Ask Me Anything
Resource Guide

A Courageous Conversation on Accessibility: Thriving vs. Surviving

Hosts

Time: 1:00 pm EST | Date: December 8, 2021

Panelists

Meenakshi Sharma
Canada Revenue Agency

Abigaïl Theano-Pudwill
National Defence

Luna Bengio
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Esther Berman
Canadian Coast Guard

Katie Freer
Health Canada

Myriam Lachance
Health Canada

Canada

NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

Thank you for participating in the [December Ask Me Anything (AMA): Accessibility - Thriving vs. Surviving](). We are excited that you joined us for this event! An extensive list of resources has been collected and curated, that we believe will be helpful for our colleagues; however, it is not an exhaustive list. We recognize that not every resource will be valuable to every reader, however we hope that helpful and interesting resources can be found within our guide.

In collaboration,
The AMA Team
DiversityandInclusion-Diversiteetinclusion@forces.gc.ca

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EVENT DESCRIPTION

This month's AMA panel is focused on disability and the right to accommodation in the work place. The panelists will speak about their personal experiences, including living with visible and invisible disabilities, along with self- and societal pressures to minimize the impact of their disabilities on others. They will also dive into the ongoing balance of self-advocacy versus being perceived as a challenge or difficult to accommodate. In addition, the panelist will discuss the stigma that exists both within the disabled and abled communities and the overlapping discrimination that comes with other aspects of their identities. The panel will close with an open discussion on what systemic changes could help increase a sense of diversity, inclusion and belonging within the federal public service.

"Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard."

-Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy

#AMAChallenge

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organization to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 mins. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

After the AMA – Team Session Discussion Questions:

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of a systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

SUPPORT

Remember, **support is available for you and your family when you need it**. Some of the discussions, at the AMA, or the content shared may bring forward past trauma or uncomfortable feelings; please seek professional help if this is the case.

Employee Assistance Program (for Federal Government employees) - Canada.ca
Toll-free: 1-800-268-7708 TTY (for people with hearing impairments): 1-800-567-5803

The Canada Suicide Prevention Service - Connect with a responder now by calling our toll-free number 1-833-456-4566.

If in crisis **visit your local emergency department, or call 911**
- https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/24-7-crisis-line/
- Ottawa and region distress center: Distress: 613-238-3311 | Crisis: 613-722-6914 or 1-866-996-0991 | TEXT 343-306-5550 | Chat & Text 10am-11pm

Wellness Together Canada - Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support.
https://wellnesstogether.ca and toll free 1-866-585-0445.

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

1. *Disability Visibility: First Person Stories from the 21st Century* by Alice Wong

2. *Women with Visible and Invisible Disabilities* edited by Martha Banks and Ellyn Kaschak

3. *The Question of Access: Disability, Space, Meaning* by Tanya Titchkosky

4. *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

5. *Accessibilité et handicap : anciennes pratiques, nouvel enjeu* De Joël Zaffran

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS:

1. What does an Accessible Canada mean to You?
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qtg_H7ox2Bk

2. Why it is time to make inclusive development inclusive
    https://youtu.be/cQg-jnOfHPQ

3. How much do you know about intellectual disabilities?
    https://youtu.be/BURbLmQL1BE

4. Disability Sensitivity Training Video
    https://youtu.be/Gv1aDEFIXq8

5. Disability and Work
    https://www.ted.com/talks/hannah_barham_brown_disability_and_work_let_s_stop_wasting_talent/transcript?language=en

6. Disability: Ask us anything
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hR5AGD5-J00

7. Des personnes en situation de handicap/sourdes racontent quand ça « gosse »
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYo9tqkWn_k

8. Trois personnes handicapées racontent ce qu'elles subissent au travail
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqP2xKHoeIE

CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE (CSPS):

1. Workplace Accommodation Consultation Series
   https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/events/workplace-accommodation/index-eng.aspx#events

2. Accessibility Learning Series
   https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/accessibility-learning-eng.aspx

3. Disability Inclusion in the Public Service of Canada: An Introduction
   https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/video/disability-inclusion-psc-intro-eng.aspx

4. Spotlight on ACCESSibility Micro-Learning Series: Built Environment
   https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/video/spotlight/built-environment-eng.aspx

ARTICLES

1. Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion
   https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/corporate/reports/building-diverse-inclusive-public-service-final-report-joint-union-management-task-force-diversity-inclusion.html

2. Introduction: Accessibility strategy for the Public Service of Canada
   https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc/accessibility-strategy-public-service-introduction.html

3. Disability Management: Employee Wellness Resource
   https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/health-wellness-public-servants/disability-management/employee-wellness-resource.html

4. The Fundamentals of Disability Management
   https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/health-wellness-public-servants/disability-management/fundamentals.html

5. Public Services and Procurement Canada Accessibility Office/Accessibility Resources
   https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Public_Services_and_Procurement_Canada_Accessibility_Office/Accessibility_Resources

TWITTER:

1. Minister of Employment, Workforce Dev. & Disability Inclusion Carla Qualtrough

2. DM Yazmine Laroche

3. Accessibility Standards Canada

4. Accessible Canada

ACTS AND POLICIES

1. The Accessible Canada Act - (A Summary)
   https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html

2. Policy on the Duty to Accommodate Persons with Disabilities in Secretariat
   https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32634

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA RESOURCES

1. Hire a student from the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities
   https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Employment_Opportunity_for_Students_with_Disabilities%27_Resource_Page

2. GCpedia Office of Public Service Accessibility Accessibility Hub
   https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Office_of_Public_Service_Accessibility/_Bureau_de_l%E2%80%99accessibilit%C3%A9_au_sein_de_la_fonction_publique

3. The Workplace Accessibility Passport
   https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/GC_Workplace_Accessibility_Passport/_Passeport_d%E2%80%99accessibilit%C3%A9_au_lieu_de_travail_du_GC?setlang=en&uselang=en

4. The Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund
   https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/centralized-enabling-workplace-fund.html

5. Digital Accessibility Toolkit - Digital Accessibility Toolkit / Sharing space (canada.ca) https://a11y.canada.ca/en/

6. Hiring employees with disabilities managers toolkit
   http://extranet.psc-cfp.gc.ca/hiring-pwd-toolkit/index-eng.htm

7. Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT)
   https://www.canada.ca/en/shared-services/corporate/aaact-program/how-aaact-help-you.html

Meet Our Amazing Panelists

Opening Remarks by Myriam Lachance, (She/Her), Acting Director for the Workplace Wellness programs for the Corporate Services Branch, Health Canada

She has a Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of Montréal (2002), A Certificate in Organisation Leadership from HEC Montréal (2010) and a Master Business Administration degree (MBA) from the University of Sherbrooke (2016).

She has been a Federal Public Servant for over 3 years now. She has played a key leadership role in the development and modernization of the Workplace Wellness Service Centre under the Workplace Wellness Programs. The Centre is responsible to provide a single access window, client oriented services for Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada employees requesting support regarding Disability Management, Duty to Accommodate, Ergonomics and incident reporting for Occupational Health and Safety.

Myriam previously worked over 15 years in both the private and public sector Health Care system actively involved to create rehabilitation services within emergency rooms, post-chirurgical environments and offering innovative services based on population data.

On a personal note, Myriam enjoys the great outdoors paddle boarding and hiking. She also enjoys gardening and reading and spending quality time with family and friends.

Luna Bengio, Senior Accessibility Expert and Special Advisor, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Luna Bengio is a seasoned Canadian public service executive and accessibility expert. Luna joined the Office of Public Service Accessibility when it was established in August 2018 where she was the Principal Advisor to the Deputy Minister until her retirement in June 2021. Since then, Luna is supporting both the Office of Public Service Accessibility and the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program. Luna provides strategic advice on a range of accessibility and inclusion issues, such as workplace adjustments, information and communications technologies, and culture change. She also leads several projects, including the review of policies from an accessibility perspective and the development of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport. Prior to this, as Executive Director of Executive Policies, Luna was responsible for all policies and programs related to the management of executives in the Canadian public service, including compensation, terms and conditions of employment, performance management, and leadership development.

Luna joined the federal public service in 1990. Over the last few years, Luna has held several executive positions in areas such as information management and information technology, financial and human resource management, and strategic planning. Prior to joining the Treasury Board Secretariat, Luna led the Public Health Agency of Canada's Blood Safety Surveillance and Infection Control programs. She also held the position of Executive Director of the Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control.

Katie Freer, Senior Policy Advisor, Health Products and Compliance Directorate, Health Canada

Katie is a 15+year career civil servant, who has worked at several federal departments including the Impact Assessment Agency, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and Health Canada. Katie Freer is a white woman with an invisible disability and mother to neuro-typical and neuro-diverse children. She was born and raised in Canada and holds a strong appreciation for the broad range of diversity that makes up our communities and wants to see it better celebrated in the public and private institutions across the country.

Katie is one of the co-collaborators for the AMA series and has contributed behind the scenes and as the chat moderator from its inception. Katie has also co-moderated several discussions on the privilege spectrum and is committed to using her voice and privilege to amplify others. Katie is dedicated to the concept that without discomfort, change cannot be made and uses both "calling-in" and "calling-out" to advance discussion around the importance of diversity, inclusion and belonging.

Esther Berman, Chair, Accessibility Network/Senior Analyst, Innovation Planning and Engagement Directorate, Canadian Coast Guard

Esther Berman was born in Kiev, Ukraine and moved to Toronto, Canada at the age of 6. She graduated from the University of Ottawa with a degree in Business Commerce. Esther worked at Health Canada, as part of the co-op program, and got bridged in as an indeterminate employee in 2011. She joined the Canadian Coast Guard team in 2017, starting in the field of Economic and Industry Intelligence. She is now working with Integrated Business Planning and also chairs the Accessibility Network. Esther lives in downtown Ottawa with her guide dog and enjoys hobbies such as horseback riding, water skiing, working out and walking.

Meet Our Co-Moderator

Meenakshi Sharma, Senior Policy Analyst, Digital Transformation Program, Canada Revenue Agency

Meenakshi has been working with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for over 14 years – she is currently a Senior Policy Analyst with the Digital Transformation Program within the CRA and is a coordinator for the Diversity & Inclusion Network. Also a Carleton University graduate, Meenakshi completed her undergraduate degree in Economics and Business and later received an Associate's Certificate from Queen's University in Project Management. Work aside, Meenakshi has been a long-time community builder advocating for the South Asian culture and arts from organizing local festivals to recognizing the need to influence change when it comes to representation and social

justice issues. Meenakshi is involved in many grassroots initiatives in her community and shares her journey of being an advocate and empowering others to do the same through blogging and digital content creation. Representation and inclusiveness have always been at the forefront of her work, whether at the Agency or in her personal life.

Meenakshi's first and utmost priority is being a mother to two little girls, who she calls her warriors. She's hoping to make a difference and influence impact in some small corner of the world so that her little girls can flourish and live in harmony and acceptance.

Meet the Host of Ask Me Anything

Abigaïl Theano-Pudwill, Communications Advisor, Ontario and Prairie Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Abigaïl Theano-Pudwill is a communications advisor for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada with a degree in Criminal Justice and Rhetoric from the University of Winnipeg. She is a Haitian refugee who loves to use the arts for community empowerment. Now on an assignment as an analyst with the Department of National Defence focused on diversity and inclusion, she navigates within and continues to advocate for bettering the racial inequities in the federal public service.

Abigaïl has led advocacy work on a local, national and global scale, representing Canada in international spaces as Canada's Commonwealth National Youth Delegate and various other titles. Since 2014, Abigaïl has worked on promoting youth engagement in governance through the National Student Commonwealth Forum and Youth Parliament of Manitoba (YPM). Her involvement on the board of directors of YPM ended in 2020 as the first black Premier/Chairperson. In 2021, she founded Auxvoir Style Collective, a sustainable styling company based in Winnipeg.

Mission - Ask Me Anything Series

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can't be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other's experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a workplace of belonging where people feel valued.