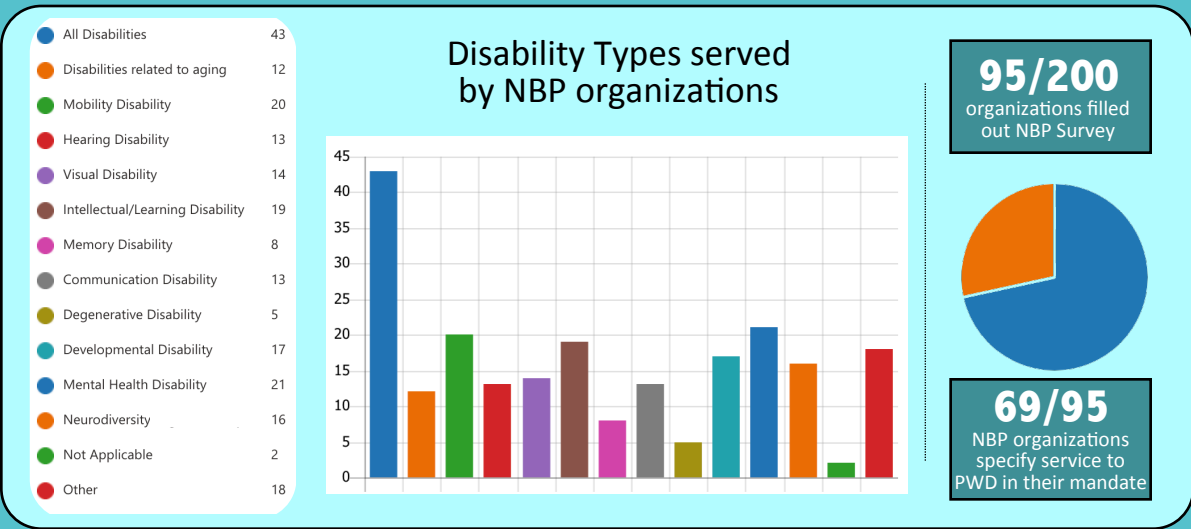


NETWORK BUILDING PROJECT (NBP)

Summary Report - Survey to Identify Challenges in the Disability Community, July 2022



ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

- Adaptive technology is very expensive and should perhaps be considered a medical expense, at least in part.
- Better education on available assistive technologies, where to find support
- Lending library for adapted equipment and resources; free or low-cost resources and equipment
- More avenues for funding accessible equipment (mobility - manual and power chairs, lifts, ramps, bathroom and breathing aids)
- Access to Assistive Communication devices for people with speech/language disabilities other than deafness

“Adaptive technology programs should be available to persons with disabilities who volunteer in their community. This would promote their contribution to society and the right to be fully active and to participate in any activity suitable to them. Currently, adaptive technology programs exist for the purposes of work only and that is not adequate.”

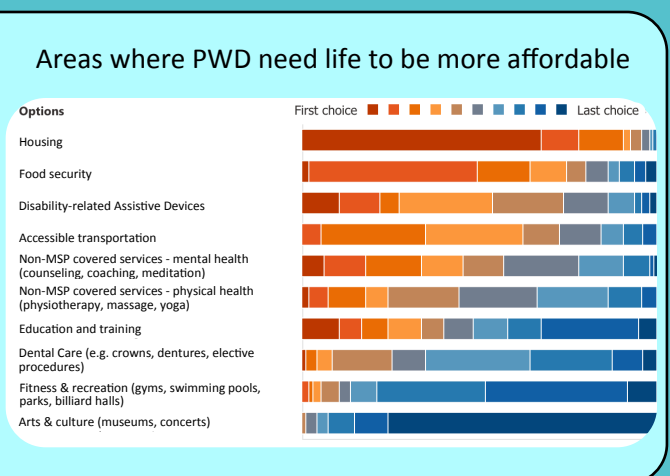
“Adopt a requirement for Accessibility Certification for all provincial infrastructure investments. Nothing currently exists and as a result new buildings continue to include barriers for people with disabilities, often requiring costly retrofits. Government leadership in this area is critical.”

ACCESSIBILITY

- Poor accessibility to newly built public and private structures
- Some of our common spaces need physical changes to make the space accessible such as automatic doors, sinks with space for a wheelchair, etc.
- Digital/virtual presence and offerings must be accessible, including online event spaces/media development tools and online K12 education
- Remote access to services must continue after COVID restrictions lift
- Changes to built environment to lower sensory stimuli: noise, lighting, smells, chemicals, interactions
- More public accessible washrooms
- Make elections and voting accessible; ensure we as blind people have a way to be comfortable and have privacy

FINANCIAL

- Need general funding pool to access disability-incurred expenses not covered under existing supports
- Increase rates for general PWD assistance - people know where to best allocate their money to address their biggest concerns.
- Improved ease to obtain workplace-based employment assistance (STD, LTD)
- Build community capacity for succession planning as PWD and their families age
- Implement federal Canada Disability Benefit with no clawbacks from provincial disability benefits
- Cease legislated poverty for people, e.g. penalizing people with disabilities who choose to be married by cutting benefits



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CARE



- An improved home support assessment process, taking into account a person's full life, for both physical support and ability to be part of the community
- Long term service provider contracts
- Better access to Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL) programs
- Access to medical supplies & prescription medication, podiatry, eye exams
- Reallocate funding for OT services in acute care to primary care.
- Excessive use of medication and use of electroshock in mental health system; mental health therapy should be covered under MSP
- More patient centred, family engaged, progressive responses to the delivery of mental health services

"Employers are not incentivized to hire persons who don't fit the traditional mold but could meet essential criteria if efforts were extended to consider what is truly essential. Note all the adjustments employers were able to effect under COVID, previously rejected as impossible or too onerous. Significant changes can be effected if we want to be more inclusive."

EDUCATION

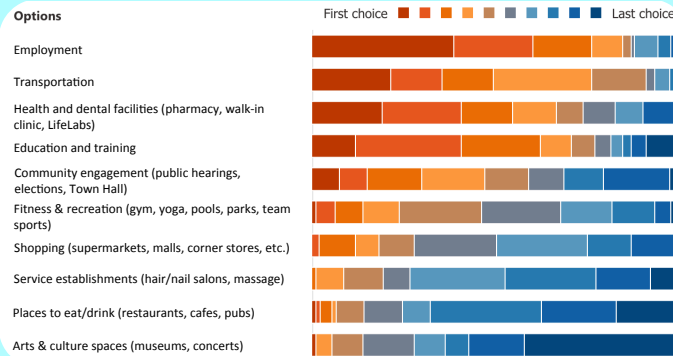


- More Education Assistants and support staff in schools
- More flexible learning options, e.g. pace and format of delivery. Restructure courses/programs to allow for more flexibility (e.g., extra time to finish credits, access funds to support longer clinical placements)
- Post-secondary programs requiring full-time attendance -- part-time should always be an option, particularly for students with disabilities
- Help K-12 schools ensure curriculum and built environment are fully accessible to students, parents, teachers and staff with disabilities
- Provide funding to Post-Secondary institutions for assistive technology resources, staff

"Government and institutional transparency. Stop using privacy as excuse to avoid accountability."

I'd recommend they DON'T create programming specifically designed for disabled people. Make every program accessible for all people.

Areas where PWD need more access, representation and/or inclusion



27.4% cited changes to built environment (parking, wheelchair access, automated doors, pedestrian signals, etc.)

23.2% cited changes to services for PWD (caregivers, therapists, interpreters)

51.6% chose lack of affordable housing as most critical housing issue for PWD

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



- Advocacy for income support (form filling, healthcare advocate) and research funding
- Culturally safe "system navigation" (i.e. applying for financial supports, acquiring assistive technologies)
- Support to get PWD funding
- Services that support the transition from youth services to adult services.
- Counselling/therapy, life skills development and support
- Anti-violence service navigation for women with disabilities
- Free interpreting services for the Deaf
- Struggles with non-verbal communication decoding

"Education on the dizzying array of services available to PWD is sorely lacking. It's common for PWD to not receive the support they need solely because they are unaware that specific services exist."

"Current service and guide dog legislation does not serve PWD and is not industry standard. It is set up for our provincial government to monopolize people needing assistance dogs and facilitate people who want to have their pets in public."

ISOLATION & INCLUSION



- Loneliness and isolation are two major health challenges faced by PWD. Being undervalued and underutilized as a strength in community is a major challenge as well
- Lack of trauma-informed and culturally safe supports for disabled Indigenous peoples (especially Elders)
- Funding options which fail to adequately account for the experience of persons with non-physical disabilities; overly restrictive program and other criteria which unnecessarily limit participation of persons with disabilities
- Support newcomers with disabilities to get connected with the disability community

NBP Steering Committee: David Fong, Disability Foundation; Helaine Boyd, Disability Alliance of BC; Karen Lai, City of Vancouver; Heather McCain, Creating Accessible Neighbourhoods; Chris McBride, SCI BC; Callum Bente, Self-Advocate, Vancouver Community Council of Community Living of BC (CLBC); Warren Bente, father of Callum; Kelly Dede-Marshall (social worker, representing UBCIC); Adrienne Fitch, Disability Foundation (Project Coordinator).

With gratitude to Costanza Testino, Vancouver Coastal Health, for her participation and insightful contributions