# EOSD Panel Discussion, July 11th, 2023: Replies to the Unanswered SLIDO Questions

## **If I said I didn't need accommodations when I started but realize I do now, is that bad?**

Darrin

Not at all. Accommodations exist to optimize your ability to contribute. They are not static and may vary over your career. Do not feel bad about positioning yourself to be as productive as possible.

Michael

This is completely normal. Some employees require accommodation or changes to accommodation due to injury, illness, or changes in personal circumstances, and this is entirely normal. It is also normal that a new medical diagnosis, a change to a medical diagnosis, or even finding out about new hardware or software at a trade show might give you new information that results in an accommodation request. Your manager should appreciate this as an opportunity for you to be a more effective team member.

## **I am scared admitting my executive function challenges will prevent me from getting jobs or promotions. Will it?**

Darrin

No doubt, there are challenges to career advancement when you have a disability. However, within the GC, there are more supports and protections available than in many workplaces. There are ways to frame your challenges in a way that does not present them as negative, while also explaining the ways that you manage those challenges. Further discussion with a mentor about your situation would be a great idea to learn how to reframe the situation.

Michael

I want to focus on what Darrin has said above about reframing the situation. There are many jobs in the GC that involve templated or scripted activities, and that don’t necessarily involve high-stress interactions, and these jobs can sometimes be at quite high levels (e.g. senior regulatory work). Work with a mentor to identify your strengths, find your way into jobs and fields where you can use those strengths, and avoid areas where your disability creates undue risks to your career. For example, me being legally blind limits my effectiveness at doing scientific fieldwork, but I have spent several years doing scientific evaluation, which requires me to read and understand technical reports, and doesn’t involve fieldwork.

Diane

I think joining the employee network of persons with disabilities might have some benefit in seeing how others have maneuvered their way through their career.

## **What advice do you have for a student hoping to start their career in policy doing engagement work?**

Darrin

This question can lead to many different areas when formulating a response. Simply, remember the purpose of your policies and programs, keep the enduser experience paramount, receive feedback openly and honestly and give those with whom you are engaging reasonable and achievable timelines and expectations.

Michael

This is all about positioning. Find a subject area that you like and apply for jobs in that subject area. You can also use tools like the informal Facebook groups and contacting managers directly to express your interest. Once you’re in the subject area, find the outreach and engagement shop that you want to work in, and get to know them and their work. Let them know that you respect the work they do and that you’d like to work with them. If they’ve got an opening, and if you’ve got a reputation for doing good work, they’ll come to you. I’ve read statistics that suggest only a third of the jobs in the public service are ever advertised, so applying for jobs that look interesting should only be a third of your strategy.

Diane

Consider jobs where you are engaging and helping others such as accessibility offices, employment equity in Human Resources Branch etc. You will be an asset because of your lived experience.

## **Do you know of any support for mental health and wellness, particularly for facing challenges like burnout or eco-anxiety?**

Darrin

The [Employee Assistance Plan](https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/employee-assistance-program.html) is a good first step.

Michael

There’s also LifeSpeak: [Stressed out and worried about your finances, family, job or health? LifeSpeak can help - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2019/09/lifespeak-stress-help.html)

Regarding eco-anxiety specifically, I’m an environmental scientist, and I find the thing that works best is talking about that anxiety, fear, or fatalism with someone else who shares your perspective. You are **not** the only person who sees the impending catastrophe, and what you are feeling is normal and understandable.

## **What helps you maintain a healthy work/life balance when considering disability (I.e., spoon theory)?**

Darrin

My work hours are my work hours. Outside of them, I do not engage with work at all. Additionally, I take breaks when I need them to reset throughout my workday, and if I am having any issues with goal-setting or managing timelines, I inform my managers as soon as I start to see that I am having issues. Further, although we all do important work that impacts the lives of Canadians, we are but one piece of a bigger puzzle, so do not internalize external and organizational issues.

## **If my needs vary greatly from day to day, how do I bring that up to my supervisor? Do I ask for accommodations based on what I need at my worst?**

Darrin

Without going into detail, let your supervisor know that you would like to seek accommodations for a medical condition that has variable impact; sometimes you are not affected much, and other times the impacts are more significant. Additionally, it is likely that you will need medical support, so discuss with your doctor your limitations and exactly what you would like to be included in a medical note or certificate.

Michael

I don’t disagree with Darrin, but I do think that trust is a major factor here. When possible, if you can build trust with your manager, it’ll go a long way toward how they interpret your accommodation, which will reduce friction with them. Not all managers are trustworthy, unfortunately.

## **I am wondering if we have a unique pool or bridging program for EOSD recruitment inclusion EOSD in job opportunities!**

Michael

There’s a unique recruitment process for recent graduates with disabilities, but unfortunately, it isn’t advertised well, most managers don’t know about it, and checking it is an extra step, so most managers don’t bother to use it. Also, the last time I saw a presentation on it (early in the pandemic) it was mostly being used to bring in low-level employees (e.g., CR-04 and AS-01). As a disabled person with a graduate-level science degree, this lack of a targeted, effective, equitable, and publicized recruitment mechanism is not ideal.

Diane

The Public Service Commission has a pool of persons with disabilities in the IT and EC inventories. Check with them because they continue to introduce new pools. Remember the government must hire 5k new employees with disabilities so they will become more visible and used. At worst, you have nothing to lose by seeing which ones that you may qualify for. Speak to your human resources personnel at your department, in my department we have internal pools at the AS levels for persons with disabilities.

The EOSD Team

The Graduate Inventory of the [Virtual Door to Talent with Disabilities](https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/The_Virtual_Door_to_Talent_with_Disabilities#List_of_available_candidates.2C_pools.2C_and_inventories) is a [bridging](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/appointment-framework/student-bridging.html) inventory for participants of the EOSD program. Anyone who has completed a work term through any student employment program ([FSWEP](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.canada.ca%2Fen%2Fpublic-service-commission%2Fjobs%2Fservices%2Frecruitment%2Fstudents%2Ffederal-student-work-program.html&data=05%7C01%7Ccfp.psh-prog-pwd.psc%40cfp-psc.gc.ca%7Cb21c6531b8c04d8d5b7608db888a0146%7C961b30aad4394bc7b6749c4a389b0be3%7C0%7C0%7C638253898851989068%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=jx6acgSfbLkECC3ClEJ75ZbAwpxYGxIkW4fVcGvBdAg%3D&reserved=0)/[Co-op](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.canada.ca%2Fen%2Fpublic-service-commission%2Fjobs%2Fservices%2Frecruitment%2Fstudents%2Fcoop-internship.html&data=05%7C01%7Ccfp.psh-prog-pwd.psc%40cfp-psc.gc.ca%7Cb21c6531b8c04d8d5b7608db888a0146%7C961b30aad4394bc7b6749c4a389b0be3%7C0%7C0%7C638253898851989068%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=gQWqJsOuL1VGJlx%2F0Z44akfGj7fjUXd7rXXP9E%2FBaZE%3D&reserved=0)/[RAP](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.canada.ca%2Fen%2Fpublic-service-commission%2Fjobs%2Fservices%2Frecruitment%2Fstudents%2Fresearch-affiliate-program.html&data=05%7C01%7Ccfp.psh-prog-pwd.psc%40cfp-psc.gc.ca%7Cb21c6531b8c04d8d5b7608db888a0146%7C961b30aad4394bc7b6749c4a389b0be3%7C0%7C0%7C638253898852145298%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=vbXi2L9rRgK9fxWZKsTLctMVji2XV0j95UbK56eb2J8%3D&reserved=0)) and self-identifies as a person with a disability is eligible. EOSD participants who have graduated or are within 4 months of graduating can apply. Once accepted into the inventory, the candidate’s profile and CV will be available to hiring managers looking to recruit and staff positions all over the country and in several different departments. All EOSD participants get automatically added to our distribution list to be notified of when new intakes are happening. Contact [our team](mailto:cfp.psh-prog-pwd.psc@cfp-psc.gc.ca) for any questions about the Graduate Inventory!

## **I have ADHD (& I suspect AuDHD) but I don't know if I have ''enough'' executive function issues to identify as having a disability. Should I still disclose it?**

Darrin

Disclosure means a few different things. First, it could simply mean self-declaration in the application process or an employee profile. It could also mean informing your manager of your issues with very little or very great detail. My personal rule of thumb is to disclose as much to my manager as they need to know regarding my work habits: for example, my boss knows that I am not strong at keeping a daily work pace but my ability to produce complex, accurate and detailed reports in very little time mitigates that issue. The bottom line is whether you can produce and what it is you need to optimize that production.

Michael

Do you trust your manager? If you do trust your manager, maybe start with a conversation about “this is what would help me work better” and see how things go from there. Everyone is different, and you don’t even necessarily need to frame this in terms of a formal accommodation if you’re not sure about it and if you can come to an informal arrangement. If you do come to an informal arrangement, and if it helps you, talk to your manager about setting up a formal accommodation in case you or they move to a different job.

## **I am wondering what kind of accommodations are provided for ADHD and anxiety or insomnia issues? Are there reduced hour accommodations?**

Michael

There are reduced-hour accommodations, but bear in mind that if you’re being paid and if you aren’t working, this may mean you’re regularly digging into your sick leave, which isn’t a sustainable solution. Without more context, I’d suggest considering talking to your manager about flexible work hours and moving to part-time status.

Diane

Everyone is different and has different degrees of said disability. Can you use your lunch to take a quick 20-minute nap? You would be surprised at the amount of flexibility you might be able to find what works best for you.

## **How do you find resources to use Dragon?**

Michael

The Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program can help with this. Check out the [Lending Library Service](https://www.canada.ca/en/shared-services/corporate/aaact-program/lending-library-service-pilot-project.html).

Diane

Your human resources personnel at your department should also have these resources or for your information technology branch.

## **Is there an occupational group/union representative appropriate for students working in PE areas (or someone comparable)?**

Darrin

I believe PE is an unrepresented group, but I would advise speaking to somebody with experience in your occupational group to ask.

## **What kind of accommodation or support is there for people with narcolepsy (if there is any)?**

Darrin

All disabled employees have a RIGHT to accommodations. You and your medical practitioner can determine what is appropriate.

## **If I self-declare when entering a pool, how will I have to ''prove'' I have a disability when applying and when hired?**

Darrin

You won’t have to prove anything.

## **How do you deal with a co-worker who is always angry and aggressive due to his disability situation, when on the other hand you have to deal with your situation also?**

Darrin

Without knowing the specifics, if you have a direct and collaborative working relationship, I would start by letting the person know that while you empathize, you would prefer to focus on the work and frame things positively. If you are not comfortable with this or it does not go well, inform your manager. If you only have an organizational relationship (i.e., work in the same unit but are not dependent on each other for production), I advise you to not worry about it. Let your co-worker own their own issues and do not let it impact you. Some people just need to vent.

Michael

Have you talked about this with your manager, supervisor, or mentor? My initial response is that you should modulate and limit how and how often you interact with them. Try email if that’s feasible, or speaking to them slowly and quietly if you need to interact in person. Anecdotally, when I started in government, I had to interact with a manager who was frequently loud and aggressive sounding with most people he spoke to. I started whispering whenever I spoke to him, and he got the point quickly – I liked talking (whispering?) to him a lot more after that, but that approach probably won’t work for everyone. As per Darrin’s comments above, make sure you consider and take care of your situation first and foremost.