

ASK ME ANYTHING



Accessibility and the Federal Public Service



Wednesday, December 13, 2023 | 1 pm ET
Featuring: Richard Soulliere, Elyse Hamel, and Myriam Fucina

Canada 

ASK ME ANYTHING (AMA) RESOURCE GUIDE

NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

We are excited that you joined us for this event! A 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

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Join us for December's Ask Me Anything, where we commit to have courageous conversations for International Day for Persons with Disabilities. Our speakers this month are public servants and inclusive leaders from a variety of backgrounds, departments, and stages of life, who will have real and raw conversations on the challenges persons with disabilities face in the public service.

More than 6.2 million Canadians have disabilities, and for many of them, these are disabilities that cannot be seen. People with disabilities experience discrimination, have many additional expenses and often face obstacles that prevent them from finding meaningful, well-paid employment. We recognize that there are various forms of disability - physical, sensory, cognitive or ones related to mental health - and that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The Government of Canada is committed to making our country more accessible and more inclusive for all. Whatever a person's needs may be, we must commit to making our organizations more accessible and more inclusive for everyone.

Come to the Ask Me Anything and learn strategies from our diverse panellists whose experiences have shaped their careers. Whether you're a new or a seasoned member of the Federal Public Service, this event will equip you with the knowledge and tools to navigate your public service career through a lens of accessibility.

Join us as our speakers share their sincere stories and raw reflections on the Ask Me Anything stage!

#AMA CHALLENGE

#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 TO DO:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organisation 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 minutes. 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 blindspots?
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](https://www.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.

RESOURCES

If in crisis visit your local emergency department, general hospitals 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.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA RESOURCES

- Supporting Neurodiversity in the Workplace
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2021/06/supporting-neurodiversity-in-the-workplace.html>
- Working for the Government of Canada: The Duty to Accommodate and Your Right to Non-Discrimination
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/working-government-canada-duty-accommodate-right-non-discrimination.html>
- Employees with Disabilities Network (EwDN)
 - https://iservice.prv/eng/hr/employment_equity/topics/ewdn/index.shtml
- Life Experience with an Invisible Disability
 - https://iservice.prv/eng/hr/employment_equity/topics/ewdn/invisible-disability.shtml
- Centre of Expertise for Optimizing Employee Potential (Accommodation)
 - <https://iservice.prv/eng/hr/dta/index.shtml>
- Accommodations/ Mesures d'adaptation - GCpedia
 - https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Accommodations/_Mesures_d%E2%80%99adaptation

RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES

- What is Neurodiversity
 - <https://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/features/what-is-neurodiversity>
- Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage
 - <https://hbr.org/2017/05/neurodiversity-as-a-competitive-advantage>
- Neurodiversity as a Vector of Creativity and Innovation
 - <https://www.mis.quebec/en/raccords-8-en/2021/06/03/neurodiversity-vector-creativity-innovation/>
- Why Hire Inclusively?
 - <https://www.theinclusiveworkplace.ca/en/hire-inclusively/topic/what-is-autism-spectrum-disorder-and-intellectual-disability/article/why-hire-inclusively>
- In the Loop : What is Neurodiversity?
 - <https://intheloopaboutneurodiversity.wordpress.com/2019/02/23/what-is-neurodiversity/>
- Épilepsie
 - <https://www.chudequebec.ca/patient/maladies,-soins-et-services/m-informer-sur-ma-maladie-ou-ma-condition/epilepsie.aspx>
- Types of Memory Problems
 - <https://www.epilepsy.com/stories/types-memory-problems>
- Risk of Epilepsy in Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus: A Population-Based Cohort Study
 - <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s00125-016-3929-0.pdf?pdf=button>

RESOURCES

BOOKS

- The Neurodiverse Workplace: Employer's Guide to Managing and Working with Neurodivergent Employees, Clients and Customers
- Different, Not Less: A Neurodivergent's Guide to Embracing Your True Self and Finding Your Happily Ever After
- Black Brilliant and Dyslexic: Neurodivergent Heroes Tell Their Stories
- Unmasking Autism: Discovering the New Faces Neurodiversity
- The Power of Neurodiversity: Unleashing the Advantages of Your Differently Wired Brain
- Neurodiversity at Work: Drive Innovation, Performance and Productivity with a Neurodiverse Workforce

VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

- Temple Grandin: The world needs all kinds of minds
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/temple_grandin_the_world_needs_all_kinds_of_minds/
- Kelli Sandman-Hurley: What is dyslexia?
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/kelli_sandman_hurley_what_is_dyslexia/
- Dr. Natascha M. Santos: Debunking the myths of OCD
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/dr_natascha_m_santos_debunking_the_myths_of OCD/
- Neurodiverse
 - <https://neuroverse.groktop.us/>
- The Neurodiversity Podcast
 - <https://neurodiversitypodcast.com/>
- A neurodiverse person's quest for an environment that will allow her to blossom
 - <https://www.mis.quebec/en/raccords-8-en/2021/06/03/neurodiverse-person-quest/>



Prerequisite: [Watch AMA](#)

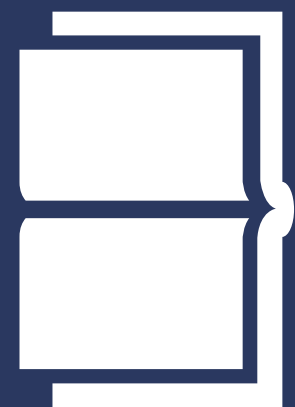
Objective: to facilitate a discussion with my work team about accessibility and the federal public service

Time: 60 minutes

What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment:

What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?

What am I not going to do anymore?



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How can I use my voice/ influence – both overtly/covertly

Where am I going to dig in and learn more?

How will I continue this conversation?

What are some of the challenges unique to your identity that you face in the workplace?

PANELLISTS



Richard Soulliere, Senior Procurement Officer, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Richard is a seasoned procurement officer who was diagnosed with colour deficiency (also known as colour blindness) at age nine, but that is not all he is or has done. He has lived all over eastern Canada as well as in Germany growing up and then as a language teacher in Asia and Europe. His formal education started in business and later flourished to include theoretical linguistics and applied language studies from having lived abroad and picking up additional languages, earning him a three-majors-in-1 Bachelor's degree.

Richard's technical interests also flourished with Master's studies in data analytics, although he focuses on procurement and special projects. He has participated in the Government Games, created Procurement Bliss (on GCpedia), and has been learning more about how to engage colleagues with disabilities and those from cultural minorities. He has published many articles on vocal.media and continues to author books.

PANELLISTS



Elyse Hamel, Acting Strategic Communications Manager, Environment and Climate Change Canada

Elyse discovered her passion for communications during her master's degree in international relations at the University of Ottawa, where she studied political speeches and discourse. A creative soul with years of improv theatre experience, she was unsure how the public service's rigidity would suit her, but quickly changed her mind after joining the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency as a senior communications officer in 2017.

Her dynamic personality, problem-solving skills and innovative thinking were immediately put to good use as she supported files of increasing complexity and importance, eventually accepting a formal leadership role in 2020. After guiding the creative services and digital communications team through the renewal of the Agency's website, she deployed to Environment and Climate Change Canada, where she has been an acting strategic communications manager since January 2023.

Elyse's Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis in 2021 came as a surprise, generating both questions and answers. She has since applied herself to reconciling her new label with her sense of identity, celebrating how her neurodivergence helps her thrive in her chosen career while recognizing how it may have hindered her in the past. As a manager, she uses this experience to lead her team with authenticity and compassion.

PANELLISTS



Myriam Fucina, Specialized Graduate Diploma (DESS) in andragogy, reflexology therapist

Myriam Fucina is a Quality Assessment Agent at Public Service and Procurement Canada's (PSPC) Customer Contact Centre, and is also involved in committees such as the Well-Being Committee, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness Committee of PSPC.

As an adult educator, she has contributed to the career development of many leaders in National Defence and many other departments by teaching French as a second language (FSL).

Using the Growth Model approach and other coaching techniques, she has specialized in teaching individuals and groups with learning disabilities and post-traumatic stress disorder to military members in particular.

She actively participated in the FSL teaching pilot project within PSPC's pay division and co-created, with 2 other andragogy, evaluation grids for her division's internal exams, and became an evaluator during the pandemic under the responsibility of Human Resources. She acted as a union delegate for 3 years while also being involved in her community with organizations fighting poverty. She is also President of her condominium's Board of Directors.

One of her current projects is to contribute to the expansion of the Moose Hide campaign by organizing events to demonstrate the leadership that exists among Aboriginal women from a matriarchal culture.

She is currently participating in the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles program organized by the Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, National Defence.

Myriam is a single mother of two wonderful children, Tiska and Orion. Of Italian origin, with French and Canadian citizenship, she treated her chronic anxiety by practising outdoor activities, but following a serious depression, she was diagnosed with two anxiety disorders, one of which affects 1 in 10 Canadians. Today, under medical care, she continues to treat herself with yoga and reflexology as well.

Also interested in the aboriginal medicine wheel, she wants to honour people who have died assassinated or by suicide by giving you her presentation on identifying destructive masks. Finally, she has a passion for discovering people and cultures from all over the world and travels as often as possible.

MEET OUR CO-HOSTS



Samantha Moonsammy, Section Head Lead Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel Group, National Defence

Samantha has spent over 15 years in the public service working in numerous communications, outreach and engagement initiatives that focuses on the people side of business. She presently leads the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion portfolio at Materiel Group National Defence and is the creator of the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles program - the largest group mentoring program for the Government of Canada. But Samantha is much more than that. Her layers include being a woman, mother, partner, daughter, sister, community builder and immigrant.

As an Indo-Caribbean Canadian she was born in Guyana, South America and immigrated to Canada as a toddler. From a young age, dating back to elementary school to the present, Samantha has been a leader in diversity, inclusion and equity, always helping to amplify the voice of others and create sustainable change in organizations to build deeper respect and understanding for all humans. Samantha lives in the Ottawa area and spent some time in Toronto and Barbados during her Master's degree in Communications and Culture. She is a passionate world traveller who has worked and studied in India, China, France and the Caribbean. Her daily mantra: Be the change you wish to see in the world.

MEET OUR CO-HOSTS



Chichi Ayalogu, MA, PhD Student, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, Department of National Defence

Chichi Ayalogu is a mother to two children, a wife, PhD student at Carleton University in the cultural mediations program, and a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Office. She immigrated to Canada from Nigeria in 1998 at the age of nine, and situates her doctoral research and writing in her experience as a member of the Nigerian diaspora. Her work is grounded in a commitment to human rights and the recognition of its denial to numerous communities globally.