

WHAT WE DID AND WHAT WE LEARNED: MONITORING DISABILITY RIGHTS



Canadian
human rights
commission

Commission
canadienne des
droits de la personne

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Who are we?

We are the “Canadian Human Rights Commission.” We watch out for human rights.

A human right is a “standard.” A standard is a set of rules. It is a way of doing things.

Human rights protect people. They say what people can have. They say what people can do. They say how people should all live together in the world. They also say we must respect each other.



There are many human rights. Everyone has the same human rights. Human rights help to keep people safe. They make sure everyone is treated the same.

Here are some examples.

- Everyone has the right to have a place to live.
- Everyone has the right to have food to eat.
- Everyone has the right to be safe.
- Everyone has the right to try to get a job.
- Everyone has the right to get an education.

These are only some human rights. There are many more. Human rights work for everyone.

What do we do?

We make sure these standards are followed. We protect human rights. We are not part of government. We work for the people of Canada.

We look into problems people have with their human rights. They can come to us. They can tell us about what happened. We can look at their problem. Sometimes we can fix the problem.

We also make sure many groups know about the human rights standards. We make sure these groups follow these standards.

We also help when there are new standards to follow. We let groups know about these.

We help all kinds of people in Canada. Some of them are people with disabilities.



What is a disability?

Any person can have a disability. Some people have more than one disability. A disability can affect a person's body or brain. It can affect the way a person thinks or feels. It can keep a person from doing some things. There are many kinds of disability. Here are some examples.

- A disability can be in the body. It can make it hard to move around. Some people can't move their body very much. Some people can't walk.



- A disability can be in the brain. It can make it hard to think about things. It can make it hard to understand things. It can make it hard to remember things.



- A disability can be in the eyes. It can make it hard to see things. Some people can't see very much. Some people can't see anything.



- A disability can be in the ears. It can make it hard to hear things. Some people can't hear very much. Some people can't hear anything.



- A disability can be in the way a person feels. It can be in the way they think about things. It can make it hard to understand other people. Some people feel different things than other people do. Other people don't understand why they feel this way.



A person's disability can be the same all the time. Or it can change.

Sometimes a person's disability is easy to see. But other times it is not. A disability can be hard to see. It can be invisible. Other people can't see it.

Another way to look at disability is not in the person. It happens in the world we live in. These are called "barriers."

What is a barrier?

A barrier is something that gets in the way. It stops people from doing what they want to do. Barriers often happen to people with a disability. Here are some examples.

- They can't get into a building.
- They can't talk to other people.
- They can't get a good place to live.
- They can't get enough money for food.
- They can't pay their bills.
- They can't use the internet.
- They can't talk to the people who make the rules.



Sometimes a barrier is in how people think about people with disabilities. Sometimes people with disabilities are treated differently because some people think they can't do some tasks.

There are many more barriers. Barriers need to be taken away. They need to be stopped. This will help people with disabilities.

There are some rules that will help. They are called "conventions."

What is a convention?

A “convention” is a set of human rights rules. Countries sign their name to a convention. This means they promise to follow the rules. There are many different conventions. They are about different things.

One convention is about people with disabilities. It is called the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. We will call it the “Convention.”

This Convention helps people with disabilities. It makes sure they have the same rights as everyone else.



Canada signed this Convention. Other countries did too. They all promised to follow it. They all have to do the things written in the Convention. They have to do actions. They have to make sure it is followed. They have to help people with disabilities.

We are also going to help people with disabilities in Canada. We are going to make sure the Convention is followed in our country. We will be a “monitor.” We will monitor the Convention.

What does monitor mean?

The word “monitor” means to watch something. It means making sure something is being done. It means keeping track of something. It also means making sure other people are doing their job.

We are going to make sure the Convention is followed. We are going to monitor it. We will check to make sure things are being done. We will make reports about what we find out.

But first we wanted to hear from people with disabilities. We wanted to know what was important to them. We wanted to get them involved. We wanted to know the best way to do things. We wanted to learn from them.

We wanted to know what people with disabilities needed to be included.

So we asked people what was important to them.



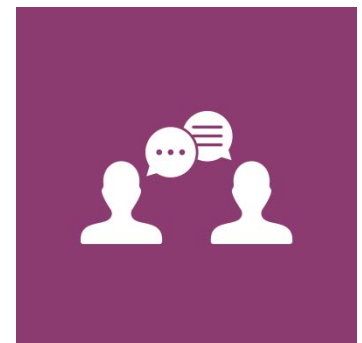
Who did we talk to?

We wanted to talk to many people. These are the groups we wanted to hear from.

- People with disabilities
- Their families or caregivers
- Groups that help people with disabilities
- Other people in Canada

We could not do this in person because of COVID-19. So we did it online. We made a survey. We did online chats. We asked people a lot of questions. They gave us a lot of information. We put all this information in a big report.

Most people we talked to had a disability. Here are some of the most important things we learned from them. These are the main things they told us.



What did people say about participating?

“Participating” means making sure everybody can take part. It means getting people involved. It means trying to reach everybody. It also means getting rid of barriers.

Participating is an important idea that will help us do our work.

We asked people about taking part. They said people with disabilities are not included. They said they are not asked what they think. They are left out of decisions that are about them. They are excluded. They said this is a big problem.

People said they wanted to take part. But they had barriers. Here are some examples.

- They did not have any money to take part.
- They did not have help to take part.
- There was no help for their disability so they could take part.

People said this was not right. They said people with disabilities must be included. They must be part of monitoring the Convention. They said more work has to be done. They said to do things to make sure people with disabilities are included.



What did people say about being accessible?

Being “accessible” means there are no barriers in the way. It means that the barriers are gone. It means that people with disabilities can do all the things they want to. They can do the same things as other people.

They can be involved. They can be included. They can get information the way they want. They can join in whatever way they like to. The things they need are there.



Here are some examples.

- They can get into buildings. There are ramps. There are door openers.
- They can get Sign language. Sign language is made by moving the hands and body. This helps people who can't hear. It helps them understand what is being said.
- They can get Braille information. Braille is a way of putting words on paper that people can feel with their fingers. This helps people who can't see. It helps them read information.

Being accessible is important. It helps more people be involved. It takes away barriers. It helps people be more equal.

Being accessible is an important idea that will help us do our work.

We asked people about being accessible. They were very worried about the barriers for people with disabilities. These are some of the barriers they talked about.

- Barriers that stop them from getting into a building or a place
- Barriers at their school and work
- Other barriers that stop them from taking part

People said there needs to be more teaching and training. Other people need to learn how to be accessible. They need to learn how to include people. They need to learn about barriers. They need to learn how to stop barriers. Teaching and training will help this.

What did people say about being treated equally and fairly?

Some people are not treated the same. Some people are not treated fairly. They are not treated equally. They don't get treated as well as other people. This is called "discrimination."

It means some people are treated badly. They are called names. They are made to feel bad. They don't get the same things as other people.

Being treated equally and fairly is an important idea that will help us do our work.

We asked people about not being treated fairly or equally.

They said this happens in many parts of their lives. It often happens when they are at work. It happens when they are in other places too. Other people do not respect them. Other people make them feel bad for being there.



People said this needs to change. They said that more people need to know about disabilities. More people need to know how to include people. More people need to know about being accessible. More people need to know about treating people with respect.

People said that teaching and training will help with this.

What did people say about being intersectional?

The word “intersectional” is about an idea. The idea is that people have many different things about them. These different things make them who they are.

Some people are treated very unfairly. They get more discrimination than other people.

This is because of more than one thing about them. It could be because of a disability. But it could be about other things. Here are some examples.

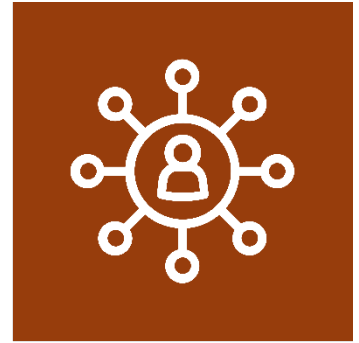
- It could be about the colour of their skin.
- It could be about who they love.
- It could be about if they are a man or woman.
- It could be about not being a man or woman.
- It could be about how much money they have.
- It could be about where they live.
- It could be about how old they are.

Or it could be about other things not on this list. Or they could be treated badly because of all these things.

Being intersectional is an important idea that will help us do our work.

We asked people about being treated unfairly because of the different things that make up who they are. People said this is important information. It is important to know. It is important to keep in mind when making decisions. It will help make sure no one is left out.

They also said other people need to know about this idea. They need to understand this idea. They need to know how it affects people with disabilities. They said there needs to be more teaching and training about this idea.



What did people say about their main concerns?

We asked people about their concerns. These were the three main ones people had.



1. They don't have enough money.



2. They don't have a good place to live.



3. They don't have a job.

People also said they didn't have enough information. They wanted to know more about the Convention.

What did people say about the Convention?

People said the Convention is not well known. Not enough people know about it. They don't know what it is or what it means. They said more people should know about the Convention.

People also said the Convention is hard to read. It is hard to understand.

People said they want to have a guide. This will help them understand the Convention. A guide will help them know what to do. It will help them know who has to follow the Convention. It will help them know when it is not followed. A guide will help people monitor the Convention with us.



What did people say about being involved?

People with disabilities told us a lot of things. They told us their stories. They told us about things that happened to them. They also told us they want to help. They want to be involved. They want to help us to monitor the Convention.

But first they need some things to help them. They said that they need more information. They want to know more about monitoring. They want to know what needs to be done. They want to know how it will be done.

They also said more people need to know about the Convention. They need to know what it is about. They need to know how it can help them. They said this is very important. People said we need to let everybody know about the Convention.

People also told us they want to see action. They want to see changes happen. They want to see the Convention being followed. They want to see the Convention helping people with disabilities.

People also said it is important to think about the ideas they talked about.

- Participating and including everyone
- Being accessible
- Treating everyone fairly and equally
- Being intersectional

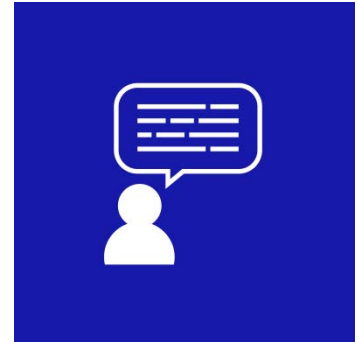
This will help make sure everyone can be included.



What did people say about sharing information?

People told us that stories about people with disabilities are important. They told us to share the stories. The stories will help people understand. The stories will make a big difference. They said the stories are the most important part.

They also told us to make videos and reports. They told us to share them.



We can share information on the internet. We can share information through the mail. We can share information in places where people go – like a doctor's office. We should share our information in many different ways.

People told us to make our information accessible. This means we need to have it in Sign language. This will help people with hearing disabilities. We also need to have information in Braille. This will help people with seeing disabilities.

We need to make sure all people with a disability can use our information. We need to be sure they can all be part of our work.

What are we doing next?

Being a monitor is a big task. We have a lot of work to do. We want to thank the people who talked to us. They are making sure we are doing the right thing. They have helped us get started.

We will keep on talking to people as we do this task. This is just the start. We are just beginning. We still have a lot of work to do.



Together, we will make things better for people with disabilities.