PACIFIC COAST UNIVERSITY FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH SCIENCES | *Centre for Professional Studies in* WORKPLACE HEALTH EXCELLENCE

Leading Change in Disability Management: A Conversation with Bill Dyer

Blog
Article by PCU-WHS Staff



Bill Dyer is the Director of Poverty Reduction at NIDMAR and he Directs NIDMAR's Reducing Poverty Initiative (RPI) which is a groundbreaking effort to reduce the human, social and economic cost of disability to workers, employers and society through education, research, policy development and implementation resources to promote workplace-based reintegration programs.

The RPI is currently being implemented in the Province of BC through funding provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada–British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. It is designed to provide valuable resources and solutions for timely and personalized disability case management for individuals and potentially longer-term structural recommendations for employers.

Individuals and employers supported through this initiative can expect compassionate and professional assistance in identifying concrete options designed to successfully maintain employment for the individual whenever possible.

This could include the provision of direct health care support such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy services, mental health counselling or other assistance such as ergonomic interventions, needed to maintain employment.

The professionals who will be working with both the individuals and the employers have knowledge and expertise in the field, as they have achieved the professional designation of Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP).

EARLY INTERVENTION IS VERY IMPORTANT, BUT COLLABORATION AND WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL IS WHAT WILL MAKE THE RPI A TRUE SUCCESS.

Together, Bill's leadership, NIDMAR's internationally recognized competency standards, PCU-WHS's training programs which support the ongoing professional development of CDMPs,

and the RPI's implementation expertise create an integrated pathway that advances disability management through education, certification, and organizational excellence while demonstrating new ways of supporting some of the province's most vulnerable people.

In this brief Q&A article, Bill shares insights from his work with the RPI and discusses how those experiences are shaping the future of disability management.

What has been your biggest insight or take away from your experience with the RPI?
The number of clients who state that the support received through the Reducing Poverty Initiative, most notably the CDMP, is the first person who has actually taken the time to listen to their story and tried to assist.

Speaking of the RPI clients, how do they usually find out about the program, what motivates them to get involved, and what kinds of challenges are they experiencing when they first come to you?
Most participants learn about the RPI through a health care professional—such as a doctor, social worker, or treatment provider—or through WorkBC. When they first contact us, they often lack a clear plan for returning to work and the funds needed for supportive treatment to overcome the immediate barrier.

What positive impacts have you seen from the RPI?
We are still somewhat early in the pilot, but we are already seeing positive outcomes in participants returning to active employment.

How else are you measuring success or what other positive outcomes are you seeing from the program?
Stakeholder support is building, and the feedback is consistent – the RPI is filling a necessary void in the system.

If you had to provide one piece of advice for someone else setting up a similar program in another province what would that be?
Patience, keep the message simple, reach out and develop community champions and solicit their insight and act on it. Keep the communication & awareness train moving. Retain your patience.

What message would you like to leave with community leaders, employers, or policymakers?
Early intervention is very important, but collaboration and working together to achieve a common goal is what will make the RPI a true success. We cannot do it alone.

Is there anything else about the RPI you'd like to share?
It's an amazing pilot, targeting a population that everyone states it's about time!