CRWDP Policy Roundtable
November 19, 2015

Ron's speaking notes

Opening remarks

- Welcome to our session on policy coordination.

- As some of you know, yesterday we held a roundtable of policy officials from provincial and federal governments or government agencies, with the leadership of CRWDP and its provincial clusters also present.

- The goal of this roundtable was not to identify recommendations for policy change. Rather it was to begin a dialogue among policy officials involved in the administration of disability programs and the leadership of the CRWDP. We expect that this dialogue will enhance the quality and relevance of future research undertaken by the Centre, and may be the beginning of a network for further dialogue and information sharing as the work of the Centre moves forward.

- The focus of the RT was on the topic of this session: how to improve coordination and navigability of disability programs to facilitate participation in the labour force.

- Broadly speaking, coordination might be viewed as the way different disability programs interact and navigability is about the ease with which individual clients can identify the program(s) most suitable for them as well as move within and between programs when their circumstances change. We are interested in these in the context of the larger objective of better supporting people, when disabled, to participate in the labour force.

- I'll briefly recap now some of the key ideas we heard yesterday.

  1. CRWDP should articulate a vision of the characteristics of a good system: what would be the parameters of success.
  2. Strong message on the need for plain language information about how to navigate the array of disability programs--potentially a portal and also the idea of providing, in complex cases, a "navigator".
  3. This was connected to the idea of facilitating seamless transitions—helping people move from one program to another as their circumstances change, and ensuring continuity of supports to participate in employment, even if the form of income support changes.
  4. Strong sense of continuing to have dialogue with people about their lived experience and what was compelling to have real stories of complex histories and their experience with the system.

5. Involving and dialogue with people delivering the services – on the front line – both the clients on the front lines and the service deliverers. If want policy implemented as intended.

6. Regarding future research, some people noted that we have some important gaps in data on the experience of disabled persons, and CRWDP could play a role in identifying those data gaps and calling the attention of governments (and perhaps Statistics Canada to the).

7. Research questions – look at experience of other jurisdictions, learn from the work underway on past efforts at reform, and examine eligibility rules of programs in detail and assess where they have a strong rationale and where they don't.

8. How get people to pay attention to the work that gets done – ongoing engagement of policy officials and government ministers at multiple levels so that as research emerges, key people not surprised and there is an appetite to use it.