

At-a-glance: ACED first-phase findings

Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED) is a five-year partnership (June 2018 to May 2023) focusing on interventions to support the sustained employment of people with common chronic diseases that are known as “episodic conditions.” To learn more, go to: aced.iwh.on.ca

During the preparatory “first phase” of ACED (June 2016 to May 2018), a team led by the Institute for Work & Health (IWH) interviewed people who could help the team better understand the challenges surrounding the accommodation of people with episodic disabilities. Through these interviews, the team identified seven key issues.

- 1 Similarities and differences among episodic disabilities** highlighted the many similarities in disability support, but a small number of differences focusing on workplace relationships.
- 2 Organizational cultures of workplace support** meant that organizations differed in whether their workplaces had a more “medical” or “bio-psychosocial” model of disability.
- 3 Misgivings about others and their role in communication-support processes** focused on perceptions of varied skills, training and motivation.
- 4 Subjective perceptions of the workplace parties** highlighted that there are real people behind workplace policies.
- 5 The inherent complexity of the response process** emphasized how the intermittent and invisible nature of episodic disabilities makes workplace planning a challenge.
- 6 Challenges arising when employees deny a disability** often created stress and led to a re-framing of a disability as a performance issue.
- 7 Casting disability as a performance problem** could lead to progressive disciplinary actions and not recognizing the skills and abilities of workers.