



GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility

PRELIMINARY REPORT – MENTAL HEALTH

LAST UPDATED ON: APRIL 13, 2021

DEPARTMENT: ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS, REAL PROPERTY SERVICES, PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT CANADA

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Introduction

The GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility was created as part of the mandate of the Centre for GCworkplace Innovation, which is to foster knowledge transfer and innovation as well as develop new concepts and tools for the Government of Canada (GC) workplace in collaboration with GC departments, agencies, and external partners. It was also created following the GC's priority and commitment towards accessibility by partnering with key stakeholders.

The GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility consisted of a series of virtual workshops with persons with various types of disabilities (visible and invisible) to discuss and understand their needs in the workplace. A total of 14 sessions (seven in English and seven in French) were originally organized; due to high demand, additional sessions were added for certain disabilities. Through engagement and consultation with users of workplaces, each session addressed existing and emerging or potential workplace barriers for a specific type of disability including mobility issues, cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, environmental sensitivity, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and psychological and mental health.

Two sessions attended by persons with mental health issues—affecting psychology or behaviour, such as anxiety, depression, social / compulsive disorder or phobia, or psychiatric illness—were held on November 25 (in French) and December 2 (in English). Following the success of these sessions, two new sessions were held, both in English, on February 2 and February 16, 2021.

Statistics

For mental health sessions held on November 25 and December 2, 2020, and February 2 and February 16, 2021.



PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Canadian Border Services Agency
- Canadian Heritage
- Canadian Human Rights Commission
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Global Affairs Canada
- Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Public Service and Procurement Canada
- Service Canada
- Shared Services Canada
- Transport Canada
- Treasury Board Secretariat
- Veterans Affairs Canada

PARTICIPATING REGIONS AND CITIES

- **National Capital Area**



MENTAL HEALTH

- > **Atlantic** (Miramichi, Charlottetown, Sidney & Halifax)
- > **Western** (Winnipeg & Edmonton)
- > **Quebec** (Quebec, Montreal & Sherbrooke)
- > **Pacific** (Vancouver)
- > **Ontario** (Sault Ste Marie)



Comments

Participants were asked to share their thoughts on their current workplace—what works, what doesn't—as well as to imagine their dream workplace. They were also walked through what a GCworkplace might look like and asked about potential barriers in specific parts of a workplace.

CURRENT WORKPLACES



POSITIVES

When asked about their current workplaces, participants identified several positives. A few participants had the ability to adjust their lighting at their workpoint, which they greatly appreciated, and several also enjoyed access to natural light. Some participants liked having ergonomic equipment such as chairs, sit-stand desks, and noise-cancelling headphones. One employee who was already in a GCworkplace environment commented that there were multiple features they really liked, including the collaborative spaces, the flexibility and technology to work from anywhere, and access to a meditation room.



Although participants had been asked about their workplaces before the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple participants mentioned that they were enjoying working from home since the pandemic began because it allowed them to have privacy on days when their anxiety was bad, and it also took less mental energy for them to work because there were fewer interruptions and distractions. One participant commented that they had previously been denied the ability to work from home and that they were overjoyed it was something they were now able to do as it dramatically reduced their anxiety.

CONCERNS

When it came to what didn't work in their current workplaces, participants listed several common concerns.

Too much noise

The level of noise in offices, particularly in offices with a Workplace 2.0 design, was frequently cited as an issue for participants. Most participants found that it took a lot of energy for them to be able to stay focused at work with all the noise and distractions around them. One participant commented that white noise machines, instead of helping, actually made them feel very uncomfortable. Another noted that they regularly had to wear earplugs to deal with the noise, and even then it was still too loud.

Stigmatization of mental health issues

Multiple participants felt that there was a stigma among their coworkers and managers about their disability. Participants reported being told directly by coworkers that mental disorders weren't real and also having their personal medical information shared around the office. They felt that they were often treated differently because of their mental health issues, particularly by management, who seemed to see people with mental health issues as burdens to be removed if possible. Several participants found that coworkers and management questioned their ability to do their job after their mental health issues became known, when there had been no issues with their work previously.

A lack of support from management

Participants struggled to get the accommodations they needed because of a lack of empathy and support from their managers. Several commented that they felt infantilized because decisions were made about what accommodations would be provided without consulting the participants or listening to their requests. One participant said that they had to get a doctor's note before they were permitted to wear noise-cancelling headphones in the office. Some participants stated that they were treated as if they should have kept their mouth shut when they asked for accommodations, and several commented that they had to move to new jobs before they were able to get the accommodations they needed.



No or limited access to natural light

Participants commented that their mental health suffered when they didn't have access to natural light, either directly at their workpoints or at least somewhere visible from their workpoint. One participant commented that at their workplace they didn't get any natural light at all and they could go all day without ever knowing what the weather outside was like, which was very upsetting emotionally and psychologically.

DREAM WORKPLACES



When asked about their vision for their dream workplaces, participants listed practical improvements that would make workplaces work for them.

Flexible hours and work locations

Participants overwhelmingly wanted the ability to choose where they did their work so that they could work from home on days when their anxiety or other conditions were flaring. They wanted the flexibility to choose their work locations without having to justify it to managers who might deny them. Participants also wanted flexible work hours that could be adjusted as needed to



accommodate their mental health needs. One participant noted that they currently enjoy flexible hours and that it has benefited both them and the employer, as on good days the participant can work longer hours and on bad days the participant has the ability to step away from work.

Natural light and adjustable lights

Access to natural light was almost unanimously cited as something that would improve the workplace for participants. Participants wanted windows either in every workpoint or at least near enough so that every workpoint had access to natural light. Participants also wanted the ability to adjust lights at workpoints so that they could dim lighting to their preferred levels or turn off fluorescent lights that bothered them.

Access to quiet spaces

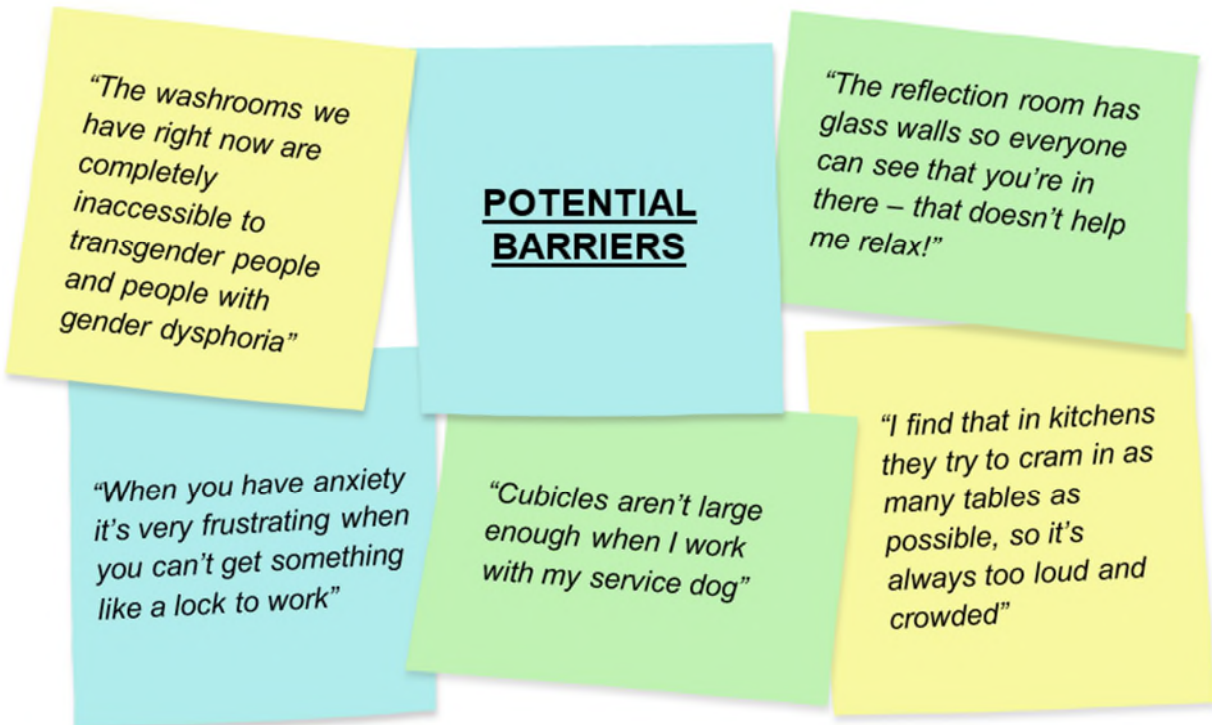
Participants stressed the importance of having access to quiet focus spaces, such as reservable closed offices or closed areas, with minimal noise and distractions. They also noted that these rooms needed to be readily available and not being used as offices by consultants or students. Multiple participants mentioned that a meditation room or a sensory room would be helpful and that this room should not be bookable as a meeting room. They commented that these quiet spaces should have frosted glass or another way of making them private.

Reduced barriers to accommodations

Participants felt that straightforward accommodations—such as the ability to telework, access to natural light, and good quality noise-cancelling headphones—should be accessible by default, instead of requiring special permission or accommodations. Participants wanted accommodations to be standardized across departments and also to be accessible regardless of type of employment (indeterminate, term, etc.) as they felt there were differences in how employees were treated based on their employment status. They also stressed that anyone who supervises employees should receive training on duty to accommodate and also on empathy.



POTENTIAL BARRIERS



Participants were asked for feedback about barriers in different parts of the workplace, as well as what they would like to see instead in those places. Some common barriers were identified:

Meeting rooms

Meeting rooms came up frequently as barriers at the office. Participants felt that there weren't nearly enough small meeting rooms and focus rooms to accommodate everyone who wanted access to one. Several participants struggled with the lights and overhead fans in meeting rooms, as well as with glass walls that let them see everything happening outside. Participants found chairs in meeting rooms were frequently uncomfortable enough to be a distraction, and several participants noted that some of the chairs in meeting rooms didn't feel strong enough to support heavier employees. They commented that meeting rooms were often decorated in unpleasant colours or with distracting patterns on walls and floors. Participants also noted that it can be challenging to find meeting rooms on floors that they're not familiar with, pointing out that if there is a map at all it's usually by the elevator, meaning that once they're on the floor there is no way for them to know where to go.

Participants wanted more small meeting rooms that were not used as de facto offices by consultants or constantly booked by the same team. They recommended having natural light whenever possible, adjustable lighting, and the ability to turn off overhead fans. For meeting rooms with glass walls or windows, participants suggested having the glass frosted so that they



aren't distracted by people passing outside the room and also so that people outside can't see what is happening inside the room. They suggested having a variety of seating options, including softer seats such as couches and also including foot stools so people could have their feet flat while seated, and stressed that seats needed to be designed to work for people of different weights. Participants wanted soft colours used in boardrooms and carpets with few or no patterns. They also wanted an element of nature in meeting rooms—this could include a window with a view of outside, plants or a moss wall, or a graphic mural. Participants recommended having multiple wayfinding locations on each floor and having wifi available everywhere on the floor so that they can contact other people if they get lost. They also suggested having maps available through a QR code or other electronic means that can be brought with them.

Bathrooms

Bathrooms were another common barrier. Participants found that bathroom stalls with doors and walls that didn't go all the way to the floor caused stress and anxiety because of the lack of privacy. One participant noted that stalls often weren't big enough for their service dog, and several others felt anxious in small stalls but also felt judged if they used the larger accessible stalls. Multiple participants pointed out that gendered bathrooms were not accessible for employees who were transgender or gender non-conforming, meaning that some employees tried to avoid using the bathrooms at all during the day because they didn't feel safe there. Participants also noted that multi-stall bathrooms made it easier for others to notice and comment on the frequency or length of their bathroom visits, something that multiple participants had experienced.

Participants wanted single-stall bathrooms, or, if that wasn't possible, stalls that were fully enclosed, with walls and doors that went to the floor and ceiling to provide privacy. They also wanted more larger stalls that were accessible for people with service dogs or mobility devices, as well as more gender-neutral bathrooms. Participants suggested removing urinals, as they took up space that could be given to more private stalls. They commented that all bathrooms (including men's) should have biowaste bins for disposal of menstrual hygiene products and sharps containers for safe disposal of medical needles. Participants wanted hands-free doors with automatic locks, as well as hands-free taps, soap, and paper towel dispensers. They noted that all dispensers, and also shelves and hooks, should be available at different heights.

Common areas

Participants pointed out multiple barriers in common areas such as kitchens and lockers. Kitchens came up frequently as challenges. Participants found that kitchens were almost always too loud, which made it very hard for them to focus on the people they were with or to feel comfortable sitting there by themselves. Knowing how the noise bothered them also made participants anxious about speaking too loudly themselves for fear of disturbing others. Participants commented that kitchens were often overcrowded with chairs and tables, making it hard for them to move around in that space. Lockers were another frequent barrier. Participants noted that locker spaces were often very crowded and loud. They were also concerned about having to remember a key or a code to access their lockers, particularly if lockers weren't assigned and codes had to be changed every day. They commented that it wasn't always



obvious how to secure a locker or which lockers were available. Several participants noted that lockers often weren't large enough for what they needed to store, such as their work laptops or their service dog's bed.

Participants suggested that kitchens be designed with more space and with noise-dampening materials to keep them from being overly loud. They also recommended having some tables or seating available near the kitchen but slightly apart from it for people who wanted a quieter area to eat. They recommended having standard kitchen supplies (such as utensils, dishes, and can openers) available in all kitchens, as well as small appliances like microwaves, coffee makers, and toasters. Some participants noted that it can be intimidating for people with allergies to use a communal kitchen and suggested having an "allergy zone" that was kept free of certain items and cleaned more often. For lockers, participants recommended having enough space near lockers for two people to comfortably be at their lockers at the same time and for a wheelchair to turn around. They suggested using employee swipe cards to unlock lockers as that removed the necessity for people to carry a key or remember a code—if these weren't usable, participants recommended using a fob or a key that could be clipped onto an employee's bag or name tag. They wanted lockers spread out around the floor so that people could access a locker close to where they worked. Participants stressed that lockers needed to be big enough to accommodate mobility aids, service dog supplies, and winter coats and boots as well as any work supplies such as laptops, keyboards, and shoes.

Summary of Feedback

Symbol	Meaning
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The green checkmark icon means: this has been addressed by GCworkplace.





The yellow line icon means: this has partially been addressed by GCworkplace.





The red x icon means: this has not been addressed by GCworkplace.



The blue asterisk icon means: outside the scope of GCworkplace.

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
No choice of workpoints		PSPC – GCworkplace Team	<p>Workpoints are distributed to OPTIMIZE the workplace and reflect the functions of the organizations. Workpoints are not assigned or designed for individuals but rather for the optimum functionality of the workplace. The users have the freedom to choose their preferred work setting</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Part 3 Design Development, Section 3.2</p>	December 2020	
Choice of workpoints only available at certain times (e.g. early in the morning)		PSPC – GCworkplace Team	<p>Taking considerations lessons learned from Workplace 2.0, GCworkplace is equipped with a large number of different workpoints. The users have the freedom to choose their preferred workpoints and setting according to their needs and preferences. As everyone is different, users should be able to find a workpoint that suits their needs.</p> <p>In some departments, it is also possible to reserve your workpoint in advance.</p>	December 2020	





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Loss of privacy		PSPC – GCworkplace Team	<p>Focus Work and Refuge: GCworkplace design focuses on improving access to visual and acoustic privacy. By recognizing that all employees can benefit from an environment that supports focus work or time to recharge, GCworkplace is designed to support all occupants.</p> <p>Also, taking into consideration lessons learned from Workplace 2.0, GCworkplace offers more enclosed workpoints and full height partitions.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide, Part 2 Key Design Principles, Section 2.4.2</p>	March 2021	
Too much noise		PSPC – GCworkplace Team	<p>Taking into consideration lessons learned from Workplace 2.0, GCworkplace is divided into 3 distinctive zones: a quiet zone, a transitional zone and a collaborative zone. The quiet and collaborative zones are usually at opposite sides of a floor and are composed of various enclosed or open workpoints.</p>	December 2020	







Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			<p>And the transitional zone is the one that allows the other two to co-exist.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Design Guide Part 2 Key Design Principles</p>		
<p>Other people don't respect the quiet zones</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p> <p>GCworkplace Project Teams, including Change Management</p>	<p>GCworkplace quiet zones are usually well indicated. They include open spaces but also offer some enclosed spaces. Many quiet zones have a cozier feel with carpets, wood and lower lighting that help indicate the space is a quiet one.</p> <p>Before moving into a GCworkplace, many activities are usually organized to help the employees understand the best practices in the new workplace. The creation of an etiquette guide by the employees as well as the use of visual reminders can also ensure everyone is aware of the expected behaviours.</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	








Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<p>Workpoints are set up so that employees can't see people approaching their desks</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>GCworkplace offers a variety of options for everyone and an employee should be able to find many options that accommodate their preference, in this case, seeing people that are approaching their workpoint.</p> <p>However, following the feedback received, we suggest that a best practice would be to include some more enclosed options where the people are facing the door to help with this issue, for example, a focus room where the desk is facing the door.</p> <p>Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Technical Reference Manual</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	<p>Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)</p>
<p>Lights are not adjustable at workpoints or in meeting rooms</p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment</p>	<p>GCworkplace offers task lighting for various workpoints. It also suggest adding dimmable accent lighting for user adjustability.</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		(OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team	Accessibility tips are mentioned in the Technical Reference Manual.		
Temperature is not adjustable at workpoints or in meeting rooms		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team	This speaks to one of the many advantages to unassigned workpoints. People can chose the workpoint they prefer. Inevitably, some will be cooler and some warmer, based on the placement on the floorplate and proximity to windows / sun. If temperature are uncomfortable, a call must be placed to the National Service Call Center.	March 2021	
Overhead fans cannot be turned off at workpoints or in meeting rooms		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Overhead fans in meeting rooms can normally be turned off but the switch location should be identified.	March 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<p>No way to know where people are sitting</p>		<p>Shared Services Canada (SSC) and departments IT branches</p>	<p>In a GCworkplace, there are a few ways to see where colleagues are sitting. Many departments are using instant messaging tools like MS Teams and Jabber where it is possible to include a status to indicate where employees are located as they can be working from anywhere: the office, home, a coworking site or anywhere they feel comfortable working.</p> <p>Some teams and departments also developed some tools posted on the wall so people can indicate where they are sitting. This tends to not be a great option in teams that change workpoints often in a day.</p> <p>This could be discussed as part of the change management plan.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	<p>Transfer consultation results SSC and departments IT branches to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.</p>
<p>Sit-stand desks are not automatic and can't be adjusted by people with lower strength</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>Height adjustable workpoints installed in GCworkplace spaces are usually electric and are located at the front of the workpoint so easy to reach.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<p>No instructions at workpoints on how to use sit-stand desks, monitor arms, etc.</p>		<p>Shared Services Canada (SSC) and departments IT branches</p>	<p>As a best practice at the Centre for GCworkplace Innovation, clear written instructions are available on the centre's GCpedia page (under the FAQ tab) for all IT equipment available in the centre. We also use signage developed for the centre to indicate some of the instruction in the meeting rooms.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	<p>Transfer consultation results SSC and departments IT branches to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.</p>
<p>Workpoints are not large enough to accommodate a service dog</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>GCworkplace offers various sizes workpoints, many options should be able to accommodate a service dog.</p> <p>Accessibility tips to be added to the Technical Reference Manual to ensure people are aware it could be an issue.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	<p>Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)</p>
<p>Lack of natural light</p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p> <p>AND</p>	<p>GCworkplace offers environments with more natural light and views to the outside to promote mental and physical health and increase productivity. It optimizes day light infiltration to reduce the need for artificial lighting.</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	


Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		PSPC GCworkplace Team			
Fluorescent lights cause headaches or overstimulation		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Fluorescent lights have been around and operating in most private sector and government office buildings over the past number of years. In cases where there are issues of complaints of headaches or overstimulation, it is recommended that those areas be investigated with respect to the age of the systems, including their design, operation and functioning of the lamps and ballasts so that further actions of improvement can be taken to remedy the situation.	March 2021	
Walls are distracting because they are either too bright or too bland		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND	Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual	January 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)




Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		PSPC GCworkplace Team			
<p>Carpet patterns cause dizziness because they are too busy</p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p> <p>AND</p> <p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual</p> <p>This will include carpets but also wall coverings.</p>		<p>Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)</p>
<p>Assistive technology such as sit-stand desks, adjustable monitors, ergonomic chairs, and noise-cancelling headphones are not available without special requests for accommodations</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p> <p>Department IT teams</p>	<p>GCworkplace offers for all to use sit-stand desk (usually electric to facilitate usage), various types of adjustable monitors and various models of ergonomic chairs. Employees should be able to find a workpoint that meets their needs without any special accommodation requests.</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			Purchase of noise-cancelling headphones are the responsibility of the department.		
No sensory rooms or water features for relaxation		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Sensory rooms are usually tailored to meet a person's individual needs. GCworkplace doesn't promote creating individual design solutions for many different reasons. A large fully enclosed, reflection point could be made available and designed in a way that can be soothing, simple and with some customizable features such as window treatments, lighting color, temperature and brightness, and perhaps soft seating with an ottoman.	January 2021	Further research can be done.
Not enough quiet or focus rooms		PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace is not a one size fits all model, which means that workpoints ratios and distributions can be adjusted to meet the organisation needs and can be customized within a standard range. A user-centered design approach ensures that a proper process is followed for requirements gathering	March 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			which relies on user surveying. This process then leads to the ideal design solution for the organization.		
Meditation rooms get booked for meetings instead of being available for meditation or prayer		PSPC GCworkplace Team	It is up to the organization to decide if a reservation system should be put in place, but we strongly recommend that a majority of reflection point and phone booth wouldn't need a reservation to use it, since their use is usually spontaneous.	March 2021	
			GCworkplace design focuses on improving access to visual and acoustic privacy. By recognizing that all employees can benefit from an environment that supports focus work or time to recharge, GCworkplace is designed to support employees. By providing proper zoning, including a Quiet Zone, it is ensured that noisier and more collaborative activities are performed away from quieter activities to minimize disruption. The Quiet Zone is a distraction-free area to help create a work environment conducive to concentration, highly cognitive tasks and activities		

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			<p>requiring a high level of discretion. Privacy is achieved by managing acoustics in open areas and providing ample open AND enclosed individual workpoints.</p>		
<p>Only upper management is allowed to use closed offices and focus rooms</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>A culture change may be needed but in a GCworkplace, everyone can use the workpoint that corresponds to their needs or preferences, including closed offices and focus rooms. This culture change can be addressed with change management when preparing to move to a GCworkplace.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	
<p>Quiet rooms are only available with a reservation that can be difficult to make</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>It is up to the organization to decide if a reservation system should be put in place, but we strongly recommend that a majority of reflection point and phone booth wouldn't need a reservation to use it, since their use is usually spontaneous.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	
<p>Quiet rooms have glass walls or windows so there is no privacy</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>GCworkplace design focuses on improving access to visual and acoustic privacy. By recognizing that all employees can benefit from an environment that supports focus work</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	








Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
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or time to recharge, GCworkplace is designed to support employees. By providing proper zoning, including a Quiet Zone, it is ensured that noisier and more collaborative activities are performed away from quieter activities to minimize disruption. The Quiet Zone is a distraction-free area to help create a work environment conducive to concentration, highly cognitive tasks and activities requiring a high level of discretion. Privacy is achieved by managing acoustics in open areas and providing ample open AND enclosed individual workpoints.



We recommend having frosted film in glass walls to increase the confidentiality and/or privacy. Privacy film are to be applied in accordance with applicable codes and standards. Fully glazed doors and partitions shall have at 1350-1500mm from the floor, 50 mm high continuous opaque strips that extend full width of doors and partitions.









Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Meeting rooms and quiet rooms should have an element of nature (e.g. a window, plants, a graphic mural)		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Incorporating natural features, materials and patterns into the design and layout are some strategies for bringing the natural world into the indoor environment is part of the GCworkplace design.	March 2021	
Lockers not large enough to accommodate canes, dog beds, or laptops		PSPC GCworkplace Team	<p>In a GCworkplace environment, Personal Storage Lockers are located outside of individual workpoints, and centralized in areas adjacent to circulation paths for easy access. Quantities and configurations should be determined in conjunction with client consultation. For example, consideration should be given to common items stored such as typical laptop size or other individual storage requirements.</p> <p>Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual. Tips could include adding hooks inside wardrobes and lockers instead of hangers, ensuring hangers are not attached to rods, including different types of lockers to meet the needs of employees.</p>	December 2020	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			For more information: GCworkplace Technical Reference Manual		
Lockers with key pads were not good for people with memory challenges			Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual. Tips could include having different types of locking mechanism to ensure different people can use the lockers without any issues. This would be possible for assigned lockers but could be harder for visitors. Options will be researched.		Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
Lockers with no identifying features other than a number make it difficult for people to remember which one was theirs			Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual. Tips could include numbers on the lockers or personalized name plates.		Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
Keys or fobs for lockers should have clips so they don't get lost		Client departments	It would be up to the client department or to the employee to purchase clips for locker keys.	March 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<p>Not enough space in locker area for multiple people to be there at the same time or for a wheelchair to turn around</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>Our current best practices include providing locker areas with lockers, benches, coat closets, and ample circulation space. When and where possible, we avoid “dead end corridors”. By doing so, the space can accommodate more people and improve the overall access to those using mobility devices.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	
<p>Lockers are all in one area on the floor or not near where people work</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>In a GCworkplace environment, Personal Storage Lockers are located outside of individual workpoints, and centralized in areas adjacent to circulation paths for easy access. Quantities and configurations should be determined in conjunction with client consultation. For example, consideration should be given to common items stored such as typical laptop size or other individual storage requirements.</p> <p>In order to promote a shared space, personal storage must be removed from individual workpoints and centralized.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			Lockers to be located near main entrance to facilitate storage of personal items when arriving or leaving.		
Length of time to get accommodations		PSPC – GCworkplace Team AND Departments HR Branches	GCworkplace removes part of this issue as many requirements are already in the space (for example: height adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, etc.). By integrating accessibility at the beginning of the design phase, GCworkplace is then promoting an inclusive, equitable and adaptive workplace.	December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can facilitate and accelerate accommodation requests.
Accommodation for non-visible disabilities are harder to get or are not thought of automatically like visible disabilities		Departments HR Branches		December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can change the way non-visible disabilities are dealt with.





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Need to always justify accommodation requests		Departments HR Branches	Doctor's notes or ergonomic assessments are often questioned by managers.	December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can change the way accommodation requests are processed.
Lack of standardized process for accommodations		Departments HR branches, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and maybe Shared Services Canada (SSC)	The Government of Canada (GC) Workplace Accessibility Passport might help solve this issue, at least partially. The Passport is a tool (yet to be launched) to create a more inclusive and accessible workplace by facilitating conversations between employees and their managers about the tools and supports employees need to succeed in their jobs. The Passport will support employee mobility and career development by ensuring the portability of adaptive tools and support measures between federal organizations.	December 2020	Verify when the passport will be launched. Transfer consultation results to departments and to OPSA and SSC to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.
Term employees are not treated the same as permanent employees with regard to accommodations		Departments HR Branches		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
No flexibility to work from home without having to justify		Departments HR Branches	<p>Flexibility is one of the seven dimensions of GCworkplace. Flexibility allows employees to work where they will be the most productive for the tasks they have to accomplished, taking in consideration their schedule, preferences and needs. However, each department have their own rules on telework and remote working.</p> <p>During the pandemic, Government of Canada employees have shown that it is possible to be as productive from home as it is from the office.</p>	December 2020	
Managers monitor employees' actions so closely employees feel like they are being spied on		Departments HR Branches		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
Managers and other employees lack understanding of mental health issues		Departments HR Branches		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.


Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Accommodations are not granted or are hard to get for online interviews and job competitions		Departments HR Branches		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
Requests for accommodations and medical information are not kept private by managers		Departments HR Branches		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
Bathroom sizes – some are too big, some too small, different sizes for different needs		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	OABE to provide information It is very hard to implement in most existing facilities without reducing the number of washrooms. This could compromise the number of washrooms per floor in existing buildings.	December 2020	Should be considered in new buildings, and where possible in major fit-up and base building improvements.
No automatic dispensers for water, soap, paper towel		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	OABE to provide information – work in progress due to COVID Application may vary depending on building owner and existing agreements.	December 2020	Where possible, automatic dispensers at reaching distance in a seated position is ideal.

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Bathroom doors are not automated or do not open in a way that is accessible		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Due to the pandemic and other needs that have been identified during research and consultation, OABE is researching options for automatic door openers.	March 2021	
Bathroom stalls with open tops and bottoms cause anxiety		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Male/Female multi-stall washrooms with open tops and bottoms are typically designed to facilitate a faster air flushing and evacuation of foul air which reduces exposure by individuals using the facility. However, the application and use of single use all-access washroom will improve the situation regarding anxiety.	January 2021	
No gender-neutral bathrooms		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	PSPC is working toward establishing an approved functional directive for All Access Washroom.	March 2021	
No or not enough single-stall		Office of Accessibility in the Built	PSPC is working toward establishing an approved functional directive for All Access Washroom.	March 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
bathrooms for privacy		Environment (OABE) – PSPC			
No biowaste bins in all bathrooms, including men’s		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	PSPC is working toward establishing an approved functional directive for All Access Washroom.	March 2021	
No sharps disposal containers		Unknown		December 2020	Research who would be the OPI and see how/if this can be put in place.
Hallways and kitchens too narrow or cluttered		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC AND PSPC GCworkplace Team	CSA B651-18, 5.1 Accessible routes width has increased. An accessible path of travel is now 1700mm minimum wide and aisles are 1000mm min. Doorways are now 850mm. Post-COVID increase in GCworkplace designs. Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual, including space between tables and chairs, between counter tops and tables, etc.	December 2020	New buildings, new space acquisitions and fit-up projects will incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation. Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
For more information: GCworkplace Technical Reference Manual					
No quiet areas to eat in or near kitchens		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Add an accessibility tip/best practice to the Design Guide to suggest, where possible, the addition of huddles near the kitchen. Huddles are often designed to reduce noise disruptions.	March 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
Microwaves and fridges are not standard issue and must be paid for by employees		Client departments	Appliances are the responsibility of the client department.	March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
Kitchens don't have basic supplies like dishes, utensils, can openers		Client departments	Stocking the kitchens falls under the client department's jurisdiction / authority.	March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
Meeting rooms with glass walls are distracting because you can see people passing by		PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace recommends glazing on enclosed rooms to allow maximum light infiltration and to optimize daylight infiltration to the floorplate to reduce the need for artificial lighting during peak daylight hours. Environments with more natural light and views to the outside	January 2021	









Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			<p>promote mental and physical health and increase productivity. In addition, GCworkplace offers a variety of different meeting rooms. For example, some with frosted glazing, which might be preferred by some employees.</p>		
<p>Meeting rooms don't have adjustable tables</p>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>Having height adjustable meetings tables in smaller meeting rooms is possible and will depend on client requirements. That said, having height-adjustable tables in medium or large meeting rooms (12 -20 people) isn't ideal for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That type of furniture is not readily available on the market and would be a huge expense. • We also have to remember that when many people attend an in person meeting, having standard height furniture is what is expected, and comfortable for most. 	<p>March 2021</p>	






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Meeting rooms should have different types of seating available (e.g. small couches, adjustable chairs, foot rests)		PSPC GCworkplace Team	We encourage providing variety when it comes to room layouts and furniture in meeting rooms. Giving people the opportunity to pick their preferred workpoint.	March 2021	
Some chairs or spots should be identified for use by people with disabilities		PSPC GCworkplace Team	<p>Identifying spaces for people with disabilities is no practice we think to be ideal.</p> <p>By labeling spaces, we may be giving these users the impression that identified spots are the only places they are allowed to work in. Also, how do we chose which spot or workpoint is “appropriate” for each type of disability.</p> <p>Should someone require special accommodations they should speak with their management and find the best solution, unique to them.</p> <p>Ergonomic chairs that are procured as a result of an ergonomic assessment, should be labeled and</p>	March 2021	






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			only used by the person it was purchased for.		
Chairs are not designed to support people who weigh more or have larger bodies		PSPC GCworkplace Team	As part of the GCworkplace standards, task chairs are designed to support the “average” body size and weight. Should someone require a smaller or larger chair, a request must be made to management for an ergonomic assessment. Please note, we have asked that the specification be revised to see if it could be more inclusive of different body shapes, sizes and weights.	March 2021	
Meeting rooms only have one door which causes problems if a room is full or if someone uses mobility aids		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual.	March 2021	Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual.
Meeting rooms are not set up with videoconferencing or the ability to		PSPC GCworkplace Team	As the seven dimensions of GCworkplace include flexibility and mobility, it is recommended that employees working in a	March 2021	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
connect with remote workers		AND Shared Services Canada (SSC)	GCworkplace have the various technological tools, including videoconferencing directly on their laptops so they can use them from any workpoints. Depending on the department's needs, some meeting rooms can be equipped with technologies such as videoconferencing.		
Wayfinding should be available to find meeting rooms and offices		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	GoC is required to follow FIP standards.	March 2021	
Wayfinding should be available in multiple locations on the floor (not just by the elevator)		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	GoC is required to follow FIP standards.	March 2021	
No ability to print documents		PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace includes "equipment areas / rooms" as part of all fit-ups. They typically house printers, multi-	March 2021	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<p>Not enough accessible parking spaces</p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p>	<p>function devices, shredders, stationery and others equipment.</p> <p>TBS Standards determine the number of accessible parking spaces based on building occupancy. Please note that the TBS ASRP also refers to the requirements of municipal bylaws, so the number of accessible spaces could be more than that identified in ASRP, but it could not be less than this one.</p> <p>As an enhancement, it is recommended that additional slightly smaller accessible parking spaces be provided for people with limited mobility such as a person with a cane, walker, and crutches.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	
<p>Automatic doors have signs saying “for people with mobility disabilities only” which excludes other people who need them</p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC and Property and Facility</p>	<p>We believe that these elevators are not reserved exclusively for people with disabilities, they are more programmed to allow more time for people with reduced mobility or visually impaired to enter and exit the elevators. The ad should be corrected to avoid misinterpretation.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		Management Service Line			
<p>Elevator design is not consistent which can cause anxiety when buttons aren't where they're expected to be</p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p>	<p>Canada and the United States use the same standard for elevators (ASME A171-2016 / CSA B44-16). The positions of the control buttons depend on the number of floors to be served, the location of the elevator, internal dimensions of the car, having a central or side door, having opposite doors, etc. However, all buttons include tactile / Braille signage, have a light and a sound is emitted when the destination is registered, while the light goes out and a sound or verbal announcement specifies the current floor as well as the direction of movement of the car. Due to COVID-19, there would be a new system being approved by CSA B-44 and ASME A171, whereby a person could call an elevator and choose their destination once inside, simply by using their smartphone. The studies are continuing their course, the ascents will be updated</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Automatic door buttons are not sensitive enough to be opened by service animals		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	gradually once approved, but it could take several years.	March 2021	
Automatic doors are too heavy to open manually in case of a power failure		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	CSA B651-18 has a maximum weight requirement for opening a door. OABE is researching options for automatic door openers. Where applicable, it is recommended to offer vertical push buttons or door sensors.	March 2021	New buildings, new space acquisitions, and fit-up projects will incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation.
Headsets aren't provided with work cell phones to reduce neck strain		Client departments and possibly Shared Services Canada (SSC)	Purchase of headsets are the responsibility of the department.	March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.