Interactive Workshop Series

CACEE National Conference

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Presenters:

Chelsea E. Mohler and Jeremiah Bach

About NEADS

- The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) is an organization focused on the support, empowerment and advocacy of post-secondary students with disabilities.

- The organization provides resources and assistance through multiple ventures, including relevant research, services, and scholarships to students with disabilities.

- NEADS supports disabled students in their educational pursuits, and advocates for their rights.

- The organization provides a national forum to facilitate communication and a network for students with disabilities across Canada to discuss their concerns, barriers and experiences as they navigate through their post-secondary programs.

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About NEADS

Vision:

Post-secondary students with disabilities experience fully accessible and inclusive education and employment.

Mission:

Through leadership, innovation and collaboration NEADS delivers research, education and resources to advance full access and inclusion to education and employment. As the national voice of students with disabilities, NEADS is a resource in the areas of: student finance, student experience in class and on campus, and student employment.

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Overview of The "Breaking Through Barriers": An Employment Project to Support Persons with Disabilities project

- Project involves holding focused employability workshops across Canada.

- Workshops address the project's objective of engaging post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities as mentors to private sector employers so they may learn of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities first hand.

- Workshops also enable employers and career professionals to address the students on key areas to share their successes and challenges in equity hiring, retention and accommodations with students/graduates.

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How does Breaking It Down (BID) differ from other traditional employment workshops?

- Two-way flow of knowledge (non-didactic model of learning and promoting knowledge transfer)

- Interactive; participant engagement is the core focus (uses participant discussions to inform content for future events and for web portal)

- Create opportunities through discussion and dialogue to engage in "difficult conversations" around removing barriers for students and recent graduates with disabilities

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A brief description of the events to date, successes and key learnings.

- Toronto (University of Toronto)

- Saskatchewan (University of Regina)

- Halifax (Saint Mary's University)

- Vancouver (Simon Frasier University)

- Calgary (University of Calgary)

A brief description of the events to date, successes and key learnings. (cont'd)

- Successful pedagogy and knowledge exchange process
- Direct Hires as a result of events in Toronto, Halifax, and Calgary
- Post-Event Resource sharing by participants
- The linkages we have made through the project have extended beyond the Project Advisory Group
- Success with Partnerships: CCRW & CACEE
- Facilitating connections for employers with disabilities

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Breaking Down Barriers Web Portal overview

- Geared to students, recent graduates, employers, career educators, and other professionals

- Working with students with disabilities

- Aim of creating dialogue/providing information around non-traditional topics that are specific to students and recent graduates with disabilities

- Interactive (have job board/what's new feature)

- Emphasis on strong partnership between students/recent graduates, career centers and employers

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Key Findings from Research to date

- Key topics emerging from the round-table event discussions:
    - SOCIAL MEDIA/PERSONAL BRANDING
    - DISCLOSURE AND ACCOMMODATION
    - SOFT SKILLS; AND,
    - MOVING BEYOND ENTRY LEVEL JOBS/BARRIERS TO FOCUSED CAREER GOALS.

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Key Findings from Research to date (Cont.)

- **SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERSONAL BRANDING**
  - Disability as part of personal brand
  - Availability of Online tools specifically aimed at Persons with Disabilities.
  - ACCESS ISSUES TO SOCIAL MEDIA (AFFORDABILITY OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY/COMPUTER ACCESS.

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Key Findings from Research to date (Cont.)

- **Disclosure and Accommodation**
  - Disclosure can be framed positively – rather than limit someone – focus on skills developed from disability
  - Overcoming adversity is art of daily life – transferable skills
  - Advocacy skills
  - Experience is important – volunteering helps to highlight and build skills
  - DISCLOSURE AS PROCESS/DEPENDING ON JOB/TYPE OF DISABILITY FRAMING TIME OF DISCLOSURE

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Key Findings from Research to date (Cont.)

- **Importance of Soft Skills**
  - Focus on abilities, not on disabilities (use disability to showcase how it has equipped you with skills like being creative, strong when using technology, an excellent problem solver)
  - IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYERS/WORKPLACES HAVING SENSITIVITY/NEGOTIATING DISABILITY

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Key Findings from Research to date (Cont

- **MOVING BEYOND ENTRY LEVEL JOBS/BARRIERS TO FOCUSED CAREER GOALS**
  - New graduates with disabilities might have lack of experience what can they do?
  - Experience + training courses
  - How certain skills are transferrable
  - Not all come from work
  - And not all skills come from a structured place
  - Non-traditional experiences
  - Use field work + coop/internships

The Power of Simulation learning in creating a culture of Inclusion

- Introduced at the Vancouver BID event to accommodate number of participants
- Used model of group simulation, practice now widely used in group simulation. Simulated a "Diversity Lunch and Learn" at a workplace
- Activity description/ how differs from traditional simulation:
  - As opposed to each character being given character, each participant creates their own character
  - One person always stays out of character to practice facilitation skills around disability and employment education
  - Time in/time out utilized to pause simulation and process

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The Power of Simulation learning in creating a culture of Inclusion (Cont.)

- Simulations allow participants to bring issues they're dealing with at school/work

- Example of simulation: HR Manager and Implementing scent free policy

- Provides place for people to voice things they usually wouldn't in workshop format

- Is a way to educate people in real-time, embodied way ie. people become angry within simulation

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The Power of Simulation learning in creating a culture of Inclusion (Cont.)

Your Turn!

- Develop Character
  - Develop personality, background, why they are there, be mindful of ability/disability privilege
- "Rules" of Simulation
  - Time in/Time out etc.
- Brainstorm Scenario
- One person as facilitator

Acknowledgements

- -our project partners: Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE); Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW); Magnet Ryerson; and, Embridge Pipelines.

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