

Inclusion is the Future of Work

2026 Symposium Programme

As of: October 17, 2026

Date: Monday, October 26, 2026; Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Format: Hybrid

Registration: <https://vraie-idea.ca/idea-4dy-symposium-2026>

Location: Campbell Conference Facility
Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy
University of Toronto

Theme: Moving from reactive to proactive workplace systems

Objectives:

- Share innovations and promising practices in accessible workplaces.
- Highlight partner contributions and showcase their work.
- Create opportunities for advancing uptake of solutions.
- Strengthen relationships among researchers, employers, policymakers, unions, persons with lived experience of disability, and community organizations.

Day 1

Masters of Ceremonies:

- **Anne Kresta**, President and Executive Director, Level It Up
- **Peter Field**, Research Associate, IDEA; Associate, IDEA-STEM

Time	Session
9:00 – 9:30 AM	Registration, coffee and pastries

Time	Session
9:30 – 9:50 AM	<u>Welcoming remarks and housekeeping</u> University of Toronto welcome: Gillian Hamilton, Vice Dean Academic Planning Introduction to the day: Krista Carr, Chair of IDEA Advisory Committee; CEO, Inclusion Canada Rafael Gomez, IDEA 4DY Co-Director; Director, CIRHR, University of Toronto Emile Tompa, IDEA Executive Director; Senior Scientist, Institute for Work & Health
9:50 – 10:20 AM	<u>Morning keynote</u> Tammy Morris, Accessibility and Neuroinclusion Leader, EY Canada
10:20 – 11:00 AM	<u>Morning presentation and panel</u> Systems-level approaches, continual improvement and the IDEA 9-domain framework IDEA 4DY Team
11:00 – 11:10 AM	Break
11:10 – 12:15 PM	<u>Partner Lightning Talks</u> 1. Accessibility as a business strategy – Jeff Willbond, Chief Accessibility Officer; March of Dimes Canada 2. Supporting learning differences in manufacturing – Sherene Mitchell, Program Manager, Supporting Learning Differences Initiative, Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium

Time	Session
	3. Mohamed Elmi, Executive Director, Diversity Institute 4. Inclusive workplaces: Accommodation by design – Alison Staples, Chair of the Board, Human Resources Professional Association Rola Helou, CEO, and Erin Sailer, Chair of the Board; Chartered Professionals for Human Resources (Virtual)
12:15 – 1:15 PM	Lunch and networking
1:15 – 1:20 PM	<u>Afternoon remarks from MCs</u>
1:20 – 2:15 PM	<u>IDEA Lightning Talks</u> IDEA applied work – Tools and resources from IDEA (including 4DY) 1. Designing disability inclusive career fairs – Dan Samosh, Assistant Professor, Employment Relations, Queen’s University and Sinead McCarthy, Vice President, Youth Employment Services 2. EDIA training for transformation – Karen Harlos, Lead, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Professor, Department of Business, University of Winnipeg 3. Developing a workplace benefits guidance tool for employers and other workplace parties – Ashvene Sureshkumar, Research Associate, Workplace Systems and Partnerships, IDEA

Time	Session
	4. Integrating accessibility into inclusion, diversity and equity policy, practice and workplace design for SMEs – Shannon Killip, Postdoctoral Associate, Employment Support Systems, IDEA
2:15 – 2:30 PM	Break and transition to workshops
2:30 – 3:30 PM	<u>Workshops</u> 1. Building a workplace accessibility supports system that works – Dilshan Fernando, Research Associate, IDEA; Peter Field, Research Associate, IDEA; Matt Freeman, Assistant Clinical Professor, School of Rehabilitation Science, McMaster University 2. Inclusive collective bargaining language – Jennifer Harmer, IDEA 4DY; Or Shay, IDEA 4DY; Emmanuelle Lopez-Bastos, UFCW Canada; Laura Peña, UFCW Canada; Kelly McDermott, Regional Municipality of Durham 3. A systems approach to building organizational capacity for disability employment inclusion – Jenny Hope, Director of Development and Capacity Building, Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) 4. From awareness to action: Implementing accessible and equitable AI in employment (Virtual) – Lisa Liskovoi, Senior Inclusive Designer, Digital Accessibility Consultant, OCADU IDRC
3:30 – 3:40 PM	Transition back to plenary

Time	Session
3:40 – 4:00 PM	<u>Afternoon keynote</u> Raf Khan , Director of Manufacturing Initiatives, Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC)
4:00 – 4:15 PM	Day 1 Closing reflections/Announcements

Day 2

Masters of Ceremonies:

- **Sharon McCarry**, National Inclusion Lead, Autism Research, Autism Alliance of Canada
- **Bilan Arte**, National Representative, Human Rights Department, Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

Time	Session
8:45 – 9:00 AM	Registration, coffee and pastries
9:00 – 9:10 AM	<u>Welcoming remarks</u> Masters of Ceremonies
9:10 – 9:25 AM	<u>Morning keynote</u> Valerie Vanderwyk , Executive Director, Indigenous Skills, Employment, Apprenticeship and Development (ISEAD)
9:25 – 10:15 AM	<u>Youth panel</u> Topic: Youth voices on barriers and facilitators to work Introduction: Bridgette Sterling Moderator: Maria Libératore , Itinerant Work Experience Teacher, Student Services, York Catholic District Schoolboard

Time	Session
	Panelists: 1. Adriana Juradinho – York University 2. Marya Bangash – Holland Bloorview Hospital 3. Rianne Matthias – University of Toronto 4. Kaelin Barichello - Junior Project Coordinator at Children, Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services 5. Brody Del Bove – Humber Polytechnic
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 – 11:20 AM	<u>Fireside chat</u> Introduction: Alec Farquhar, Strategic Advisor, IDEA Moderator: Rafael Gomez, Director of the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources at the University of Toronto. Raf Khan , Director, Manufacturing Initiatives, EMC Eve Adams , ED of Canadian Business Disability Inclusion Network (CBDIN) Tammy Morris , Accessibility & Neuroinclusion Leader, EY Canada Laura Pena , National Representative – Human Rights & Equity Department, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW Canada)
11:20 – 11:30 AM	Break and transition to workshops
11:30 – 12:30 PM	<u>Workshops</u> 1. Practical tools to support people living with chronic health conditions in the workplace – Dr. Monique Gignac, University of Waterloo 2. When conversations transform us: Fostering inclusive mentorships that strengthen social capital –

Time	Session
	Joanna Goode, Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) 3. Creating safer workplaces – Valerie Vanderwyk, Indigenous Skills Employment Apprenticeship and Development, and Amanda Klarer, Keepers of the Circle 4. Building a workplace accessibility supports system that works (Virtual) – Dilshan Fernando, Peter Field and Matt Freeman, IDEA 5. Inclusive design workshop (Virtual) – Emile Tompa, Rebecca Gewurtz and Alec Farquhar, IDEA
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 – 1:35 PM	<u>Afternoon remarks from MCs</u>
1:35 – 2:45 PM	<u>Partner Lightning Talks</u> 1. You don't have to do it alone: Building employer confidence, capacity, and inclusive hiring – Anna Nelson, Director of Employment Supports, LiveWorkPlay 2. Pathways to EmployABILITY Program: Supporting students with disabilities in the workplace – Joel Cummings, Workplace Accommodation Specialist, Toro Group of Companies, and Maria Liberatore, Iterant Work Experience Teacher, York Catholic District School Board 3. Supporting apprentices with disabilities during the apprentice journey –

Time	Session
	Emily Arrowsmith, Director of Research and Programs; Canadian Apprenticeship Forum 4. Mentoring: A solution that centers relationships as a conduit to inclusion and workforce readiness Tracy Luca-Huger, Executive Director, Mentor Canada
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Break and transition to Table Talk
3:00 – 4:00 PM	<u>Table Talk</u> Facilitated by: Bridgette Sterling Krys Munnings, Senior Engagement and Partnership Officer, IDEA 4DY W. Francis Fung, Engagement Lead, IDEA Youth leaders
4:00 – 4:15 PM	Day 2 Closing reflections/Announcements

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