almost one in four people have some kind of connection to disability. Now here's the other important statistic nationwide only 59% of people with disabilities age 25 to 64 are employed and that's compared to about 80% of Canadians without disabilities that's a huge consequence when we think about under-employment. A conference Board of Canada noted the impact on the economy, it said that if we made some improvements to the workplace 550,000 Canadians with disabilities, would be able to work, and that would increase our GDP by 16 almost \$17 billion by 2030. So that's just a huge untapped potential, both from a financial perspective, but also from just a source of creativity.

You know when I look at people with disabilities and I know you're going to have a panel soon and you're going to hear from people with disabilities. They are the most creative resourceful and adaptable people, you will find you have to be when you work in an environment that a friend of mine says doesn't love you. You have to find workarounds so that you can survive, so if you're not including people with disabilities and your recruitment efforts you are missing out on a very rich pool of talent.

And you know it's something that some sectors of our economy have already figured out I look at the banks. We don't tend to think of the banks as charitable organizations right there during business they're there to make money. But they are really targeting the market of people with disabilities because they're looking for new markets and they're looking for inventive people to drive innovation and the economy of the future.

And our workplaces are changing another thing that we've learned from COVID is that everybody has unique needs and managers, need to be very flexible in developing with their employees that work arrangements that are going to work best for them. I think, in the end, it just makes us stronger and better.

So I'd like you to think about these questions as you continue with your conversations. How are diversity, inclusion, and accessibility embodied throughout your organization? At your highest levels if you're in the private sector, how representative is your board, how representative is middle management, and the working level? If people don't see themselves in your organization, then, are they ever going to want to come and work for you so it's really important to think about it.

Not just the number of people, you have in your organization, who come from diverse backgrounds, but where are they when you get that you get such a bang, for your buck in terms of that creativity that comes from people with very different lived experience and very different approaches to problem-solving.

So I want to maybe close because I'm conscious of time, and I think we want to get to the panel. I want you to think about how do you go about doing this everybody wants to do good everybody wants to improve lives. But too often, I find that really well-intentioned people end up wanting to do things for people, but too often we don't do things with people. And so that's why I have put so much emphasis on co-development and why, in fact, the name of our strategy is nothing without us, you will always get better results if you co-design with the people you're trying to help. And, that you know, working together and learning from each other's lived experience is really how you're going to get the best possible results.

And the other way is to not make accessibility, an afterthought, you have to bake it into what you're doing right from the start.

We like to say one of our catchphrases is accessible by default inclusive by design, if you do it right upfront, you are going to avoid costly do-overs in the future and you're going to make things better, not just for people with disabilities, but for everybody. So these are just a few of the examples of some of the stuff that we've done at the federal public service level.

I think I would just like to close and say. It really takes everybody. Being very deliberate and intentional about being accessible and inclusive and it's not about standards and legislation and rules it's about what each individual can do. One person in my life rented a ramp so that I could go to her house for the staff Christmas party. The first time

somebody has ever done that, for me, and it made a huge difference another time somebody assistant called my office to say, could you ask her where are the accessible restaurants, so that we can book our next meeting in a place that works for her. A small act that makes a profound difference, and so I would encourage all of you to think about what are the small acts that you can do. That will make a profound and meaningful difference and have better results for everybody. Alors, je vous remercie une fois, pour tous que vous faites, et pour tous que vous allez faire, pour faire avancer notre cause.

Yutta Fricke (MAO) at 00:38:51

Thank you so much, Deputy Minister Laroche. Just like the last time I heard Deputy Minister Laroche speak, I am totally inspired by her words, and I've taken down notes of the things that in our small Manitoba accessibility office that we will be following up on like the Microsoft Office. Training team, and some of the ideas that you have certainly in the Manitoba government, we have lots to learn from what you're doing, and we have lots of opportunities to collaborate our very next standards is an information and communications that we hope to be seeking public input about come September so maybe even earlier, so it will be really good to know what the Federal Government is doing, and we really appreciate.

The federal leadership that is going to change things for all of us across Canada, including. Through our transportation, CRTC, but it's so important that we see ourselves working together, and then I want to thank you. As well as Deputy Minister for the example you set personally and how even you ended your presentation today, I think, sometimes we all feel a little overwhelmed we want to do the right thing if we begin with small steps if we get begin by asking, we always say ask how can I help. Then I think the very the big things will be possible when one step at a time, so thank you very much for that inspirational presentation. And now I plan to ground us all in our accessibility standard for employment so that you get a sense of how the standard works overall in promoting a law and setting requirements for private-sector Shay if I could please have the PowerPoint back up.

Thanks, so this is my opportunity to provide a little bit of an overview and I should say right now that the accessibility standard for employment is our second standard. The

first targeted customer service, which was very relevant during COVID as well. The next standard I just mentioned, will target information communication, and then we still have two standards where our accessibility advisory council has offered recommendations. And we will be set up posting the same standards again for public input and transportation and in the design of public spaces. So right now, I'll focus only on the standard for employment, it was enacted on May 1st, 2019, it's the second standard under the AMA. That is the accessibility from the Manitobans act, so it acts like a regulation under law. It aims to remove and prevent barriers that affect current and future members of the Manitoba Labor force. It calls on all employers with one or more employees to have accessibility measures policies and practices to provide reasonable accommodations for employees and applicants seeking a job.

The accessibility standard for employment builds on existing requirements of the Manitoba human rights code, so that kind of reactive legislation requires a complaint, we're acting proactively. The standard helps organizations hire, support, and keep employees. And it applies to paid employees that are full-time, part-time apprentices, seasonal, and volunteers. You have them and the image on the right is of a man in his wheelchair speaking across the desk to a woman who is seated.

Safety comes first, to ensure the safety of employees with disabilities, all employers in the public, private non-profit sectors must comply with the following requirements. And this was just as we entered our pandemic on May 1st, 2020. Employers must create emergency response information to help employees with disabilities stay safe during emergencies and we are in a public health emergency so COVID is included. And employers must ask employees who require assistance during an emergency permission to share information with individuals who agree to help. So, during COVID, it may be that as other people return to the office people with an immune deficiency cannot do that and need a different kind of a plan. We have a workplace emergency response information toolkit that would guide you right through this, including sample memos, templates, etc.

So, the employer requirements are not that many and are well categorized, so I'm going to run through those quickly. So, in the area of recruitment employers must inform applicants that reasonable accommodations are available, upon request they must also offer and provide reasonable accommodations to individuals participating in any

selection process. Upon hiring they must notify new hires about the organization's policies for accommodating and employees with disabilities in the workplace. In terms of training, employers must train the staff who have responsibilities in the recruitment selecting and supervising of personnel, as well as those people who are involved in setting policies or training content.

The focus of the accessibility standard for employment is on accommodations. So, to provide reasonable accommodations employers must inform employees about accommodation policies and provide updates when these policies change. They must also offer to provide information in accessible formats and with communication supports so a format might be electronic for some people, it might be spoken in plain language, for others which act as communication support if requested. An employer must develop an individualized accommodation plan for an employee who faces a barrier. The employer must also consider how a workplace accommodation supports and employees' opportunities for training and advancement. And must remove a barrier affecting job performance, so that it's basically a level playing field all across the employment experience.

The return-to-work requirements actually follow those of the worker's compensation board. And that is that you must create a policy that sets out the steps to reintroduce an employee who has been absent from work due to a disability. And you must describe the process, the employer will follow to determine whether and what reasonable accommodation is necessary to support an employee and returning to work. The image to the right is of two men and hardhats pointing up at a building, I think one is holding a phone and the other clipboard. There are additional requirements for large employers, so that includes all public sector organizations such as crown corporations, regional health authorities, colleges universities, schools, as well as large municipalities, but not small municipalities. So, these organizations and any not-for-profit organization or business with 50 or more employees must document and writing all accessible employment policies and practices. Including the content and timeframe for training, they must also make these documents public and accessible for the well publicly available and accessible. For anyone who is requesting them so here, I want to add that not many organizations and Manitoba have more than 50 employees. But policy and the requirements that we set out are very hard to pass on from one person to another by word of mouth, so it is a best practice to write these down to make sure they're

consistent and shared as you acquire new employees, and you redeploy. Make sure everybody knows that you are proud to be an inclusive employer.

So here are the timelines and you will note that already the Manitoba government and the public sector organizations that I mentioned are complying or on their way to complying with the accessibility standard for employment. The Manitoba government had a deadline of May 2020 and the public sector organizations just this past month May 2021. So, in the meantime, private sector non-profit organizations and small municipalities still have about 11 months more till May 2022 next slide, please. But we don't want you to be worried about these deadlines and the support requirements, because there are plenty of resources available to help you on your way, and some of these things, we think you're already doing.

So, some of the newest resources, and I'm very proud to show an image to the right of our new online learning portal. Where you'll see that there is training for accessible customer service currently in an HTML version, in the future, it will also be in a learning management system. So larger organizations can integrate it into their training and it was mentioned by Minister Squires that the training includes the voices of mandatory ones with disabilities. And certificates, so that you can actually track who's taken the training, we are still finishing up the next. Training module on accessible employment and that will be coming to you and we hope and then next couple of months, another new resource on our accessibilityMB.ca website is a minister's annual plan for 2021 22 and 2022 23 there you'll find our plans to develop and implement future accessibility standards and our commitment to making Manitoba accessible significantly more accessible by December 2023.

We also have in there a banner showing here on the screen of accessibility during covert 19 where we take our customer service standard unemployment standard and show how to consider these things and those requirements. During a pandemic, so it please if you're interested born in what this means during covert see our information, all of these resources are the ones so far are on our homepage and the following resources are on the tab for employment under either non-profit in business or public sector. So there you'll find a workplace emergency response toolkit. You'll find the employers handbook and sample accessibility employment policy templates that you

can fill in a guide to create an individualized accommodation plan and process and policy and we're also really pleased.

By having Manitoba disability Community help us and creating actually we have two different videos that this one is on accessibility in the workplace. And if anyone needs a lunch and learn it's a great tool to use only six minutes to have a discussion about what accessibility looks like in your organization. All of these resources as soon as we load them up within a week we will advertise them in accessibility news. There you'll find all the latest information as well on consultations on our accessibility standards. And I know many people are very interested right now in the Manitoba accessibility fund. So it was just launched in March we're currently working on the guidelines checking in with some stakeholders to make sure it's effective for Community organizations. And it's basically guided by the principles and the standards of the Accessibility for Manitobans act so eventually we hope by April 2022. There will be a grant process available for not-for-profit organizations, as well as for business and some public sector organizations, not crown corporations. So, all those guidelines will be set out, and we hope you make use of what is a \$20 million endowment fund, we will use the interest on that fund on an annual basis, to create new projects at the Community level and that are targeted specifically to your audience.

That ends my presentation about the standard. And I loved what Deputy Minister said – that it is with people with disabilities, asking, talking, finding out about their experience of your workplace, your organization, and your client experience that you will have the best expertise to guide your way forward, and for that reason, I'm especially pleased that today I'm able to introduce Rosalie Best, who is the accessibility services coordinator for the Manitoba league of persons with disabilities, who is the facilitator for our panel discussion. I want to add that the Manitoba league or MLPD is a provincial not for profit organization that promotes accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities and will MLPD educates and offers expertise on a wide range of topics and issues related to inclusion and accessibility so with that welcome Rosalie

Rosalie Best at 00:53:11

Hi, thank you so much for having me and having MLPD at this event. I might give a little bit of a background on myself really quickly. Before I was an accessibility services

coordinator for MLPD, I was a career counselor for people with disabilities, I worked in a cross-disability and bilingual environment, and so I kind of got to see a lot of Manitoba employment kind of I guess practices. And I remember thinking oh if I could only get in the room, with the employers and just make them see why they should hire my people And so now coming to MLPD and offering training for employers and being able to talk to them is a wonderful opportunity to do that. But I'm here to facilitate not talking about myself at length, so I will introduce our panelists and if I want to see your name, you could just kind of wave, so people know who I'm talking about So today we have Erika Rodeck

Erika Rodeck at 00:54:17

Hi everyone!

Rosalie Best at 00:54:20

Erika has been blind since birth and she currently works as an intern with the Canadian National Institute for the blind foundation come to work program where she contacts employers to encourage them to hire individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Her previous work experience includes volunteering as an administrative assistant and a research intern in the newsroom of a local radio station. Erika has also been involved as an advocate in the disability community, looking for work has presented many challenges for her but her goal is to find permanent full time employment welcome Erika.

Erika Rodeck at 00:54:55

Thank you!

Rosalie Best at 45:58

Next up, we have Samantha Rayburn-Trubyk. Samantha is an HR advisor and accessibility manager at price industries limited. In her spare time she's President of Little People of Manitoba and spends much of her free time advocating for little people in North America. In addition to her duties in Manitoba Samantha sits on the advocacy

committee for little people of America and co hosts slash co created a zoom group for North American parents raising children born with dwarfism. The group saying is to ensure that all kids born with dwarfism are raised, knowing they are perfect in their bodies and don't need any sort of fix. Samantha and her son were born with I sorry I come to a place which is a form of dwarfism and she has much pride in her disability and wants to share it with everyone she meets. Samantha's completing a master's degree in disability studies at the University of Manitoba and lives in Winnipeg with her husband son and their few dogs.

Next up is Josh Watt and for the past six years josh has served as the Executive Director of the Manitoba school boards association. Following a 15 year career as a public servant for the federal and provincial governments. He's proud to serve as a member of the accessibility Advisory Council, and one of two public interest representatives on the continuing competency committee of the College of registered nurses of Manitoba. Josh holds a bachelor of arts and on with honors in law and political science from Carleton, masters of public administration, from the University of Winnipeg and a master of education from the University of Manitoba. And a master level certification and peace support operations through the United Nations Institute for training and research. He was recently named a fellow of the Royal Society of arts in the UK and is currently completing the final capstone for the public leadership credential at the Harvard Kennedy School of government. As a person with Asperger's syndrome josh has a profound believer in promoting accessibility for all Manitoba he believes there's always room for correct progress in recognizing those persons who said their abilities are visible and sometimes invisibles. Josh brings a lifetime firsthand experience concerning the opportunities our communities can provide for all persons who may be need of accessibility. And through today's panel, he hopes to share career lessons about what employers can do to accommodate those employees whose accessibility requirements might be obscure or overlooked, due to the end visibility of 13.

And last but certainly not least, we have Bill Tucker!

Bill Tucker at 00:57:48

Hi everybody.

Rosalie Best at 00:57:51

Bill joined the client service and support team environmental approvals branch conservation and climate at the Manitoba government on a second month from his role as career development consultant with skills and employment partnerships. Prior to the six years with the provincial government Bill spent 10 years with Manitoba liquor and lotteries and surveillance department and 10 years with Manitoba start. Bill enjoys spending time volunteering, including being on the board of directors of management possible and working with reaching equality employment services Inc, otherwise known as REES there's never a dull moment at Bills home, which includes his wife to teenagers and a variety of pets, including three dogs five aquariums two turtles to guinea pigs and two parrots. Bill, just a quick aside you're in good company I have approximately the same amount of animals. I've never met anyone else so good to have you here today okay so let's just jump right into these questions.

I'm going to be alternating starting with Samantha. All right here we go. So Samantha what accessibility barriers to you or have you faced in the workplace?

Samantha Rayburn-Trubyk at 00:59:08

So for me most of my barriers are due to my height, I was born with achondroplasia, which is a form of dwarfism and so, most of my barriers are either things that are too high, things that are placed right or even just attitudinal barriers so most of my barriers really are limited to my physical disability.

Rosalie Best at 00:58:31

Thank you and Bill. What accessibility barriers do you face in the workplace?

Bill Tucker at 00:59:40

The majority of their barriers that I've been facing have been twofold. One of them comes from the fact that when I first started working, I was what you might call a normal person I had no there was no visible aspect to my disabilities. And then I was diagnosed, three years ago. And once that diagnosis was disclosed, I became a

different person in the workplace, for some reason I'm not sure why. The second thing is, I have a service animal now that works with me and goes with me pretty much everywhere. She was here earlier but she decided that she wanted to quit and go and have a lay down.

And so, the barriers, there are primarily two: having an animal with you in the workplace on a permanent basis in the workplace, not necessarily knowing how to work with that, and how to accommodate an animal in the workplace.

Rosalie Best at 1:00:48

Thank you. Erika what accessibility barriers, do you face in the workplace?

Erika Rodeck at 1:00:54

Most of the barriers that I faced in the workplace in terms of accessibility relate to the recruitment process, and also the onboarding process. I use a screen reader called jaws and I find that a lot of the time when I apply for jobs, I'm able to submit my application and everything's great.

Until I get an email like an automated email saying that okay congratulations I've submitted my application now I need to do an assessment, and when I go into the link where they have the assessment. I find that it's not accessible and when I've contacted the employer to explain my situation. I either don't get a response or I'm told that they can't accommodate me and sometimes I'm even challenged on whether or not I'd be able to do the job anyway.

I've also had some issues with interviews even prior to COVID I found that sometimes, there was a reluctance to guide me to and from the interview room and within the building. And, of course, if I was hired I would take steps to learn to navigate a building independently, but when I've never been to a place before I'm going to need some assistance with navigation. And I also find that a lot of the time employers just aren't aware of how to interact with people who are blind or partially sighted, so I can think of one example, where I went to an interview, and I was entering the place where I was going to be interviewed. And suddenly, I felt this thing on my forehead I didn't know

what it was I figured out fairly quickly that the woman was trying to take my temperature, but it would have been helpful if she would have told me that.

So just those kind of things that just add up and make things a little bit more difficult. I also find that a lot of the time it's the technology. So, I was in a work situation where attitude wise, they were wonderful they were very inclusive, I was definitely part of the team, but I wasn't able to do the onboarding process because of the technology and the lack of accessibility.

Rosalie Best at 01:02:58

Thank you and Josh what accessibility barriers, do you face in the workplace?

Josh Watt at 01:03:04

Thank you so much Rosalie and it's a pleasure to be here, so thank you for the invitation. For me the manifestation of Asperger's is palpable in many different ways, and when you look at a job you'll often see that one of the big criteria for any job is having a driver's license or access to transportation. And for some people with Asperger's, including myself, the spatial temporal dimension of our cognitive processing the sensory inputs that are coming at us every second have prohibited me from ever acquiring a driver's license or being able to drive a car so during my lengthy career, which has taken me across the continent to various places. I have always had accommodations made in order to help me to get from place to place or city to city, and I have never felt the need. You know, to try and pursue that myself it's always been something that people have helped me with you know colleagues have been there to provide transportation when it is needed there's an expectation that if I'm going to attend a meeting you know I will have the time ability to take transit to go there. And those are pretty important accommodations you know, beyond the social emotional and behavioral cognitive dimensions of Asperger's. Which I can't tell you, if you've ever watched the good doctor or you know big bang theory or you've seen the Temple Grandin movie you know that those are many different manifestations of Asperger's based on the autism spectrum disorder spectrum.

So, I won't share all of the different accommodations that I've had, but I think in terms of the transportation piece that one, most of all, has had the largest impact on how I have experienced barriers and how employers have been able to accommodate that.

Rosalie Best at 01:05:30

Thank you Josh and I actually just going to quickly say I agree as a person who is a wheelchair user and doesn't have her license. I found my way around needing a driver's license many a time and it is definitely something that's come up for people disabilities who can't get a license or for people who can't get a license with disability or not. So Samantha What was it like to start the conversation about workplace accommodation and are you now comfortable disclosing a disability?

Samantha Rayburn-Trubyk at 01:05:42

So yeah, I'll go in two parts, my younger self was very awkward. You know when you meet me, I'm not somebody that can put on a fake mustache or top hat and hide in the crowd. You know when you meet me, you know, I have a disability either you see it, or you can hear that I'm coming from a less than average location. So it's not something that I can't disclose when it's just so obvious. When I've applied for jobs in the past and I'm talking to my younger self and I've disclosed it, there are times more times than not where I'm not getting a callback. When I haven't disclosed it in the past I've gotten a call back so you know take that for what it's worth. Now I haven't applied for a job in a very long time, so I'm hoping that that has changed. I'm a lot more comfortable in my skin now than I was you know in my early 20s and I'm somebody that's very. You know, I have a lot of pride in my disability and pride in who I am. So I have no issues disclosing it. I have no issues, having that conversation at work, I work for a great employer who wants to have that conversation with me who, you know my first two weeks hooked me up with an ergonomist, you know right out right out of the gate they wanted to accommodate me and make sure that I was comfortable here. That I was you know I had everything I needed cost wasn't a factor, they wanted to make sure that I knew that they knew that they wanted me to feel valuable and that goes a huge way that's so important for someone with a disability. I can tell you at past jobs where I've had that conversation about accommodations where they've initiated it. And perhaps it's come across you know I've made some recommendations, nothing outlandish but the

comments that I've gotten where it's a little expensive here's your consolation prize of a stool. So, it's nice to know, you know it's nice to be somewhere where I've just felt so valued right from the get go.

Rosalie Best at 01:07:53

Yeah absolutely! Bill what was it like for you to start that conversation and are you comfortable disclosing your disability?

Bill Tucker at 01:08:04

Starting the conversation in the workplace, I was initially very open about it because I really didn't know the impact of having a hidden disability in the workplace. I didn't know I had one for 30 years. And so I'm, I have a very trusting nature, and I was very open, I was very honest and I disclosed as much as I could in the workplace and that kind of sort of came back and bit me in the butt a little bit. People didn't understand necessarily what the disability was or what the expectations of that disability were, or how to deal with it, and so that became sort of a bit of a tension between employee and employer, if you like as to my comfort with disclosing my disability, it depends on the environment, it depends on who I'm talking to where I am. Because of because of Jackie my service dog she is the visible part of my disability you see a dog walking up to you, and they have a service dog jacket on a service dog based on. The assumption is that the person with that dog has a disability of some kind, because it's not visible I very often get asked well what's wrong with you.

My knee jerk reaction to that is it's none of your business. But I also understand that people need to learn what it is to have a disability, when you see Jackie she's not a typical service dog she's a small Jack Russell terrier. So she's not a black lab she's not a golden retriever she's not a German shepherd, and so the assumption is that this isn't a real situation, so I understand that people need to be educated into that situation. But, I need to have the understanding during that conversation it's very difficult for me to talk about that because. For 50 odd years I thought of myself as being a normal person. And then somebody comes along and says Oh yes, you have this and it was a huge shock to me. As much to anyone else who has known me throughout those 50 years so.

Now I'm a little more comfortable with disclosing it. I kind of I've owned it I've learned how to respond to people. But it's still not I wouldn't go into a cocktail party and use as an icebreaker.

Rosalie Best at 01:11:19

Thank you, and not to put you on the spot, but I want to say when Bill uses normal it's in her inferred that it's quote unquote normal.

Bill Tucker at 01:11:30

Exactly.

Rosalie Best at 01:11:31

I know that, because from our last time we talked, and then Erica can you please tell us about starting conversations I was combination and just be cognizant of the time?
Thank you!

Erika Rodeck at 01:11:44

For me it really depends on the environment that I'm in this might sound a little bit strange to people, but I actually find that sometimes it's more difficult when I'm within a disability organization or a disability environment because I find that even unconsciously certain assumptions are being made about what people's needs are based on their disabilities and sometimes even though people are very well meaning and well intentioned. I feel that I'm sort of indirectly being compared to other people who have disabilities or other people who have a disability that's seen a similar to mine. Whereas I find that when I'm not in a disability environmental organization, maybe I'm the first disabled person that someone has met so everything's new and they're very open to learning and accommodating me in whatever way is needed in order for me to do my work. For me, the question of disclosure isn't really something that I think about a lot because I'm pretty much always out. People can tell by my white cane and the way my eyes are and the way that I navigate through space that, I have a vision impairment, so

it's not really something that I can hide and even in my resume and cover letter because I don't have a lot of work experience, most of the experience that I list is related to volunteering with disability organizations. So, it's something that I feel like I'm always kind of disclosing but I don't emphasize it in a way that focuses on the things that I can't do or I don't frame it as a weakness. I just frame it as okay it's part of myself part of who I am it's not all of who I am it's the same as having brown hair and yes it's part of me but there's so much more to me.

Rosalie Best at 1:13:40

Thank you so much! Josh tell me about your experience with workers, accommodation and if you're comfortable disclosing.

Josh Watt at 1:13:47

Sure, well like Bill, for most of my life my diagnosis was not made, and so I went through life, you know with the manifestations of Asperger's not knowing what exactly it was, and neither did my mother who raised me as a single mother. And so having the conversation with employers, it can be challenging because, frankly, nobody who interacts with me beyond knowing that there's quirky behaviors or responses. Whoever assumes that I'm a person who is in need of accommodations or accessibility so frankly the last job interview that I had which is my current job, I actually did not disclose to them during the interview process that I was in need of accommodation, because I was absolutely certain that that would prohibit me from obtaining the job. I disclosed it after the job offer was made and, as I pointed out to them, they did not specifically request a driver's license in the statement of qualifications on the profile. And that was important for me to be able to prove myself to them and undertaking the work that I knew I could do without having my own transportation, and they accepted that.

And it was a bit of a challenging conversation at first, I can see that, when I disclose the need for the accommodation, there were some sideways glances between people on the hiring panel and yet at the same time, I think that's what has borne out during the last six years of my employment has confirmed that I am able to do that job. And so, really, I think it's unfortunate that you cannot feel open and having those conversations with an employer who's able to create a culture where any job applicant knows that they

will not be screened out of a competition or there will be no judgment or assessment against them as a result of having need of an accommodation, regardless of whether it's a visible or invisible ability is something that is a prime consideration.

Rosalie Best at 1:16:14

Thank you, I was often asked as a career coach from my clients with invisible disabilities, whether they should disclose, and I never had an answer for that Sam did you want to add something to that.

Samantha Rayburn-Trubyk at 1:16:27

I would just say I've often wrestled with myself in terms of not wanting to appear as being high maintenance and really having to work on that honestly from my younger self going don't ask for anything you're going to appear to high maintenance you don't want them to fire you like just grateful for the job. So you know currently going know I deserve that I need that accommodation I'll be better at my job without accommodation so it's switching the mindset yeah.

Rosalie Best at 1:16:157

I fully agree with that same thing here I would often buy my own thing sometimes it's just not tell them yeah okay so with that said, based on your experience in the workplace, what do you what are steps that you think a workplace can take to create a culture accessibility to everyone? What would be your message to employers and, if you want to throw something in there about COVID and what we've learned from it that accommodation wise, please do so Samantha go.

Samantha Rayburn-Trubyk at 1:16:27

I have, so much so, what I would say to employers is no you don't know what ableism means, understand that your words matter. Take a look at your policies or procedures or guidelines or signage and you're building all of that. And see and take a look and understand if you're being you know, ableist if you're having policies and procedures that are unknowingly excluding people or not being inclusive to everybody.

So that's where I would start for sure. I'd also say you know don't question somebody regarding the validity of their disability meaning, you know whether you believe them or not is irrelevant that's not your concern. I would also, you know work with your employee I know this has been said before, but work with your employee. Ask your employee how they can be accommodated they're going to be the best person to talk to don't assume that you know what's best for them in terms of an accommodation and work closely with your employee think of disability as any other marginalized group right.

And unfortunately, we know that disabilities still you know lag behind in the workplace, and we know that folks with disabilities have so much value and can contribute so much and want to contribute so much. So don't be scared of anything accommodate what you can accommodate everything and let your employees soar.

Finally, I'd say you know, be the leader that goes against the grain, again, we know that folks with disabilities have a difficult time in the workplace still. Don't be that leader that contributes to that you know don't be that leader that says you value inclusiveness and you value diversity in the workplace, but then don't really actually value diversity and inclusion in the workplace, your actions matter wholeheartedly.

Rosalie Best at 1:19:21

Thank you, and then Bill, I just want to say, we only actually have a few more minutes so if you can share your experiences there for the rest of you just saying like maybe a minute or less, they'll be great starting with Bill.

Bill Tucker at 1:19:39

You really want to try and keep me short on that one.

Rosalie Best at 1:19:42

I don't want to I'm sorry we're running out of time.

Bill Tucker at 1:19:39

That's fine that's fine. So the advice I have for employers is what Samantha said ask what the needs are, my point to that would be asked the right questions learn what the right questions, are first. One of the things that one of the experiences I had when I first brought my service dog to work was does she have fleas or ticks? Where are you going to take her to the bathroom? Does she have all of her inoculations? Those aren't the concerns around my disability, those are my concerns with regard to the tool I use to manage my disability I don't think anyone would ask, have you greased your wheelchair wheels recently are the seats secured properly. You wouldn't ask that right, those are the wrong questions to be asking so as an employer, if you want to be helpful to someone asked the right question.

Rosalie Best at 1:20:49

Thank you Erica.

Erika Rodeck at 1:20:51

I would say understand that disability can be something of value and can really be an asset to the workplace, instead of thinking of it as a liability. All people need assistance from time to time, whether or not they have disabilities and most people with disabilities really strive for independence. So this idea that they're going to need help all the time and going to need to be guided, all the time, definitely isn't true.

Really normalize accommodation, I mean people don't question it when maybe Somebody needs an ergonomic chair or this person needs to be by the window and this other person likes the lights on, or off or I mean, I would like us to get to a point where something like a screen reader is just seen as normal, because a lot of these things aren't expensive there are actually screen readers that can be downloaded for free and there are a lot of other accommodations there aren't expensive so don't assume that you're going to have to spend a fortune. And be creative as we've talked about throughout this discussion COVID has really taught us that it is possible to work remotely and a lot of things that people thought weren't possible from home actually are so. As people are saying ask what people need don't assume and be really receptive

and understand that somebody who experiences, the world in a different way from how you experience it can bring something really valuable to the table.

Rosalie Best at 1:22:15

Thank you, Josh.

Josh Watt at 1:13:47

No, I would really echo what all of the panelists have said but Sam said something that really resonated with me, based on my current studies in leadership and there's multiple dimensions of leadership that are exercised within the workplace every day. And some is formal authority and some as moral authority, but at the end of the day, everyone is a leader in their own right and everybody is called upon to exercise that moral leadership. And I think that what I learned the most out of Harvard University, which is very ironic for somebody who was processing of social emotional inputs is a little bit difficult is that the true ingredient of success the unifying theory of all leadership is love. And when you exercise that quality towards your fellow human being, when you recognize the inherent dignity and worth and value of all of your employees and those who applied to your positions, you will realize that that in itself is a cultural shift that still has to be undertaken in the workplace, today, and I think bears repeat very carefully in this particular context.

Rosalie Best at 1:23:30

Thank you, Josh, I've just been told, we have some more minutes, I will do the last question, after all, and so what would your message be to employees with disabilities Sam?

Samantha Rayburn-Trubyk at 1:23:48

Sam's good. I would say a couple things, I would say, ask for what you need so really you know put your hand up or speak to your employer, but ask for what you need. And the second thing I would say is find yourself a mentor find yourself somebody who can you know you can talk to somebody who you can who gets it. Somebody who you can

share experiences with and get some guidance from but find yourself a mentor and they can help guide you through some of these situations that are a bit you know sticky for lack of a better word. So I think those would be the two things that I would say you know.

Bill Tucker at 01:24:29

My suggestion would be. Be brave. When I was first diagnosed, I was terrified it shocked me it frightened me people started to treat me differently, and so I started to shrink away from it cursing the disability being very, very upset and started eating starting to become depressed about it. I've learned that's just that's just a knee jerk reaction to it. Being brave standing up for yourself getting what you need to ask for is the best advice that I could give you you're not abnormal you're just other normal.

Rosalie Best at 01:25:14

Awesome Thank you and Erica.

Erika Rodeck at 01:25:17

I would definitely echo what Sam and bill have both said about being assertive I know firsthand that it can be difficult. Especially if you're new in a position and you're trying to impress people and you are a little bit self conscious and you don't want to seem like you can't do your job, but the truth is that you'll be better at your job. If you have all the accommodations that you need so really get to a place where you can ask for that, and I know that it's hard for a lot of people with disabilities to get to a place where they feel comfortable with who they are, I know, for many people that can take years and I think that's totally understandable. However, I think that the more comfortable that you are with yourself and the more comfortable, you are. Accepting yourself and your disability and all of the other ways that you identify that's going to show outwardly and the more comfortable, you are with yourself, the more comfortable people will be around you.

Rosalie Best at 01:26:09

Thank you, and finally Josh.

Josh Watt at 01:26:12

I would say, as somebody who's gone on 40 years now, without largely disclosing. The other abilities that I have certainly being assertive and speaking what your requirements and your needs might be is absolutely prime. I think that when you learn to communicate with others in a straightforward and frank manner that is to everyone's mutual interest then the workplaces enhanced and at you as an employee are enhanced as well by that so certainly I echo everything that Bill Erica and Sam have shared.

Rosalie Best at 01:26:53

Well, thank you so much for sharing and for being as I want to say, maybe quote unquote vulnerable with us, I know that it's important for people to hear our stories. And you know how important it is to have people with disabilities in the workplace, so with that being said, I'm going to pass it back over to you, oh sorry we're out of time, but I'm going to pass it over to you to, and thank you so much to our panelists.

Yutta Fricke (MAO) at 01:27:00

Thank you. Yeah, it always seems when we have a panel we don't offer enough time but, you have shared your experiences and just as Rosalie said, have made yourself vulnerable and that's where we're learning happens, and I think in an event, where we start. We started today by expressing our grief and we ended by expressing that love is the answer. I think like what an amazing MAAW event that is and you know what my deep thanks to all of the panelists I, we have a couple of slides to go back to I know it we've just hit 3:31 and if we could go to the PowerPoint just so that we, we end the next slide please just with the Thank you that we want to say to all the people who participated. And just to remind you, I was looking at the chat line and so many people panelists know that there was a lot of expression of gratitude, for you, sharing your stories and giving those messages today. So, I know a lot of our audience today really appreciate that, if anybody has any questions and there is a number posted here again 204-945-7613 in Winnipeg. And please contact us or using the contact information on

accessibilityMB.ca which we provided earlier, and we can also provide you information about MLPD that actually gives workshops regularly, and whereas you know we're really pleased to share our tools and our online learning we provide that at the Manitoba Accessibility Office as a base.

You know today from having heard the voices of people living with these experiences and facing barriers, that nothing replaces that and nor does really legislation. I always think that the best move ever in Manitoba and across the country is to have inclusive classrooms. When you know that there's diversity in our community, and that we are a community, that's even be moved from your heart and what we always say is that attitude is the biggest barrier so break that one down and we will have an inclusive society. I have a last slide just to thank some folks. So I want to thank by name or excellent panelists and our keynote speaker, who was Yazmine Laroche.

Our facilitator today was Rosalie Best. And our panelists were Bill Tucker, Erika Rodeck, Josh Watt, Samantha Rayburn. The combination of your comments, was excellent, thank you also to the ASL interpreters, who always does such a great job for us.

Right I actually told the ASL interpreters, I will not read this long list, but you can see how many different organizations and if you can't see it the slide will be provided later we have 14 organizations that participate in the Manitoba accessibility advisory network that supports those of us in our office with their opinions insights. Promoting our events so we truly appreciate that and just to let all of you know, will that whereas our event today's over Manitoba Accessibility Awareness Week is a full week and you can also visit our website again accessibilityMB.ca to access the social media toolkit or visit Facebook or Twitter page of the Manitoba government or one of our partners and just keep this conversation going, we often started with accessibility means you know it to each person.

I think, to all amount of tokens not people who identify accessibility means something else, so, so please engage let everybody know that In the end, it's a majority of people that I think it's everyone who needs accessibility. At least some of the time, if not all the time and aging into disabilities is the good news story.

So with that I'm going to pass it back to Erika who's just going to end and it's for our own purposes to get a sense of who's coming to our event. So there'll be a little polling. There was one more slide and in the image of that slide that's Okay, Shay. You see, the group that put on Manitoba access Awareness Week from the Manitoba accessibility office last year when John Wyndels, who is picture to the left and the wheelchair, he was still with us he retired last week, and Colleen Watters, and myself and not even sure who, that is.

Erika Vas (MAO) at 01:32:16

That's actually Tracy, Tracy' shadow, yep that's Tracy.

Yutta Fricke (MAO) at 01:32:25

So I want to thank, thank you for jumping in there and our two interns last year, this year it's Drew Weber so thanks, we have a very small team with very big ambitions also joined by the compliance secretariat so thank you all. These are highlights, for us, these events, when we get to be with our community and let's hope that by October, when we celebrate DEAM it will be in person.