

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR RACIALIZED DISABLED WORKERS

WHAT WE KNOW



Estimates from Statistics Canada (2020) indicate that among **racialized disabled individuals between the ages of 25 to 64 years, 49.9% have the potential to work** but are currently unemployed, highlighting an urgent need to better understand the intersectionality of race and disability in the context of employment supports.*

WHAT WE DID



LITERATURE REVIEW
We reviewed the existing international literature on race and disability within employment supports or vocational rehabilitation programs.



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
We interviewed key stakeholders about their experiences, including employers, employment service providers and racialized disabled job seekers.

WHAT WE FOUND



NEED FOR INTERSECTIONAL SUPPORT
Racialized disabled job seekers and workers often encounter employment barriers unique to their intersecting identities. Support systems that do not adapt to these needs are less effective.



TRAINING GAPS
Service providers need increased training and resources to understand and address the combined impact of race and disability on employment outcomes.



SYSTEMIC ISSUES
Organizational policies often fail to account for the lived experiences of underrepresented populations, reinforcing social and structural inequities.

WHAT IT MEANS

FLAWED STANDARDIZED SUPPORT SYSTEM
Employment support systems that help people find and keep jobs, and advance their careers are standardized, limiting their responsiveness to individual needs. This rigid approach overlooks the complex barriers faced by individuals who experience the combined effects of both racism and ableism, resulting in lower employment opportunities and reduced job quality.

DISCRIMINATION ON MULTIPLE FRONTS
Racialized disabled workers experience discrimination on multiple fronts, which creates unique barriers. Without intersectional support, employment programs fail to address the real-world, compounded impacts of both race and disability, which contribute to lower job quality, reduced job security, and fewer advancement opportunities.

LOST ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES
Economic opportunities are lost by excluding job seekers and workers with intersecting identities. Diverse teams drive productivity, foster innovation, and bring unique perspectives that lead to better problem-solving and decision-making.

LACK OF TRAINING
Service providers often lack training to address the combined impact of race and disability, leading to inequitable support, and reducing employment opportunities.



RECOMMENDATIONS



FLEXIBLE, PERSONALIZED SUPPORT
Develop employment programs that directly address the combined impacts of racism and ableism. Employment support services must be adaptable through assessing and providing personalized career coaching, mentorship, and accommodations that reflect both racialized and disability-related needs.



ENHANCED SERVICE PROVIDER TRAINING
Educate service providers on the nuanced and intersectional impacts of both racism and ableism to deliver more effective, respectful, and culturally aware services. Use real-world case studies, experiential learning, and direct input from racialized disabled workers to improve understanding.



POLICY REFORMS
Develop employment policies that foster equitable access to supports for meaningful and sustainable employment for racialized disabled individuals. Push for stronger enforcement of existing employment equity laws, with clear accountability measures for organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

To foster an inclusive workforce, it is critical that employment support systems evolve to meet the intersectional needs of racialized disabled workers. Implementing flexible, personalized approaches and addressing systemic barriers will pave the way for more equitable and sustainable employment outcomes.

NEXT STEPS

To extend the impact of our research, we will focus on educating service providers through targeted workshops and information sessions.



These sessions will equip them with key insights on the barriers faced by racialized disabled job seekers and provide actionable strategies to improve employment supports.



By fostering dialogue and practical learning, we aim to bridge knowledge gaps and drive more inclusive and effective employment services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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