

## Match Summary

Name of Match: **“How will we know our work is making a difference in the lives of people we work with and serve?”** The essential role of social impact research and evaluation in cross-disability initiatives inclusive of mental health

Location of Match: Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (Canadian Centre on Disability Studies)

### 1. Brief summary of the outcomes of your match

CCDS hosted three individuals during the IIDL/IIMHL pre-conference in September. Two of the individuals were from international communities (New Zealand and Australia, respectively), and the other from Ottawa, Canada. One of the primary outcomes during our match was generating numerous networking opportunities between our guests and leading local cross-disability agencies. Our guests had opportunities to connect with disability advocates (i.e. Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities; People First of Canada), service and resource providers (i.e. Manitoba Schizophrenia Society; Innovative Life Options), and policy makers (i.e. Council of Canadians with Disabilities).

In addition to these connections, our guests met with and networked with several others, including community members, front-line service supports, academics, and researchers. This was particularly evident when our guests attended the community forum that CCDS hosted alongside the Disabilities Issues Office of Manitoba (DIO). This forum included three presentations, each with their own area of focus, but all contributing to the exploring the concept of social impact evaluation. The main question to be answered here was “How do we know that our work is making a difference?” As a senior research officer at CCDS, Dr. Youn-Young Park detailed the use of the logic model as a pragmatic way to measure impact while conducting research work. Natalie Baydack, member of Canadian Evaluation Society, shared her experience with program evaluation by using an example that aimed to increase outcomes for at-risk youth. Yutta Fricke from the DIO gave a presentation on new provincial legislation entitled the Manitobans for Accessibility Act. Based on the feedback we received on this forum, participants valued the discussion period which followed these presentations, as many were able to apply impact evaluation to their own work. The outcomes from this event were to discover differing ways of evaluating outcomes, and to investigate how leaders in the field are ensuring that they are meeting the needs of those they work with. The consensus on this event from our guests was that it was effective in detailing ways to do this.

A major component to our pre-conference was creating dialogues around the historical contexts of disability/mental health research and advocacy work. Our guests were invited to engage in productive discussions with several grass roots and governmental organizations. Through informal presentations and in-depth discussions, a process of mutual learning was initiated. Topics of conversation included individual/professional histories and how our organizations differed as far as infrastructure and funding were concerned. Because we also had the opportunity to converse about what was going well and where we were struggling, we were able to share success stories and points of frustration. Sharing our experiences and offering advice to one another proved to be an invaluable experience for all involved.

The educational component to this pre-conference had several applications. We invited our guests to visit to the newly opened Canadian Museum for Human Rights. At the museum we had a personalized tour, in which the tour guide outlined international human rights histories, with a specific focus on disability and mental health issues.

## 2. Resources used in your match

### Resources that we used for the Community Forum:

“The Essential Role of Social Impact Research and Evaluation in Cross-Disability and Mental Health Initiatives” was a forum that we hosted in partnership with the Disabilities Issues Office (government of Manitoba).

[CCDS-DIO Social Impact Evaluation](#)  
[Park Presentation](#)  
[DIO Presentation](#)  
[Baydack Presentation](#)

### Resources that we used internally:

[IIDL-IIMHL Visitor Package](#)  
[Pre-conference Schedule](#)

### Resources from Ryerson University:

A webinar presentation from Dr Melanie Panitch at Ryerson University. Dr Panitch presented on the Disability Studies art exhibit that was on display at the CMHR entitled *Out From Under: Disability, History and Things to Remember* - <http://www.ryerson.ca/ofu/>. Dr Panitch also presented on Mad Studies and the work that the faculty has previously done in Canada.

Please see resources:

[A Brief History of Everything...](#)  
[Re-presenting Disability...](#)

### More links to resources:

A guided tour at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which included specific emphasis on disability issues. Link: <https://humanrights.ca>

The “Manitoba and Disability Advocacy Forum” was hosted by us on the second day of the pre-conference, and included presentations by three advocacy organizations:

People First of Canada. <http://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/>  
Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities. <http://www.mlpd.mb.ca/>  
Council of Canadians with Disabilities. <http://www.ccdonline.ca/>

## 3. Brief description of how your match has accelerated change towards mental health, well-being and inclusion

Our match created various opportunities (e.g., symposium, visits, local organizations’ presentations, semi-structured meetings) for guests and other participants to exchange, learn and discuss about emerging issues and practices with regards to mental health and disability. We believe that people who participated in our match will improve their work in the field of mental health and/or disability with the knowledge and insights that we shared and the network developed during our match.

To exemplify how we fostered these insights, I would like to allude to one specific discussions/semi-structured presentation that we planned that pertained specifically to education, mental health and disability. Before heading to the museum we were fortunate to have Dr. Panitch, a faculty member from Ryerson University Disabilities Studies program present on the exhibit that they created for the museum. It was entitled *Out From Under: Disability, History and*

*Things to Remember* which outlined disability rights movement in Canada through the medium of visual art. We were able to have a discussion period with Dr. Panitch as well, which increased our understanding of our national history of advocacy and scholarship. Discussions also included the topic of Mad Studies and the work that they are currently doing in mental health. This presentation is a prime example of how we incorporated concepts of inclusion and mental health into the content of our pre-conference by offering historical context.

#### **4. Brief description of how your match has built leadership for the future**

Shortly after our guests arrived in Winnipeg, discussions began around the importance of meaningful work, collaboration, leadership and lived experience. In retrospect, the pre-conference became a microcosm of what was to come during the combined meeting in Vancouver. Learning the systematic and operational differences that exist between and ourselves and others was imperative to building relationships and envisioning a future where leaders are able to make an impact on future generations. By engaging in a reciprocal exchange, we were able to examine ways in which we can improve our work. Individualized funding, person-centered planning, and veering away from charity and individualized models of contextualizing mental health and disability were all central components to our discussions. Coming away from the pre-conference, I believe that the CCDS team has a better grasp on who is doing what, both on national and international scales. If we can operationalize these tactics, principles and theories into our work, it will better the support that we are to provide. As a research institute, we must continually ask the question: "How do we know that our work is effecting real change, or are we just keeping busy?"

There is no doubt that our work must reflect the lives of those in the community. As leaders in the community, we must reach out to those our work effects and ensure that our work accurately reflects the lives of individuals with lived experience. This includes networking with advocates, service providers and community members. By no coincidence, these were the very individuals that we were able to connect with during this conference. Moving forth, we must strive to explore these partnerships. Equally important, our work must be informed by innovative practice; action that promotes critical and divergent ways of thinking, knowing and being. Through discussions with other leaders, several ideas were brought forth. As a result of this leadership exchange, we have expanded our pool of resources to the global community, learned strategies to ensure our work is meaningful, and made connections with internationally renowned leaders.