

ORDER OF EXCELLENCE



MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK\* RECIPIENT



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

# **Employment for People Living with Mental Illness**

## **Workshop**

**Halifax, Nova Scotia**

**Date: June 19, 2018**

**Conference: Canadian Association for  
Supported Employment Annual  
Conference**

**Summary Report**

## INTRODUCTION

On June 19, 2018 the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) hosted a one-day workshop in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This workshop brought together over 100 people consisting of supported employment professionals, employers, people with lived experience, researchers, social enterprises, and experts from across Canada to explore opportunities for greater engagement and collaboration focused on addressing the complex employment needs of individuals living with mental illness. The discussions surrounding the workshop were captured by a graphic recorder which can be found in Appendix 1. The goals of this workshop were to:

- Deepen our understanding of the many supported employment models that currently exist to support people living with a mental illness find and sustain meaningful employment;
- Feature the results of an MHCC led national environmental scan of supported employment organizations across Canada that sought to determine where and how evidence-based approaches are being implemented to support individuals living with a mental illness to get into the workforce;
- Identify systemic barriers that affect the success of supportive employment initiatives for individuals with mental health issues;
- Learn about [Collective Impact](#) as a possible framework for collaborative action to address systems change on a range of complex issues; and,
- Explore opportunities to utilize the Collective Impact framework to address the identified systemic barriers for individuals living with mental illness.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Adele Furrie of **Adele Furrie Consulting Inc.** shared the findings of her recently completed environmental scan of supported employment programs across Canada. The scan identified over 518 supported employment organizations using the following criteria; the scan *includes* all supported employment programs that offer their services to only people with mental illness or to people with all types of disabilities, including mental illness. The scan *excludes* any supported employment programs that required a client to have a disability other than mental illness, such as developmental, autism, seeing, physical, etc.

The results of this scan were [mapped](#) on a user friendly and interactive visualization tool that was based on Canada's provincial and economic regional data and the recent 2016 Census data (including information from 2.9 million persons aged 18-64 who self-identified as living with a mental illness).

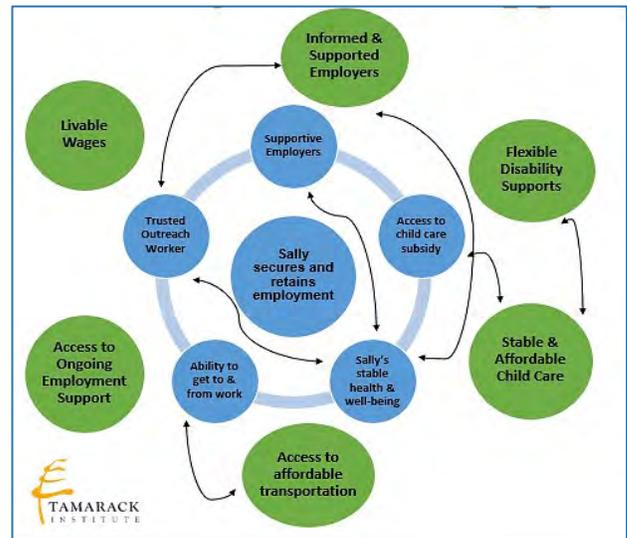
After the scan's findings had been presented, participants reflected on the results of the scan and the supported employment program models identified. In response to feedback received at the workshop a guide has been developed to accompany the interactive mapping tool and will be posted on the MHCC website in the coming weeks.

## IDENTIFYING SYSTEMS BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT

Sylvia Cheuy, Consulting Director with the **Tamarack Institute**, presented content on the distinction between supportive employment programs and systems change efforts to address barriers to supported employment for individuals with mental health issues. During this presentation, workshop participants who currently deliver supported employment programs for people living with mental illness, defined a common key objective for the field: to identify systemic barriers that limit the success of these programs and consider opportunities to work collaboratively to address these barriers.

### Key Factor Map of System Barriers to Supported Employment

Participants were introduced to the Key Factor Mapping Tool, a tool which is used to develop a shared understanding of the factors that have the most impact on addressing a complex issue or challenge. It is most useful when a group wants to get a better understanding of the underlying issues and dynamics that may make a challenge or issue difficult to implement or move forward. It is most effective when it is used by a diverse group of stakeholders who share a common interest or passion about solving a specific issue. The graphic on the right offers an example of a factor map for supported employment.



Opportunities that emerged to overcome systemic barriers to supported employment include:

- A need for enhanced funding and greater flexibility in terms of how funding is used, particularly regarding income assistance;
- A need for increased public awareness and education. For example, enhanced efforts to reduce the fear of self-identification and stigma associated with mental illness;
- A focus on better engagement and education of employers and employees to create more inclusive and supportive work environments;
- Enhanced access to programs and services and better links and coordination with other service providers to have the appropriate resources available when managing the complex issues of mental health; and
- The need for a policy agenda to better equip members of government with information on mental health and the workplace so that they can make informed decisions.

### EXPLORING THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

The Collective Impact Framework was introduced to participants as a possible framework to support them in working collaboratively to implement systems change strategies identified through the Factor Mapping exercise. Collective Impact is a disciplined form of multi-sector collaboration that includes five conditions which, when integrated together, have demonstrated considerable effectiveness in advancing positive change on complex issues.



Workshop participants were invited to have conversations in small groups to identify the opportunities and challenges of using the Collective Impact Framework to address the systemic issues to supported employment that they had identified earlier. A summary of the themes that emerged from participants' dialogue regarding the challenges offered by the Collective Impact Framework included:

- A lack of trust between different stakeholders;
- Limited resources (time, money, knowledge to be shared);
- Effective engagement and leadership (who to involve & how to involve them);
- Lack of a common language and terminology within the field of employment and mental health; and
- How to frame a complex issue in a way that will create ownership and inspire action.

Opportunities identified in working with the Collective Impact Framework to address systemic barriers to supported employment included:

- The benefit of drawing from multiple and diverse perspectives by working with a cross section of stakeholders (e.g. people with lived experience, policy makers, program developers, funders, etc.);
- Shared opportunities to raise awareness and advocate by working as a collective;
- An opportunity to address "The Big Picture" by using an all-encompassing framework and thinking pre and post process;
- Sharing resources between agencies, government and employers; and
- Leveraging diverse skills and resources amongst participants.

## MOVING FORWARD

Workshop participants were then asked to reflect upon the ideas and insights discussed throughout the day and make recommendations for how to best keep the thinking generated by the workshop moving forward. The themes that emerged across participants' recommendations included:

- Continue to grow and expand this network;
- Develop a communication summary and resources;
- Build a plan for shared action; and
- Continue to work collaboratively.

## CONCLUSION

This workshop has established a strong foundation to continue to convene and mobilize the sector of employment providers for individuals living with mental illness. The plan is to work collaboratively across Canada and develop a strategy to address the systems barriers that limit the effectiveness of their programs and services for those that they serve.

To continue this work, the MHCC and the Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) announced the launch of a National Community of Practice (CoP) on Supported Employment. Individuals across Canada who are delivering employment supports to people living with mental illness were invited to apply to be a core member of the CoP. This membership is intended to further the work of supported employment across Canada by working with policy makers, people with lived experience, funders, program developers, etc. across the country to advance the needs of this sector and develop practical tools and resources. With the support of the MHCC and CASE, this group will provide a strong foundation for undertaking collective work across the sector and will be well-positioned to offer needed leadership and infrastructure in this field.

# EXPLORING SYSTEMS CHANGE IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

JUNE 19, 2018

