Inclusion is the Future of Work

2026 Symposium Programme

Version: October 23, 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	**Welcoming remarks and housekeeping** **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	**Morning keynote** **Tammy Morris**, Accessibility and Neuroinclusion Leader, EY Canada
10:20 – 11:00 AM	**Morning presentation and panel** 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	**Partner Lightning Talks** 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. **Building Inclusive Pathways to Employment: Youth-Focused Programming, Wraparound Supports and Future-Ready Skills –** Mohamed Elmi, Executive Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University 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	**Afternoon remarks from MCs**
1:20 – 2:15 PM	**IDEA Lightning Talks** 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	**Workshops** 1. **Building a workplace accessibility supports system that works (Main room)** – 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 (108N)** – 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 (208N)** – 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	**Afternoon keynote** **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	**Welcoming remarks** **Masters of Ceremonies**
9:10 – 9:25 AM	**Morning keynote** **Valerie Vanderwyk**, Executive Director, Indigenous Skills, Employment, Apprenticeship and Development (ISEAD)
9:25 – 10:15 AM	**Youth panel** **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	**Fireside chat** **Moderator: Rafael Gomez,** Director of the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources at the University of Toronto. **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) **Alec Farquhar,** Strategic Advisor, IDEA
11:20 – 11:30 AM	**Break and transition to workshops**
11:30 – 12:30 PM	**Workshops** 1. **Practical tools to support people living with chronic health conditions in the workplace (208N) –** Monique A.M. Gignac, PhD, Scientific Director & Senior Scientist, Institute for Work & Health; Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

Time	Session
	2. **When conversations transform us: Fostering inclusive mentorships that strengthen social capital (108N) –** Joanna Goode and Erica Ruth Kelly, Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) 3. **Building safer workplaces for Indigenous women and two spirited people (Main room) –** 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. **Beyond accommodation: Unlocking talent through inclusive design (Virtual)** – Emile Tompa, Rebecca Gewurtz and Alec Farquhar, IDEA
12:30 – 1:30 PM	**Lunch**
1:30 – 1:35 PM	**Afternoon remarks from MCs**
1:35 – 2:45 PM	**Partner Lightning Talks** 1. **You don't have to do it alone: Building employer confidence, capacity, and inclusive hiring –** Anna Nelson, Director of Employment Supports, LiveWorkPlay Darren Bailey, Senior Human Resources Advisor, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada

Time	Session
	Neil Butts, Director of Culinary Programs, Kinaxis Jennifer Broad, Employer Partnerships and Workplace Inclusion Specialist, 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 –** 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	**Table Talk** **Facilitated by:** **Bridgette Sterling** **Krys Munnings**, Senior Engagement and Partnership Officer, IDEA 4DY **W. Francis Fung**, Engagement Lead, IDEA
4:00 – 4:15 PM	**Day 2 Closing reflections/Announcements**

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