



FINAL REPORT

# **Enhancing or Increasing Employment Supports for Autistic People / People on the Autism Spectrum in New Brunswick**

For Autism Nova Scotia & Ready, Willing and Able

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Research Team:

Lead Researcher, Laurie Cook, MAdEd  
Junior Researcher, Alyssa Gerhardt, MA  
Research Assistant, Melissa Grandberg, BCD

## Executive Summary

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How do we create more inclusive communities? The specific goal for this project was to look at how to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. However, a key finding of this report is that you cannot look at employment supports for autistic people without looking at the broader context of inclusive economic development for marginalized, and even racialized, people and communities.

Another key insight is that there is much more work that needs to be done to understand the complexity of various individual needs, interests and aspirations related to broader community and societal needs and interests. One of the strengths of the research comes from the lived experience of one of the researchers involved in this project. They have lived experience as someone who lives with a mental illness, as someone living on disability benefits for many years, someone who went back to school to improve their competitiveness in the labour market, is self-employed, and has been an employer of marginalized and racialized people (and is still learning how to do that well).

Another significant role of the lead researcher is her own experience evolving as a community development practitioner, doing community-based research as a professional and as a PhD Student in Educational Studies. She is learning more about how her role as a community 'activist' helps inform her work. There is a common saying in marginalized and racialized communities: 'Nothing about us, without us.' With great regret, there was not time in this project to engage with self-advocates and autistic people as researchers on this project would have liked. Community-based research takes a lot of time to build relationships, and it is critical that the people with the most at stake are involved (and paid for their time and expertise) right from the beginning of the design of a research project or any type of programming, support or policy. Moving forward, future projects must do better.

Part of the goals of this project also were to consolidate some learnings and knowledge that already exists in this area, in particular in relation to New Brunswick specifically and reports / projects done most recently. Two past projects that stood out from the beginning included the 'Cliff Report' (2019) and the CONNECT Project (2017/18). One of the most striking findings of this project was the tremendous lack of awareness of the significant work that had already been done. However, once people were aware, many of them asked the research team for copies of any relevant reports or publications. Sharing of this material will happen once this final report is done. Many others expressed a keen interest in learning more about this project, and seeing any resulting reports or summaries as well.

The process of doing research from an 'ecosystem' approach also helps build bridges and create connections just by doing the work. Several people suggested other people, research and projects to look at for more information. A lot of this material will be provided separately to the commissioner of this project and report to help inform future research, network building and collaboration. A key recommendation for the future of this work would be to develop some sort of collaborative infrastructure that could include a 'hub' for sharing information in a way that not just academic or government policy analysts could relate to, but also ordinary citizens, of various backgrounds, skills and abilities - and those with the most at stake.

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## Introduction

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The goal of this project was to understand what is needed to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. The funders of this project were Ready, Willing and Able and Inclusion Canada nationally through Autism Nova Scotia as a regional partner. Some of the key questions we looked at included:

1. What are the needs, issues, challenges or gaps that need to be addressed?
2. What are some of the best practices / innovations both from outside New Brunswick that could help?
3. What is working well in New Brunswick that could be built upon?
4. Who else is doing similar research work in New Brunswick? What kind of research are they doing, and what are their timelines?

Experts in the field advised us to use the phrases 'autistic people' or 'people on the autism spectrum,' so we do use these phrases interchangeably in this document to talk about the work done. We also are specifically using the word 'people' instead of just adults because so much came up in the research about the importance of addressing the needs of youth and even middle school children in enhancing autistic people's access to employment.

In terms of format, the first section is meant to look at some of the overall principles (methodology, ontology and even axiology) that informed the approach to this work, and the position or perspective especially of the lead research on this project. Then for each section including the Literature Review, Interviews, Surveys and Organizational Scan there are two sections: Method and Limitations, and Findings and Gaps. Then, at the end of this report is a summary of findings from all the various methods of research used, and some recommendations for future work.

## Methodology & Positioning

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This project was very much based on an action research approach. The 'problem' we were looking at was how to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. In addition to the lead researcher, a junior researcher who is a PhD Candidate and a Research Assistant with education in community development were also involved. The lead researcher is someone who identifies as a person with lived experience with mental illness and economic exclusion though, and as employer of people with who have been marginalized. Given the background and experience then of the lead research, it was felt it was important to make a note about this to try to be fully transparent.

## Self-Advocate / Activist Perspective

The background of the lead researcher in addition to their own lived experience with marginalization (including spending many years on disability benefits) also includes their background in adult education and community development, with a strong focus on inclusive economic development. The lead researcher also has extensive experience not just learning about community-based economic development, but also many years of practical experience. She was a Past President of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet), and is now a PhD Student in the Inter-University Educational Studies program that includes Acadia University, St. Francis Xavier University and Mount Saint Vincent University. She is based out of Acadia University.

A growing part of the lead researcher's identity is as an 'activist.' We mention this because it meant connecting with autistic people directly was something that seemed important from the beginning of this project. There was also the introduction of the term 'self-advocate' in the work. The significance of not just talking to autistic people / people on the autism spectrum, but talking to 'self-advocates' seemed important, likely because of the community development background of the lead researcher but also her background in adult education. Self-advocacy then became a term that seemed to indicate a higher awareness of one's situation in the world beyond just living in it, but with aspirations to see it change. Ideas related to critical pedagogy and Paulo Freire's Theory of Conscientization then also started to inform the methodology of this work.

What we were not able to do with the short timeline of this project (about 6 months) was to be as inclusive as we would have liked. We did not have anyone with lived experience as an autistic adult as part of the research team, nor did we have any policies set up to compensate autistic people for their lived experience and expertise. In this future, this should be a key consideration in how any work related to this population is done.

## Transparency & Reciprocity

As a PhD student and active community developer, a community-based approach to this work seemed most appropriate. Given this, some of the principles that were incorporated into the approach to this work was to try to be as transparent as possible about the intention of the work, who was doing the work and where they were coming from. Another key principle we tried to incorporate into the work was a sense of reciprocity. One area we looked to do that was to share some recent research that was done with interview participants who were not familiar with these reports. This was done prior to the completion of this report.

## Appreciative Inquiry

Early on in the literature review, we noted that a lot of research had already been done about the problems and barriers to employment that autistic adults face in New Brunswick and Atlantic Canada. Two key projects were very influential:

- One was known as 'The Cliff Report' and was specific to New Brunswick (2017/18)
- The other was known as the CONNECT Project, and was focused on the Maritimes (2019)

Because both these reports were fairly recent, a decision was made to not just focus on problems but also to incorporate an 'appreciative inquiry' approach which is about being solutions-oriented and generative.

This meant a key focus of this project was to also look at what is working in enhancing or increasing employment supports for autistic people in New Brunswick, and outside New Brunswick. We also wanted to know what solutions or innovations were happening. Many were sometimes on the small side, but the hope is by identifying these pockets of brilliance they can then be explored further and scaled to have a bigger impact.

## Ecosystem Approach

The importance of an idea of an 'ecosystem' approach is part of how we want to approach this project in the beginning to include a variety of perspectives and ideas. Identifying outlier ideas, as well as those that came up more frequently, was also important. Just because only one or two people might have mentioned something doesn't mean it wasn't considered just as important as when several people mentioned something.

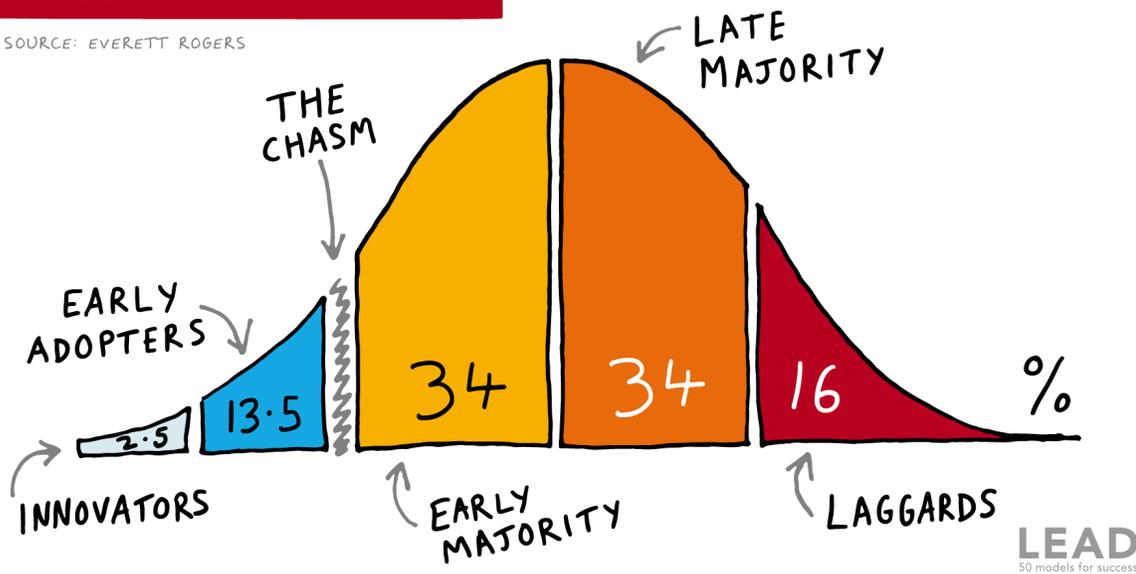
The complexity of this work also came up quite a bit in this work. Autism is not simple. It involves people being on a 'spectrum,' and the potential of many other co-existing challenges and conditions including mental illness, intellectual challenges, developmental challenges, learning challenges and of course 'social' challenges for many who are autistic. Then there are also a host of other socio-demographic factors that can influence the course of someone's life and whether they are able to find, maintain and enjoy employment in some way. It was also noted in the literature reviewed that an ecosystem approach to research related to this topic is critical, because of everything just mentioned.

## Diffusion of Innovation

Another key principle in this research was to focus on 'innovators' and 'early adopters' as a source of ideas for best practice and solutions to many of the problems mentioned in other literature. The Diffusion of Innovation concept is about not trying to talk to or work with everyone involved in solving a problem. Instead the goal is to focus on the first 15% of people who are natural 'innovators' or 'early adopters.' This is why when we asked for referrals as opposed to just anyone. We asked who the 'keepers' and leaders are doing work in this area, and then we asked them to suggest other people as well.

## DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION

SOURCE: EVERETT ROGERS



## Literature Review

### Method & Limitations

Initial material for the literature review was provided by Autism Nova Scotia and Margaret Tusz-King, a New Brunswick expert in employment support for autistic people. After helping to identify a range of material including the 'Cliff Report' and the 'CONNECT project,' other literature was suggested to researchers as they started to reach out into communities across New Brunswick.

### Findings & Gaps

In the key themes related to the findings in the literature review, it is noted that New Brunswick has one of the highest rates of disability in Canada, and Atlantic Canada itself has a larger proportion of people with disabilities compared to the rest of the country. It is unknown if this finding is related to the general 'age' of the population in Atlantic Canada which is also one of the oldest in the country. In the CONNECT Project (2018) it is noted that there are 16,000 autistic adults between the ages of 22 and 75 living in the Maritime Provinces (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia). And yet, in another recent study (Jose et al, 2021) it is also noted that only 46% of the sample of the study related to employment for autistic adults were employed, and only one-fifth held full-time employment.

Under Current Needs and Challenges, the review noted one of the biggest challenges is autistic people finding and maintaining 'quality' employment. It was also noted that support is needed at the individual level, community-level and societal level, and that 'employment' is made up of various factors in a very complex ecosystem that is multi-level and inter-connected. Several authors note a lack of recognition around this point is a key reason success in supporting populations like autistic people is very difficult. There is also the question of whether employment should be the goal, or if employment should be considered as just one factor of the ultimate goal of a 'good life' for autistic individuals on their terms.

The review then looks more deeply at the different levels already mentioned: the Individual, Family, Employer and Community. Key points mentioned in this area include:

- Recognition that Autism is a spectrum 'disorder,'
- Supports must plan around and accommodate the unique characteristics, needs and aspirations of individuals,
- Some of the big challenges for autistic people are social interactions, job interviews and communication with co-workers, and
- Success should consider (and evaluate for) more than an individual just getting 'a job,' and instead also include overall quality of life as one might for any other person.

In terms of Family, Employer and Community, some of the themes that came up included:

- More support for employers,
- Differences in supports being available in urban areas versus rural,
- The need for transportation options that work for autistic people and consider any sensitivities they may have,
- Significant lack of a formal structure or network to enable organizations across New Brunswick to share learnings, what's working, what's not working, and advocacy around funding and government policy, and
- Lastly, recognizing that employment fits into a much larger context related to political, economic, legal and technological systems; and various values and attitudes can shape unconscious biases toward autistic people.

Some of the Gaps identified included:

- Need for more autistic people to be involved in research, policy discussions and the implementation of employment supports - including representation of the entire spectrum,
- Research in a Canadian context, nevermind an Atlantic Canadian context, is very limited,
- Cross-sectional and longitudinal research is also very limited,
- Lack of research on the intersections of Autism Spectrum 'Disorder' (ASD) with other important socio-demographic, socio-economic and geographic factors, and
- The role of family continues to be another under studied area.

Under Best Practices and Innovation, the idea of an ecosystem approach came up as critical. It was noted that Autism Nova Scotia does use such an approach which includes 3 key steps.

1. Conduct an environmental scan to identify unmet needs, priority areas, current government spending and key players,
2. Create projects to pilot which meet the needs of autistic individuals and also complement and enhance services and supports that are already being offered, and
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of said projects by those who use them.

Worktopia which was a federally funded program for individuals on the autism spectrum was also based on an ecosystem model. It included four steps.

1. Individualized and experiential learning, ie. learning by doing in real life work settings,
2. Participants, co-workers, peers and/or employment support staff were seen as co-learners,
3. Individual goal setting is important, and
4. Community capacity building, including employers and employer training, is critical.

Another key theme in the literature review was the importance of building skills and work experience from a young age for people who are autistic. One successful program that was mentioned was called Project SEARCH. It provided internships for students in their final year of high school, and 88% of the students who participated ended up finding and obtaining competitive employment.

Supported Employment and the potential of remote work also came up in the literature. Key points included the importance of pre-employment support and then immediate on-site job coaching support. The American TEACCH program is one example where the job retention rate was 89% for those who found employment through the program. The idea of remote work, which increased dramatically during the pandemic, also seems to be very promising for autistic people in more recent literature. It can address geographical barriers by enabling people to work from home, be closer to support in the community, have flexible hours and recordings of meetings with closed caption transcripts.

The literature review concludes by noting even though there have been increases in employment supports over time, there are still significant gaps between the needs of autistic adults and the supports available. There is a persistently high unemployment rate in this population despite their interest in working. Aid is often more frequently available for those with fewer needs, and less for those with high social support needs and other co-occurring conditions. An 'ecosystem' approach is also critical to ensure various complex factors involved in enhancing or increasing support for autistic people. There also needs to be more done to look at the strengths of autistic people, and how those strengths could help fill a variety of skill gaps related to Atlantic Canada's current and future labour shortages. A recent Atlantic Provinces Economic Council Report (April 2022) points to how many labour shortages in the region could be filled with people from a variety of marginalized and racialized communities, with appropriate support. Immigration is not our only option to address this challenge.

# Interviews

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## Method & Limitations

The method for the interviews was to use a semi-structured approach. We were able to interview 15 people using Zoom. Each interview took about 1 to 15 hours to complete. Questions were provided in advance when requested. People to interview were identified through a networking approach. Some names were provided by Autism Nova Scotia, others were identified (again using a networking and referral approach) by the lead researcher on the project and then others were referrals from people who participated in an interview. When looking to identify people for interviews, a key part of the approach was to ask who people thought were innovators or leaders in the field of employment support for autistic people.

The findings in this section also noted whether respondents self-identified as self-advocates, service providers or researchers / policy analysts. We did this wherever there were significant answers to various questions to enable readers of this report to better understand where people might be coming from, and to enhance understanding of the context of the findings. One group we were unable to get to in this project that represents a serious limitation is that we did not get to speak to anyone currently working in government in New Brunswick.

## Findings & Gaps

### Demographics & Self-Identification

Geographically, there was good distribution for the interviews amongst the various regional centres: Saint John, Moncton, Fredericton and Miramichi. Two people interviewed were from outside New Brunswick. Participants were asked what communities they identified with, but it was not possible to do specific outreach to more rural areas. This would be another area that could be good to focus on more in future research.

Two participants were self-advocates and also worked with service providers. Then nine other interviewees were service providers for a total of eleven, and three other interviewees were researchers or policy people. We were not able to speak with anyone actually working in government. This would be another area for more focused research in future.

One very interesting finding was that 13 out of 15 interview participants had some sort of personal connection with someone who is autistic or on the autism spectrum; 2 were autistic themselves, and the others either were the parent of an autistic adult, or an autistic child, or have some sort of connections as a family member or friend with someone who is autistic. This seems to demonstrate that people who are involved in work related to employment supports, and other kinds of work related to autism are highly motivated by some sort of personal connection to someone who is autistic or on the autism spectrum.

Most of the interviewees also worked with large organizations (20+ employees) and a few with small organizations (under 10 employees). Most also had worked between 5-10 years in work related to autism, and a few 5-10 years. Most identified as female and a few as male, one as gender nonconforming. Most are also identified as caucasian, white or Canadian of European descent. One identified as First Nation. Almost all identified English as their first language.

## Employment Support

Most interviewees said they provide job coaching services, and only a couple said they could provide services within a day of an autistic person getting a job, and even then that depended on staff. One organization did say that because they are larger it is easier for them to make sure they can offer a wide range of employment support fairly quickly. Only a couple interviewees said they could provide job coaches for both high and low support needs, and a couple for low support needs.

### TOP 3 CHALLENGES

#### From Self-Advocates

- Belief that New Brunswick is behind in ensuring it is illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities. It was suggested NB needs to look at legislation in Ontario to see what they have. Another key point related to challenges that was brought up was the issue of job interviews and how much they count in people getting jobs, and how for many autistic people interviews are very difficult and make it almost impossible to compete for employment.
- One person said: It targets all our weaknesses related to social situations, difficulty with interpreting and showing facial expressions, poor eye contact and a flat voice tone. Interviews are very stressful for autistic people, and they seem very subjective, arbitrary, and not transparent (even when asking for feedback, they generally don't get it). Many organizations also, even though they say they will provide questions in advance, either don't or do so with very little short notice.
- Working remotely and communicating with Zoom apparently can help because it is less like dealing with a "flesh and blood person, more like watching TV." However, working remotely can also be a source of many distractions at home. Other challenges mentioned included: finding job coaches, transportation, getting disability benefits and then understanding how to ensure the government doesn't just 'clawback' people's earnings, there were concerns about getting paperwork done and approved by Employment and Social Development Canada, and notes that caretakers can also discourage people from working.
- Finding employment and finding job coaches, some employers don't want to hire someone with a job coach.
- Transportation.

## From Service Providers

Interviewees mentioned the following as challenges:

- Transportation,
- Lack of support from employers,
- Lack of support for time management and visual cues / tools,
- Lack of open dialogue / communication between employers and employees,
- Dependency on wage subsidies,
- Lack of training for employment agencies, job coaches, and employers, specifically on how to support neuro-diverse people,
- Lack of long-term funding for employment supports,
- Funding for pre-employment programs like Career Quest but not job coaching,
- Some individuals may not want job coaching because of the stigma attached to it, and
- Some employers may not want to hire someone because they need a job coach.

## From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- It is difficult in general to secure jobs for people with disabilities as well as those who are autistic. It is hard to recruit job coaches and there is more education and support (including tax incentives and subsidies) for employers. The cost of support and the responsibility for covering those costs is not clear or well-defined.
- Many people with autism also often deal with mental health challenges as well, and have difficulty accessing support for co-occurring conditions like that. Some autistic people would also lose access to disability programs or benefits if they worked.

## **IDEAS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES**

### From Self-Advocates

- Making sure anti-discrimination legislation is the best it can be. Putting more weight on task-based means of evaluating people in hiring processes instead of so much on interviews. Understanding and explaining why offices are really helpful for autistic people, because it makes

it easier for them to concentrate and address issues like noise sensitivity. There is also the issue that many people associate offices with high status within an organization, and resent people who are lower on the ladder having access to offices. Therefore it is important for other coworkers to understand why someone might have an office.

- Employment and Social Development Canada also need to make things easier to understand in relation to benefits and people with disabilities / neuro-diverse working. When asked about working in social enterprise with cohorts who have similar strengths and challenges versus working individually with external employers, interviewees said it would be good to have both options so people can do what they feel most comfortable doing, get experience and have something to put on a resume, but also have something to move on to.

#### From Service Providers

- More training for employers on types of supports / accommodations they need to provide. It was noted they often say they understand, but in actuality do not really. Staff then get frustrated and anxious about work.
- Transportation needs to be addressed; there is public transit, but some autistic people may not be able to understand how this works depending on whether they have high or low support needs. Family can sometimes help but not everyone lives at home.
- Many employment support programs need to address specific challenges related to autism like teaching social cues.
- Need to build more capacity through human resource managers and employers.
- Need to share more success stories.
- Inclusion NB (formerly NBACL) is looking to create an Inclusive Communities Institute in October 2022 to help spread more awareness and education about who can help play a role in helping people prepare and find employment, maintain employment and do work they want to do.
- Government policies need to provide support for short-term and long-term needs, and support work experience / co-op learning opportunities like the former ADAPT program that was more activity-based.
- Jobs also have to be a good fit for what autistic people want to do, and to make the most of their strengths.

#### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- There is some asynchronous online job coach training in development. They used to be in person, and then with Covid went to using Zoom. Now looking to make it even more accessible.

There is also a new pilot partnership program called Inclusion GNB (for Government New Brunswick) and sometimes also referred to as a second CONNECT project (not the same as the one led by researcher Caroline Jose a few years ago).

- There is also movement to look more at: online training related to mental health; education for employers about hiring autistic youth; programs to support autistic youth in high school, so they are better prepared for employment when high school ends; new policies and programs to help transform 'sheltered' day programs to be more employment-focused; more of an employment first focus in general; and training on career / job development for people with disabilities (but still not great at what autistic people specifically need help with).
- It was also noted that 'employer education' is not enough. It is important for the government to look at total cost and productivity / revenue / hour for small and medium size businesses to encourage them to hire people with disabilities and specifically autistic people more. It was suggested there should be tax benefits and wage supports for absorbing extra costs for supports or accommodations, and for more research to be done on the challenges employers experience, in understanding what they need in order to hire more inclusively. Several people also mentioned it is important for the government to stop 'clawing' back money from disabled or autistic people when they do work. It was also noted that the eligibility criteria for benefits need to change.

## **SUCCESS FACTORS FOR SECURING EMPLOYMENT**

### From Self-Advocates

- Getting past stigma is very important. There is a challenge in disclosing or not if one is autistic. Programs in social etiquette as well as different job skills are very important. Role playing with 'mock jobs' and using virtual reality can be very helpful.

### From Service Providers

- Having the right skills are very important, and making sure people are comfortable with what they need to do.
- People need to be prepared well to know what is required for a job, what their strengths are.
- Accommodations don't have to be costly.
- Support with resume preparation, social skills and interview skills are important.
- People knowing their rights, but also their responsibilities are also important.

### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Person-centred approach is about understanding the unique needs of each person and their circumstances, the types of work they want to do and good matching with employers. There is a need to build broader knowledge in the employer population, need to do more to involve autistic people in the design of support programs as well; 'nothing about us without us.'
- It was also noted building relationships with employers is very important, developing a robust ecosystem of supports to enable individuals to thrive at work and in community, and to ensure support for mental health challenges and other co-occurring conditions that present challenges can be addressed in a timely and effective manner as well.

### **SUCCESS FACTORS FOR MAINTAINING EMPLOYMENT**

#### From Self-Advocates

- Needs and accommodations are met. Daily check in's, check in's with job coaches and with employers are also important to see how someone is doing and if they need help with the skills required.

#### From Service Providers

- Continuous support is needed, and then support can gradually be withdrawn if someone is doing well.
- Good management that is accommodating and willing to make accommodations is important.
- Open, consistent and effective communication and transparency between employer and individual.
- Support for employers, co-workers and individuals is needed. Sometimes a buddy system can help if no job coach is available.

### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Ensuring the environment is one people can thrive in is critical. There needs to be a good match and fit with skills, abilities and the workplace and what's required of someone as well, just like for anyone.
- Employer education is not quite the right word. Many employers are not averse to being inclusive, but small and medium size employers face more challenges than large ones like banks, government, etc. Relationships are really important and a lot of what is important is for employers to get to know the person they are hiring especially if it is not a typical 9-5 job. Again,

there need to be tax benefits and subsidies to help smaller employers to be more inclusive. Key Performance Indicators for managers must also be aligned with an employer's goals and values around inclusion, or it won't work.

## **FACTORS FOR EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS**

### **From Self-Advocates**

- Autism is also looked at from a deficit point of view. Need to look at strengths and how to capitalize on them. Many autistic people have a strong attention to detail, and strong motivation related to tasks and topics that interest them. If they have low support needs then being independent in their work is success, and when they have high support needs just getting a job done can be success.

### **From Service Providers**

- Having employees still employed.
- Having income for a good quality of life, being challenged and a supportive culture at work.
- Person feeling well-supported, doing meaningful work, getting paid an equitable wage, natural good relationships with colleagues, back and forth communication with employers.
- Person who is happy to go to work, feels included in the workplace, other employees are engaging, complete 'integration' in the workplace.
- Ability to go to work and company is benefiting from their work.

### **From Researchers / Policy Analysts**

- Autistic people want to go to work, feel valued and respected, are being paid a fair wage, have work that is meaningful, and opportunities to learn and grow. Individuals are working in an area that is gratifying and again see opportunities for growth, and have positive social relationships in the workplace and community. Employment is focused on strengths and abilities. They are happy and have a good quality of life; again, just like anyone else would want.

## **Best Practices & Innovation**

### **IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

#### **From Self-Advocates**

- Hard to identify because so much needs to be done. Think of all agencies doing good. Some good vocational training is going on, but if a person is not happy then not really a good fit. See some agencies really pushing employment and getting people outside of the community.

- There is a new initiative called Inclusive GNB (Government NB). May also be known as the Connect Project (2nd one, not the first done earlier). Hopeful at first about Inclusive GNB, but needs to fit their requirements exactly. In the old days if overqualified they would still hire you, now they won't. Many autistic people are over qualified.

#### From Service Providers

- Miramichi is unique in having Book Nook and being able to employ several people over several years.
- Ultimately the goal should be independence. In an Ideal world it would be great to have cohorts in the workplace, however this is not realistic. Cohorts need to be able to support autistic populations wherever they are working, but at the same time if independence is the goal then it shouldn't matter where they are working. It is a catch 22. It is also important to teach others, the average person, about autistic people. Before training, their mindset was different, and really changed after training. If we're going to be inclusive, the best way for others to learn about this is to work with diverse populations.
- Labour work shortage is a big opportunity for a narrative shift. A lot of conflation with disabilities, mental health and autism. Need more understanding from employers perspective.
- Feel New Brunswick quite behind in support, especially in innovative ways.
- Staff are not being trained properly to support. Not getting to work with a family like 3 years ago. Now coaches are not doing the work, but just supporting only so coaches can be phased out. No specific training for coaches related to autistic people though.

#### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Not much going on. There has been an invitation from the government last Fall for autistic people to help rewrite accessibility law. More consultation with the population is good.
- Work that Inclusion NB (Formally NBACL) is doing around youth transitions, especially from high school to post-secondary education (PSE) or to employment is good. Interesting story that's been evolving over 10 years or more. This is a critical time of life; If we miss the opportunity to work closely with youth and they leave school unprepared, then they often fall into social assistance and they get used to getting a cheque. Working with families to ensure transition goes smoothly is also important. Think we could still do more for youth.
- Project Connect (#2) working with the government around creating more inclusive environments. Includes autistic people in the work. Partnership with NBACL. Did research on employment cultures and the environment.

- Opportunities significantly enhanced with strong support networks for people with disabilities, same for autistic adults. Always been a key factor. In work on youth transitions, networks have always been important. Question is, what do we do for the people who do not have access to those networks. Additional responsibility for service providers to help develop or provide those support networks. In particular with youth, where there is not strong family support. Another area for exploration is peer support. How can we enable those who have had successful employment experiences to offer good advice to those still on that employment journey. Think this is an area we should explore more deeply. How to build capacity around offering peer support? Concept of mentoring may be more effective especially if someone is also autistic.
- Participative research focused on autistic people. More on health, how to address various co-existing conditions / comorbidities. Have a provincial strategy for mental health; high in some autistic people. Need a better idea of needs for different sub-groups and develop better approaches. Need to look at social demographics and constructs. For instance, one sub-group could be very independent but then also at high risk for stress because trying to be independent. Also need to look at environment / social demographics as well using a participatory approach. Autism in Adulthood is one journal that covers a lot of this, as well as Framework Publishing.

## OUTSIDE NEW BRUNSWICK

### From Self-Advocates

- Vancouver is doing a lot. Found Canuck Autism on Instagram. Very Autism focused.
- Ontario rules about not discriminating. Also saw a program called Employable Me (reality TV show) based out of Ontario. Follows people with disabilities (PWD) as they try to find employment. Both hooked up with places who knew about their disabilities and willing to give them a chance. Looked good. Educating employers is good, but tough when there are so many disabilities. Might be only can do case by case. Ask if you are willing to consider a PWD and then educate them for a particular person who has a skill set about specific needs and strengths.

### From Service Providers

- Autism family camp. Response was really good. Want to make it a yearly or bi-annual thing. Came from Ontario. Board member mentioned it and then the Executive Director ran with it. Limited funding though.
- Autism Nova Scotia seems to be doing a lot of great stuff. Don't have a central place for that in New Brunswick. There Are a few organizations that support pre-employment but in terms of getting a job and support for that job, there is a gap.
- Bunch of programs, but need to do more to prepare people with functional life skills as early as middle school and working with community organizations with Blueprint to look at transition.

Need to take plans out of schools and connect with community organizations including a strong focus on experiential learning, finding out interests and how to relate to a job.

- Mentorability, bringing this into agencies now. One hour to full day mentorship. In Schools. Also, schools with no specific curriculum (more common in Toronto). Look at what students are interested in, then match them up, interest in music and computers, focus on these. Join a band, etc. Free to do what you are interested in, get a mentor not a teacher that guides.

#### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Initiatives in the US to make cities autistic friendly. Instead of adapting people to the workplace, we need to adapt the workplace to the needs of autistic adults.
- Work-integrated learning on post-secondary campuses. Fit of job based on resources that provide ongoing supports including community support that change the culture and increase sustained access to employment.
- Always find small scale pockets of things doing well. Challenge is scaling. All community organizations are limited by government money. Not enough.
- Heard of things like companies who made special effort to include autistic people. It would be interesting to follow up. Some examples include Europe and North America. What have specific companies done to customize work opportunities that don't create stressors, noise, lighting, etc. How do businesses / employers do that in a very intentional way? Are there some best practices in workplace design and communication that could be looked at? Maybe public service could lead the way?
- In relation to cohort or co-op approach, I would rather look at how to build inclusive work environments where people don't have to have a diagnosis to work there. Spent so long trying to get away from segregated environments, but maybe some way to look at. Philosophically prefer to create 'normative' pathways for people, focus on providing inclusive environments and provide choices. As long as there are open and fair choices, not only things being offered. This is why working so hard to transform 'day program' activities. Bringing people together and not paying them is not good, and not a real choice.

## **CHANGES TO PROVINCIAL POLICIES**

#### From Self-Advocates

- Rules around disability benefits and working. Health cards issued with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), after having employment for 3 years, lose the card. Everything with ESDC needs to change. The money. Need to explain more how the health card works.

Social workers need to be more involved. Not often involved. Often I need to get more approval for things. More businesses need to be more inclusive. Preach but don't show.

- Helping people go to college. Waive tuition. Make study grants easier to get. When I personally went it was like a fight to get what I needed. Canada study grant. Make it easier to get, more accessible. NBCC is good to help people get their schooling. Make it easier to do tests. Student loans are still an issue too. Issues around discrimination, not protected under provincial law.

#### From Service Providers

- Lumping autistic people in with traditional PWD. Avenue NB, gatekeeping. Worried, small and tight knit. New members need to be approved with 80%. Not sure right mix of people / organizations for autism.
- Interview process. Mainstream processes for getting foot in the door. Better accommodations related to application forms. Not asking questions that are not really relevant or important for the job. Make it more accessible to all.
- Clawbacks can be an issue, but with disability designated assistance (called Extended Benefits in NB), should be able to keep around \$500 and then 50% of all income after that. There is a lot of misunderstanding about this. If they have a permanent disability (getting official diagnosis is also an issue), and getting more than regular income assistance as well. There is a lack of clarity and ease of finding out how these systems work. It is very difficult and would help if made easier, often have to do quite a bit of digging. When the employment first model came out there was quite a bit of push back because they didn't understand what was ok or not. Need to increase awareness of this.
- Need for documentation / medical form completed too is a major problem and barrier. A number of people can struggle with such or don't identify as having a disability. Some identify more as 'neuro-diverse' more than PWD. This encompasses a broad range, but even learning disabilities can qualify. But need documentation. Can take 6 months, has to be reviewed and can have trouble accessing supports for diagnosis.
- PWD have disabilities forever. Shouldn't be penalized for money they earn. People are afraid of losing their health card. Debt issue too. Keeps people trapped in a cycle. Challenge to climb out of.

#### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Disability supports program. Diagnosis a problem. Need to access supports but services implemented by NB government target intellectual disabilities. Not all autistic people have this.
- Main one is the clawback rate on disability benefits, 70% or higher. Should be at 50% or lower.

- Reform on social assistance program. How can we better incentivize employment? Policies around day programs. New standards came in 3 years ago to support better and how people are accessing the supports they need. Need to look at whether working. Various changes over the last few years. Have they helped? Often policies not focused on a particular population. Do have a sense of changing workplaces and culture. Government in NB trying pilot project to do better. Could result in policies that could apply in other environments. New initiative around supportive decision-making. New legislation. Government initiative with NBACL involved briefs that were presented over past year. Expecting new legislation on adult decision-making to be introduced this Fall.

## Relevant Research: Knowledge of & Recommendations

The intent with this section of the interview was to assess knowledge amongst interviewees of two key reports / projects that were done recently and seemed very relevant to this work. More information about these reports in the Literature Review in the Appendices.

### FAMILIARITY WITH 'The Cliff Report (2019)'

Very few people were familiar with this report, but many did express interest in having a copy sent to them. Lead researcher made sure those who were interested did get a copy. Comments have also been combined because there were so few.

#### Points that Stood Out

- Several points including lack of funding for Autism Centres, lack of employment for those who are autistic, has been mentioned at a couple of board meetings. Really need more provincial support.
- Early intervention in schools is very important, but supports drop off when transition to high school and then none at all after high school. Education Assistants (EA's) are not trained to provide support needed, so autistic youth lose support and momentum.
- Some concern on behalf of autistic adults that their voices were not heard. Recall there were some specific recommendations related to specific barriers, but would have to review. Need to do better.

### FAMILIARITY WITH 'The CONNECT Project (2017/18)'

Nothing stood out for interviewees about this project. Only two people knew anything about it. Note: the lead researcher on this project had health problems towards the end and that likely affected any knowledge

mobilization in the community related to the project. There was work done, and some of it looked at the literature review, for academic audiences.

### **Research that interviewees recommended current and future researchers look at:**

#### From Self-Advocates

- Need to learn more about the importance of socializing for autistic people. Need to know more accessible equipment that makes jobs easier. Would be very scared at work if I didn't have something like visuals to make the job easier. Help to make people less nervous, and more keen to go for a job. Also need to look at how important access to transportation is too. Many people refuse to work because they don't have access to transportation. It's not good to have to rely on others.

#### From Service Providers

- Because First Nation, have worked as an autism specialist in First Nation communities. If a child is diagnosed early, then the province will step in. Many more have been diagnosed in the past 12 years, but because the federal government is last on the list there are many gaps around supports for autistic people on First Nations. Many have no idea where to go for supports. Resources are not on reserve. Many are diagnosed in early child care centres, not at school. Very few educators, or anyone, trained specifically in autism. Need to get educators into a different mindset.
- Virtual training is very innovative as a way to help address anxiety. Need to look at this more.

#### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Paper on *An Ecosystem Approach to Employment and Autism Spectrum Disorder* (2018). *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* could also be helpful.
- Research on autism being done at University of Sydney. In particular looking at Alberta data around clawbacks.

## **SUGGESTED POLICY CHANGES**

#### From Self-Advocates

- Lack of anti-discrimination legislation (as per Ontario). Hiring practices of government itself. Make the task-based part of the employee selection process more important as a factor than the interview process.

#### From Service Providers

- Get more autistic people working. They want to work. Part of life. Great to see people working at Book Nook. Everybody should have the same thing.
- Guaranteed Basic Income. Inter-connectivity between young adults and their parents / caregivers. Sometimes parents are in difficult situations too. Sometimes young people ask for help because their parents are unemployed or something as well.
- Income assistance scale is coming to mind. People need to know what is out there. People think the effect on income is greater than it is, and think we could do better to not have it affected at all. Financial security is really important for everybody, and many people feel their financial security could be at risk by pursuing employment. Important for people to understand what reality is, but also to see reform to make things better.
- Staff supports should be a right. There shouldn't be a time limit. Should be able to access lifelong, like glasses.
- Better support in high school.

#### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Disability program. Accessibility Law. Increased consultation with Persons with Disabilities.
- Incentivizing employment where people don't lose personal benefits when they find employment, so they can move into 'soft' employment where they don't risk losing benefits. Increase access to post secondary education for those who may be disadvantaged. Develop employment friendly policy that highlights equity and diversity. Check if there is a lack of legislation against discrimination. Could be a human rights issue.

## **OTHER SUGGESTIONS**

#### From Self-Advocates

- One thing to add. Heard about Critical Race Theory (CRT). Topic many don't understand. CRT talks about how sometimes there is discrimination baked into the system, so even if an individual may not mean to be discriminatory they are though because they are part of a system. That is, many people get hired because they are recommended by someone in an organization. More white people may have networks / connections of people that can 'recommend' them that already work in the organization. So, white people are more likely to be hired than black people for this reason. The system is skewed in favour of white people. See parallels. People don't wake up and think they are going to be discriminating against PWD today, but using a system that discriminates. So everything about the hiring process is stuff that is stacked against people

on the spectrum. Things will only get better when people realize this and try to change the system.

- Some job counselors have experience specific to autism, so understand better how to help with specific issues like tendency to go off topic and then can warn or address more directly. That is helpful.
- Self employment seems like a lot to go through though now some people prefer that, like Elon Musk, can do very well. I feel too old though for that and not interested in running a business.
- Networking also can be very hard to do. Don't like talking to people I don't know. Don't know how to reach out.

#### From Service Providers

- Years ago there was a provincial program similar to ADAPT where we went to each employer, found out skills they needed, then connected them with someone and had a subsidy to hire (EEO).
- Book Nook is a great way for people in the community to get to know people working there, but hard to do unless they have provincial support.
- Private industry needs to be part of strategizing and small business.
- More funding for job coaching and staffing, and funds specifically for training related to autism. Every agency should have staff specific for job coaching and supporting people. Don't have enough funds now.
- Long-term, need to implement community-based transition programs, building the Blueprint for individuals on needs to be successful and encourage them to go to work. Lots able, but not willing because not ready.

#### From Researchers / Policy Analysts

- Need to increase awareness and acceptance in society.
- At the provincial level, we need to bring together people working in space to create integrated strategies. Put on the provincial priority table, and use what's happening / innovative in other provinces to help leverage change in NB. Need to find employment champions in business / industry, in and out of government, partner with labour ministries and advanced education to help move conversation forward.
- How do we look at creating more inclusive environments with autistic people involved in the design? Important for policy but also HR perspective.

## QUESTIONS NOT ASKED, FOR FUTURE

- Local struggles and challenges.
- Coming to terms with identity as autistic. Focus used to be very much focused on families. Now seeing a lot of young adults coming in with diagnosis and looking for help. Trying to work with PETL on customizing essential skills programs. Some self diagnose and work with that while they are trying to get an appointment to get a 'proper' diagnosis. Mental illness is often an issue for people too. People need to know their story deeply, try to focus first on engagement and figure out the rest as they go.
- Big barrier, 10-11 Autism Resource Centres. Funding is ridiculous. Get less than \$50k / year. Focus supposed to be resources. Fredericton has been able to expand and grow. Great early intervention. Next group working on school age. Autism NS came with CareerQuest but unless they have first voice representation in building programs, will have lots of pushback.
- Need to stress the importance of leveraging province to province so that it can be used as leverage to create change.
- Main one is we don't know why the government is not doing more. They are aware of the situation. Maybe they are waiting for basic income federally. They have shown little willingness for tax changes, subsidies. Why is there a lack of political will? Even with tightening of skills / labour, don't think this will help. Businesses will close for lack of people. Lot of jobs are mobile and people from elsewhere could be hired (outsourcing from places like Ontario). Need healthy businesses to afford training, accommodations. Easier for larger organizations like the government, banks, etc.
- Collaboration. Why there is a higher population of autistic youth in schools who will be coming out, and an increase in diagnosis in school systems. So supports for youth is very important. Over the next 10 years, more autistic people will be coming out. What do we need to be thinking about to ensure they have supports through school and as they come out of school. There are significant gaps for active transition in years 2-3 before graduation as well and ages 17-19. We need to make sure there are solid supports in place. Some are set up but others may need more support. Interesting questions, are we ready?
- Labour market gap. Need to change the narrative that immigration is the only way to solve that problem. Governments are starting to acknowledge we have a disadvantaged population that we need to support better, but also how we start to message our employers is important. They need to know there is a population with disabilities that is ready, willing and able to work, but employers need to change how they engage with them and what does that look like for a population of autistic individuals? How do we educate potential employers? It would be a real shame if we missed this opportunity but don't see this happening on its own. Some employers will but need to be a lot more intentional. How do we start to talk about this?

## ANYTHING ELSE?

- Need more support for families, and collaboration. Tough to collaborate with brain drain. Lot of turnover in board members and staff. Not membership based now but think that could be better for us. People often reach out related to employment, but socialization is key. Would like to see arts, digital stuff coming in more. Good for community engagement and fundraising. Seems to be a gap in our community. Lot of autistic people are interested in the arts. NBCC has animation and game design programs. Community College is a realistic path. Way to go to college and stay close to home. Programs are great, but then getting into industry is difficult. Would really like to see more work looking at opportunities in the digital economy.
- Avenue NB for anyone who already has a contract with PETL. Not sure how someone new looking to join would happen.
- Have to get to our community in middle school to prepare them to be ready, willing and able and currently not getting supports they need to be successful.
- Employment should be seen as a very complex domain. Look at different types of employment. Success different for different autistic adults. Different approaches re: cohorts versus individual employment. Big companies are easier to hire than small ones. A lot more issues. Individuals may not be valued. Anything we can do should be person-centred because needs are very different. Even between genders. Men often have more difficulty.
- What we've learned over the last few years is you may have a higher proportion of autistic people who also identify as LGBTQ. Need to understand there could be multiple identities and barriers involved, related to different identities. So making sure we recognize those, we have to be mindful of being able to receive people with those multiple identities. Mental health project with autistic adults has been a great learning opportunity. Great to hear autistic adults talk about their experiences. How do we encourage others to learn from people with first voice / lived experience? Last couple of years, there has been immense value in understanding more about what people are experiencing related to masking, not wanting to have to mask. Takes a toll on people. There is this belief that you have to pretend not autistic to fit in. People feel they need to put their 'autism' to the side to fit in. Have to be prepared to meet people in the middle. Need to figure out how to get employers and workplaces to understand more. This is the key opportunity. Need to understand true experiences of autistic individuals versus expecting them to adapt to our environments.

## Surveys

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### Method & Limitations

We created two different surveys to help better understand how to enhance employment supports for autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. The surveys were intended for two different sample populations: autistic adults themselves, or their parents / guardians / caregivers if they couldn't or needed support in completing the survey; and anyone working in service provision, government, research, or policy related to employment supports for autistic adults (for conciseness, we refer to this survey as the service provider survey). The surveys were translated into both official provincial languages, French and English.

Unfortunately time to respond was limited to about 10 days which is much shorter than best practice in survey work, and response of a total of about 49 overall was too small to be able to draw any significant, common findings. Many surveys were also not filled out completely. However, that doesn't mean any of the info was not important. Data was used to confirm findings and identify outliers that could still be useful. Outliers being data that only one or a few respondents might have identified. Both surveys were also offered in French, and the few responses we got back were translated and included. The majority of responses were in English.

The process of distribution of the survey links was done through a range of organizations including: Avenue NB, the Autism Centres in New Brunswick, and New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL, now known as Inclusion NB) An initial email was sent out asking people to distribute through their organizational and personal networks. A follow-up email was done to see how many organizations / people had been able to send the links out. And then a final email went out reminding people again after a week, and informed them of the extended deadline of a few days. At this point, some social media content with the links was shared as well, as requested by one organization.

During the process of identifying organizations and people to ask to help us distribute the links, we also identified who were 'warm' contacts that we had a previous relationship with and 'cold' contacts who we had not yet had a chance to connect with personally. There did seem to be more engagement in being willing to help distribute the links through the warm contacts. This would suggest that more time in the future to work on building relationships in the community is important.

In total, fifty-five surveys were opened and consented to. However, fourteen of the fifty-five surveys were not even partially completed (i.e., the participant did not answer any questions), and so these surveys are excluded from the presentation of the findings. Twenty surveys were partially completed, however, some with only a few of the survey questions answered. Twenty surveys were completed (i.e., the participant got to the end of the survey and answered *most* survey questions). This left us with a total sample of forty surveys with at least some questions answered. Out of the forty partially or completed surveys, most were those of the service providers (see Table X for breakdown of surveys).

**TABLE X**

	<b>Consented to Survey but no Responses Inputted</b>	<b>Partial Surveys (i.e., answered only a few questions)</b>	<b>Completed (i.e., answered majority of survey)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>English Autistic Adults</b>	10	7	3	20
<b>English Service Providers</b>	3	12	14	29
<b>French Autistic Adults</b>	1	1		2
<b>French Service Providers</b>		1	4	5
<b>Total</b>	14	20	20	56

The greatest limitation regarding the survey was the short time frame in designing the survey, survey recruitment and having only a week and a half for the survey to be disseminated by individuals/organizations and completed.

A second limitation, which has also been noted in the literature, was the lack of first-person experience with autism on the research team. While we were informed by both the literature and qualitative interviews, we did not have autistic co-researchers and so we may have lacked knowledge around how to design appropriate survey questions and how to make the survey more accessible to individuals on the autism spectrum.

Having very few completed surveys by autistic adults could be reflective of this, but could also be attributed to our recruitment strategy, which focused on recruiting survey participants through organizations. As mentioned in other research, reaching autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum can be challenging especially if they aren't already connected to an organization. Social media is mentioned as a possible channel for recruitment within the autism community (Jose et al. 2021; Tint and Weiss 2017). Given the short time for project completion, we were not able to create a robust recruitment strategy.

A third limitation was the low overall number of completed surveys, especially for autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum. Therefore, we cannot draw any conclusions from the findings due to the very small sample size and because certain questions in the survey were skipped by many participants. While this is also an issue with the service provider survey, due to the higher number of completed responses and the higher number of open-ended questions in the body of the survey; the qualitative findings may be more informative.

## **Findings & Gaps**

### **Autistic Adult Survey**

The survey for autistic adults included thirty-two questions in four main sections:

- 1) Self-Identification;
- 2) Employment (i.e., questions related to being either currently employed or currently unemployed);
- 3) Employment Supports for Autistic Adults; and
- 4) Demographics (e.g., participants' community, gender, racial/ethnic identity, Indigenous identification, and first/preferred language).

The survey questions and design were informed by the current literature on employment outcomes for adults on the autism spectrum. For example, if indicated they were currently employed, autistic adults were then asked a series of questions about their current job (e.g., about pay, full vs part-time, support and understanding from employer, satisfaction with current job) in addition to whether they used employment supports. As the literature has pointed out, just because a person on the autism spectrum finds employment does not necessarily mean it is quality and meaningful employment for them (e.g., they could be underpaid with little support in place to help them succeed).

#### **SELF-IDENTIFICATION**

Most participants who answered the survey for autistic adults self-identified as parents, guardians or caregivers compared to only three participants who identified as adults on the autism spectrum. However, parents/caregivers/guardians were still asked to answer the survey as it would pertain to their child or care recipient. One participant chose not to self-identify.

We asked participants to indicate the level of their support needs (i.e., low, moderate or high) in the following categories: overall support needs, intellectual support needs, social support needs, mobility support needs and mental health support needs. Overall, most participants identified as having moderate overall support needs, and more indicating high social support more than any other category. Most participants reported low mobility and mental health support, and most reported moderate intellectual support needs.

Informed by the literature, we also asked participants about their overall mental health during the last six months. Of those who answered the question, most participants reported that their mental health was in the categories of either good or very good; one participant reported it as excellent, while three participants reported their mental health as fair. No participants reported their mental health as being poor. Overall, five participants reported that they were able to access the mental health support they needed, four reported they did not need mental health support and so it wasn't applicable, and two participants reported that they *could not* access the mental health support they needed.

## CURRENT EMPLOYMENT / UNEMPLOYMENT

Overall, most of the participants (seven out of eleven) reported they are currently employed, while four reported being currently unemployed. However, out of the seven who are currently employed, only three answered some of the module which asked more details about their current employment. When asked how long they had been employed, one participant answered “five years or longer”, one answered “one to less than five years”, and one answered, “less than six months”. Two out of the three employed participants who answered some of the employment-related questions reported that they worked less than twenty hours a week, with one working less than ten hours a week. However, the other participant reported working 37.5 or more weekly hours. All three of the participants reported that they work year-round. Two out of the three reported making “minimum wage to less than \$15 an hour” and the other participant reported making \$20 or more an hour”. Only one participant ranked how well they felt their employer understood, supported, and accommodated them as an employee on the autism spectrum and they ranked their employer high (i.e., that their employer had strong understanding, support and accommodations). Only two employees answered the job satisfaction question and reported they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their current job.

Two out of the three currently employed participants who answered the more detailed job questions reported that they *did use* supports when preparing for and/or during their employment, while one reported they did not use these supports. However, when asked in more detail about the supports they used, only one participant answered. They reported that they had used customer service and social support and that conversation, getting to talk to customers and the customer service support worked the best for them in helping to find/and or maintain their employment. They also reported that the support they used was very close to their home.

Of the four who reported they were currently unemployed, only three answered the questions in the currently unemployed module. Of those who answered, all three reported they were interested in working and that they had looked for and/or used employment supports. Those who indicated they had used employment supports (whether they were currently employed or currently unemployed) were also asked if the supports they used met their needs as an autistic adult. Out of the four participants who answered the question, three reported the support(s) did not meet their needs as an autistic adults / adult on the autism spectrum.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

All survey participants were asked about their knowledge of employment support(s) for autistic adults in New Brunswick—whether they had used these supports themselves. Only four participants wrote responses: the Neil Squire Association; Autism Resources Miramichi; and the Government of New Brunswick (but did not specify which particular government program, service or department).

When participants were asked what they think would be the most useful in helping them find and/or maintain employment, four participants provided responses:

- *“Getting employers to understand us”*
- *“Financial support and a lot of guidance and patience”*
- *“Someone meeting with me each week of work for three weeks until I get the hang of it”*

- *“Job shadowing and mentoring”.*

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Three out of the four participants who provided their demographic information reported they resided in the community of Miramichi and one participant reported residing between both the communities of Moncton and Fredericton. Three out of the four participants reported being in their twenties, and one in their late teens. For those who answered the demographic module, there was equal representation of men and women. All four participants identified as white, and two also identified as Indigenous. All four reported that their first and preferred language is English.

## Service Provider Survey

The survey for service providers (including government, researchers, and policy makers) included seven main sections and twenty-nine questions in total, with most questions being open-ended. The survey sections were:

- 1) Self-Identification;
- 2) Employment Supports;
- 3) Best Practices/Innovation;
- 4) Barriers to Support;
- 5) Relevant Research;
- 6) Recommendations; and
- 7) Demographics.

## SELF IDENTIFICATION

Participants were asked to identify in what capacity they were answering the survey. They were able to check more than one response. Of the twenty-six participants who either partially answered or completed the survey, most identified with an organization that provides employment support for people with disabilities (22 out of 31), and/or an organization that provides employment support for autistic adults (16 out of 31). Fewer participants (also) identified as an adult on the autism spectrum themselves; a parent to an autistic child; a person with lived experience as a family member; a person with experience as a professional with a community organization; a researcher with experience or interest in supports for people on the autism spectrum; a government professional with experience or interest in supports for people on the autism spectrum; and/or a policy professional with experience or interest in supports for people with autism.

Seven participants reported that they were in Fredericton, followed by four in St. John (two of the urban cores in New Brunswick). Other communities identified were Mirimichi, Perth Andover, Dieppe, Sussex, Edmunston, Bathurst, Moncton, Tracadie-Sheila, and Bouctouche. While years of experience working in employment support for autistic adults was quite varied across survey categories, the highest proportion of participants reported having “twenty years or more experience”. However, it is important to note this was only in the English sample,

for those who answered the French service provider survey, all participants reported having less than fifteen years of experience, with most under five years.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Most participants (22 out of 31) reported that their organization *does* provide job coaching services for autistic adults and 16 of the 22 reported they provided these services to individuals with both low and high support needs. The rest reported being able to provide to low support needs only, and none to high support needs only. However, no one reported that they would be able to provide these services to an individual *within a day* of them receiving employment, five reported they could provide a job coach within a week, but most (ten participants) reported it would take over a month to provide a job coach after an individual had obtained employment.

Participants were asked to list the top three challenges in providing employment supports for autistic adults. The most common responses were related to either job coaching or the employer. Related to job coaching, participants mentioned that the challenges were a lack of available job coaches—particularly in rural areas, lack of stability for job coaches (in terms of their pay and benefits, and hours) and that they may not be available to individuals long-term if needed. Related to employers, participants mentioned the challenge is around finding an appropriate employer for the individual, the reluctance of employers to pay employees with autism a living wage, and employer stigma including unwillingness of employers to accommodate or understand individuals on the autism spectrum and create positions for them. Other challenges that were mentioned were lack of transportation and transportation resources; lack of funding for support (especially long-term support); exclusionary criteria to access supports; lack of work experience; lack of flexible employment arrangements (e.g., working hours); inadequacy of secondary programs and training programs to prepare for the labour market; lack of community partnerships; lack of mental health support; and timely approval for support and funding when needed.

When asked about their ideas to address these challenges, participants provided several ideas, some of which are shared below:

- *“Government needs to allow for long term job coaching funding. At the moment they allow for 52 weeks or 1200 hrs at a higher rate of pay. When the long term after 52 weeks kicks in the pay is lowered for the job coach. It needs to remain the same.”*
- *“Agencies that [offer employment support] should have access to a yearly budget that can be used to hire job coaches.”*
- *“Training for job coaches in the colleges.”*
- *“Pool of trained Job Coaches with the funding to support them while waiting for job placement. More information to offer employers on ASD.”*

- *“Having an employment assistance program specifically for individuals with autism in the province. The people involved could give training to autistic persons according to their interest, help them find a job, do regular follow-ups with autistic individuals and also with employers.”*
- *“Having more access and support to help our clients with acquiring their basic needs. Educating employers on how people with ASD may appear or sound different; although with the right training and support they are statistically proven to stay with that employer long term. Educating employers about job carving; along with adjusting the requirements that are not necessary to do the job.”*
- *“More information to offer an employer or training for hiring. Money and incentives (Insurances, Health Care) to hire and retain Job Coaches.”*
- *“I think we need to increase the programs and services available outside of schools to help people build skills and independence. Fund more aba programs that can do this work and regulate it to ensure quality of service. There are no organizations in some areas, establish a minimum infrastructure provincially and procure service providers. People with moderate to severe disability with challenging behaviour are excluded often, we need programs with clinical support for these Individuals to reduce their barriers to inclusion, employment, and well-being.”*
- *“Less change, help individuals with what is expected of them, work them up to the required hours and not just start them at a part time or full-time position and expect them to do alright. They need to keep increasing their hours each week and start out slow. Some individuals cannot stand for a 5-8 hour shift, they may not have the physical abilities to do the job for long shifts.”*
- *“Making the adult feel comfortable, placing adult in low stimulus environments, proper supports, gradual integration.”*
- *“Guarantee a specific number of hours for hired job coaches as well as decent salaries, outreach to employers via success stories so they can see the positive benefits, work experience for individuals lacking experience and confidence in their ability to hold a regular job.”*
- *“The work upstream with employers is essential, the individual may be qualified and have experience, but if the first impression and meeting with the employer is a failure, the process usually stalls.”*
- *“Relevant co-op placements in high schools, opportunities to build relationships with community members and employers, education and training for employers, incentives for employers that are not at the expense of the individual (i.e., limited time stipends that do not affect the rate of pay to the individual but only last during a reasonable training period), we need better pay and training for job coaches.”*
- *“Working directly with Employers on inclusion/ensure they have a good understanding of autism/making sure appropriate placements based on the individuals’ strengths/build natural*

*supports/specific training working with autism (professional development), ABA training (specifics)."*

## **BEST PRACTICES & INNOVATION**

Participants were asked about what they thought were some of the most promising and/or innovative and effective practices in New Brunswick related to enhancing employment support for autistic adults. Some participants noted they felt there was nothing successful happening in New Brunswick when compared to other places, which was attributed by some participants to New Brunswick being a mostly rural province and not having adequate transportation. Others who did note that some things were working currently in NB, mentioned the following:

- *"Programs that have essential work skills, such as: Transition Program, YES Program and Autism Miramichi."*
- *"Employment skills program in Miramichi, but that is the only one I'm aware of."*
- *"The use of Job Coaches. The Ways to Work program, the WES program and the bridge program at Key Industries."*
- *"WorkLivePlay's approach to matching employers and employees, trial placements and published success stories"*
- *"Some of the province's autism resource centers have joined together to apply for a grant through the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities regarding employment for adults with autism. This program, if implemented, would be a great help to individuals with autism in the province."*

Some participants noted that places like Europe, the US, and the United Kingdom have better policies in place to support autistic adults. More locally, and in the Atlantic Canadian region, Autism Nova Scotia was mentioned as having effective supports in place, for example their "Exploring the Spectrum" online training was specifically mentioned.

When asked which organizations in New Brunswick are currently pursuing or implementing effective practices to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic adults, the most frequently mentioned were Jobs Unlimited, Community Employment Agency (CEA), Key Industries, Hire Potential, and New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL). Other organizations that were mentioned were: Crosswinds, CCRW Employment Services Moncton, Oromocto Training and Employment Centre (OTEC), John Howard Society, Working NB, Vocational Training Centre, Avenue NB and Autism Resources Miramichi.

When asked why these organizations are innovative and/or successful in providing employment support to autistic adults, the responses included:

## Jobs Unlimited

- *“appropriate employer match based on abilities/taking a client centered approach/pre-employment training with the individuals/continuously educate the business sector on inclusion/ provide short term and on the interim job coach support, Inhouse training, Key Industries Vocational simulated stations”.*
- *“they have been working in this field for many years and have learned best practices for hiring Job Coach's. (Needs to be extended on hours...to support hours not on a weekday 8-5)”.*
- *“Jobs Unlimited finds the right employer, supports the individual through the whole process of securing the job, providing the supports needed for the individual to do the job and provides ongoing support to the individual and the employer.”*
- *“[Key Industries, Hire Potential and Vocational Training Centre] They are constantly evaluating and educating themselves along with upgrading techniques, equipment and/or practices to continually better assist all clients on the Spectrum.”*
- *“Key Industries gives the visual of what the job looks like.”*
- *“[NBACL, Crosswinds, CCRW Moncton] Person-centered approach to planning, individualized support”*
- *“CEA - They have a few Job Coaches that they use over and over, this keeps the JC hired and it keeps individual's short term support.”*
- *“NBACL - They identify gaps then attempt to fill those gaps. Employment has been a huge gap so they have developed many programs that look at this.”*
- *“Autism Resources Miramichi offers small class size and individual support for each person, along with job coaching.”*
- *“Employability Plus also helps. It is a specialized employment assistance service for customers with high employment backlogs. However, they don't just target people with autism. They target people with disabilities, people with mental health issues, offenders and young offenders, members of a vulnerable minority group, new immigrants, First Nations individuals, elderly workers, and the long-term unemployed.”*

When asked about who the most innovative individual leaders in research, government or policy work are related to providing employment support for adults on the autism spectrum, only two names were mentioned: NBACL (specifically the name Sarah Wagner) and Autism Connections. However, one participant, while recognizing that NBACL is doing this work, mentioned:

- *“I think NBACL is the only organization doing that work but I think they miss the mark on a few things. Too much advocacy focused on inclusion rather than individuals' needs being met.”*

*People want to contribute and have places to go and things to do, we need to fund the organizations better that are willing to do the work.”*

## **BARRIERS TO SUPPORT**

Participants were asked whether they considered any current provincial policies to present barriers to employment for adults on the autism spectrum. Most of the participants who answered the question, answered no. Of those who answered yes, they provided the following details:

- *“Social assistance and I think our education act should mandate vocational skill development for learners with individualized plps.”*
- *“Stipends - this policy has the right intentions but employees with disabilities often fall through the cracks and the employer basically gets “free labour” for a training period that can last 20 years. This needs to change.”*
- *“It's not specifically policies but rather how services were being provided. When Gov't works in silos it makes it difficult to provide an effective fluid service. AvenueNB is working to change this and improve services. If all goes as planned this association will make a big difference in enhancing and creating new effective services for all people with disabilities.”*
- *“I believe Social Development DSP needs to reform policies that so not discriminate based on complex needs.”*

## **RELEVANT RESEARCH**

Participants were asked whether they were familiar with two New Brunswick-based studies related to services and supports for autistic population: *A Provincial Focus on Services for Adults with Autism: Navigating “the Cliff”* (i.e., the “Cliff Report”) and the *Continuity of Care and Support for Autistic Adults* (i.e., the CONNECT Project). Of those who answered this section, the majority were not familiar with the Cliff Report, and none of them knew about the CONNECT Project. For those who did know of the Cliff Report, they recalled that the key learnings from that report were:

- *“The difficulty that adults had to navigate the system to find services”*
- *“The government doesn't support the NB resource centres in the amount that would benefit individuals with autism and their families throughout their lifelong disorder. Families are in need of help and support as they are aging, and nothing is being done to help our growing youth that now adults and there are not enough services to provide any services in rural NB. I feel the cliff report shows how most families feel like they are falling from that cliff!!!”*

Participants were asked if they had any recommendations for relevant research related to best practices or innovation regarding employment support(s) for autistic adults. Almost all participants reported they did not

know of any and noted that “most research that we have read has been on relation to people with developmental disabilities rather than specifically autism” which is also a limitation noted in the literature. One participant recommended Open Future Learning, which is an online learning provider to the learning disability workforce.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants were asked for any final suggestions or recommendations they had for ways to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic adults in New Brunswick. These recommendations included:

- *More alternative education programs*
- *Pool of job coaches in each region + consistency with job coaches*
- *Employment matching (based on strengths and abilities)*
- *More training and support about autism for employers, support workers and job coaches*
- *Fluid, individualized services based on clear assessments of individuals' abilities*
- *Stronger and more direct connections to mental health services and housing support*
- *More federal intervention in autism supports*

Participants were asked if they would like to add anything else to their survey responses.

- *“Ideally, I would like to see employers mandated to employ a certain percent of people with barriers to employment.”*
- *“There are employers who are extremely satisfied with the work done by persons living with disabilities and they are the ones who make the best case to their fellow employers, thus creating the desire to do the same as they do, and they in turn contact us.”*
- *“Our children are growing fast, there are more getting diagnosed each year and we need to make sure every individual gets the supports they need at every level of growth.”*
- *“There are other factors (other than just employment supports) that contribute to an individual's success in gaining and retaining employment. Wrap-around services are needed so that the employed individual can remain employed. Employment supports, housing, stress and anxiety support, family support, connection to friends, etc. are needed to live a fulfilled and happy life. When one need is not being met, employment is at risk.”*

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Most participants who answered the demographic section of the survey reported that they were in their forties or fifties, with fewer in their twenties and thirties. All participants who answered the demographic questions reported that they identified as women or females, identified as white and/or acadienne, none as Indigenous and all with their preferred language as both English or French depending on which survey they answered.

# Services Scan

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## Method & Limitations

In various literature reviewed, a lack of knowledge of what types of services for autistic people are available in New Brunswick seemed to be highlighted as a gap. This included whether they are employment related or not, whether they are specifically for autistic people or not, where these services are based or offered geographically, and in what languages. The scan we have done in this report looks to help address this gap in knowledge as a means of supporting increased access to services, and increased coordination and collaboration amongst organizations. A lack of coordination and collaboration amongst organizations looking to support autistic people was also identified as a key finding in the literature review (see Appendices for a copy of the review).

The scan was done by collecting data through websites, Facebook Pages and phone calls. Information was cataloged onto a spreadsheet (A condensed version can be found in the appendix) and then transferred into three interactive maps using Google Maps ([Map 1](#), [Map 2](#), [Map 3](#)). Screenshots of significant geographical areas and information were then done and included in the Findings and Gaps section of this report to back up various findings and gaps in service that were identified. Of the 54 organizations called, 14 organizations answered the phone and were able to answer some or all of the clarifying questions for the spreadsheet.

Phone calls were conducted to clarify the information found online and fill in any gaps in information unavailable online. The phone numbers used were often for the main front desk. Therefore, the person on the other line was often a receptionist, or in the cases of smaller organizations such as Autism Centres, the main staff member answered. Various voice messages were left, but no one called back. The majority of the organizations had websites or a Facebook Page, however four did not. Information on two of the organizations came from 211, and the other 2 from Hire for Talent profiles. Websites often had the most information, but phone calls allowed for the most accurate, and detailed information to be gathered. 211 was, however, helpful in identifying disability support organizations through their business lists and profiles.

Two reviews on organizations were completed. A preliminary review focused on identifying Autism Centres and members of Avenue NB (New! Co-operative). The second review identified disability employment support organizations and employment support organizations with disability-focused programs, as well as New Brunswick Association for Supportive Services & Employment (NBASSE) members and Inclusion NB (formerly NBACL, New Brunswick Association for Community Living).

The spreadsheet includes, but is not limited to:

- Website or Facebook Page link
- Call status (who answered)

- Location
- Language
- Size (identified by the number of employees)
- Number of Autistic people served
- Network/membership status
- Purpose
- Employment services offered
- Other, non-employment, services offered

Notes on organization mission/purpose, employment services and other services offered, were copied from websites, or transcribed from phone calls. If the organizations did offer Autism-specific or disability-specific employment services, they were categorized as such. Membership status was based on organization network/membership with Avenue New Brunswick, New Brunswick Association for Supportive Services & Employment (NBASSE), Inclusion New Brunswick (formerly New Brunswick Association for Community Living) and/or an Autism Centre.

Phone calls were the most valuable in finding out information. However, it was often difficult to get through to someone on the other line, and the person answering didn't always know all the answers. Further research would benefit from having more time to follow-up with every organization, and with the staff member who is able to answer questions accurately and fully. Websites and Facebook pages can be limiting, especially in determining the size of the organization, memberships, number of Autistic people they serve and language.

The most difficult information to determine was the number of Autistic people each organization served, and how many employees they had. This information had to be determined almost exclusively by phone, and was often a difficult question for them to answer. It is difficult to know the number of Autistic people disability employment-specific support organizations are actively working with, if any, Autistic people, unless they were contacted by phone. It was assumed that if they offer services to people with disabilities, that they also serve people with Autism. However, this leaves room for inaccuracies and does not determine if and how services are adapted to support autistic people.

Many organizations were also unsure if they were members of Inclusion NB or not. When talking with staff, they may have known they worked closely with them, but were unsure if they were actual members. This may have been a result of the transition in branding, as it used to be known as New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL), and only the last half of organizations were asked using both the new and old name, as the name change only became apparent part way through the scan. Avenue NB and NBASSE were easier to determine, because their list was online. Inclusion NB lists their partner organizations, but not all their members. The only organization who was able to confirm over phone that they were a member of Inclusion NB, was not included on the Inclusion NB website under partners. This implies that there is some confusion and lack of clarity within some networks.

If unable to get in contact with the organization directly, languages were assumed based on the language options presented on their websites and/or the voicemail on their phone line. However, these assumptions could be greatly inaccurate. For instance, one Autism Centre would have been assumed French without speaking to a staff

member who explained that although they are mostly French, they do offer services to English speakers as well and are currently working with an anglophone client.

Determining if an organization provided employment support was also difficult to determine, because many supports may not be employment specific, but do indirectly support people in employment. For instance, functional skills assessments, emotional confidence training and behavioural support all can help someone with autism in their Employment endeavors. For the sake of this research, employment-specific support was based on supports that were directly related to their employability, and were identified as such by the organization.

The spreadsheet provides information on the various employment and non-employment support offered by each organization. Future research would benefit from taking a deeper look at these services and comparing them to see what types of employment and non-employment supports are being offered and are there any gaps? For instance, of the organizations that offer employment support, gaps in the types of employment services (e.g. on the job support, resume building, skills training, etc.) could be determined.

## **Findings & Gaps**

### **Spreadsheet**

The spreadsheet includes all organizations identified in the research as offering support services, whether employment specific or not, to Autistic people and/or people with disabilities. It captures both the employment and non-employment support services available in New Brunswick, and who the services are available for. Information such as language, location, size, and number of autistic people served were also captured, depending on what information was available.

Conversations with staff at Autism Centres suggest that Autism Centres serve the largest number of Autistic people and families, while also having the fewest resources. They offer the greatest amount of support specific to Autistic people, both employment and otherwise. However, they are limited in their resources, often being run by 1-2 staff members who serve an entire region of individuals and families on a limited budget.

There also seems to be a gap in employment support for youth, as most organizations only serve adults. There were some organizations that did not specify, however, so those would be worth doing further research on.

The spreadsheet was instrumental to the creation of the maps, which show the gaps in services by geography, networks and language. The networks/memberships of organizations can be on Map 2.

### **How to Read & Use the Interactive Maps**

Interacting with Google My Maps allows you to click on each location and see what organization it represents. The organizations can then be corresponded with the spreadsheet to identify more detailed information about each organization. Organizations are separated into different layers and can be viewed in the left side panel. Layers can be checked on and off to show or hide the layer on the map. Each map uses colour to represent

something different. The legends for each map can be found in the screenshots of the corresponding map (See below).

**TYPES OF SUPPORT**

1. **Autism Employment Support:** Employment support services that are offered to and designed specifically for people with Autism.
2. **Autism Support:** Support services that are offered to and designed for Autistic people, but do not include employment support services. Support services offered may in-directly impact a person's employment, but not directly.
3. **Disability Employment Support:** Employment support services that are offered to anyone with a disability, which may include people with Autism, but not necessarily designed specifically with their specific disability in mind.
4. **Disability Support:** Support services that are offered to anyone with a disability, but does not include employment-specific support services.

**TABLE #1: MAP PURPOSES, LINKS AND GUIDE TO INTERPRETATION**

<b>Map 1</b>	The first map displays a geographic overview of organizations by types of support offered, demonstrating support offered by specific geographical regions.	<a href="#">Link</a>	Layers: Type of support  Colours: Type of Support
<b>Map 2</b>	The second map demonstrates the type of support by network/membership status. These networks included Autism Centres, Avenue NB (New! Co-operative), New Brunswick Association for Supported Services & Employment (NBASSE), and Inclusion NB (formerly NBACL or New Brunswick Association for Canadian Living).	<a href="#">Link</a>	Layers: Network/ Membership  Colours: Types of support
<b>Map 3</b>	The third map separates organizations by the type of support they offer and the language(s) they offer them in to demonstrate the geographical differences in support offered by language.	<a href="#">Link</a>	Layers: Type of support  Colours: Languages

**MAP #1: SUPPORT BY REGION**

To interact with this map click [here](#).

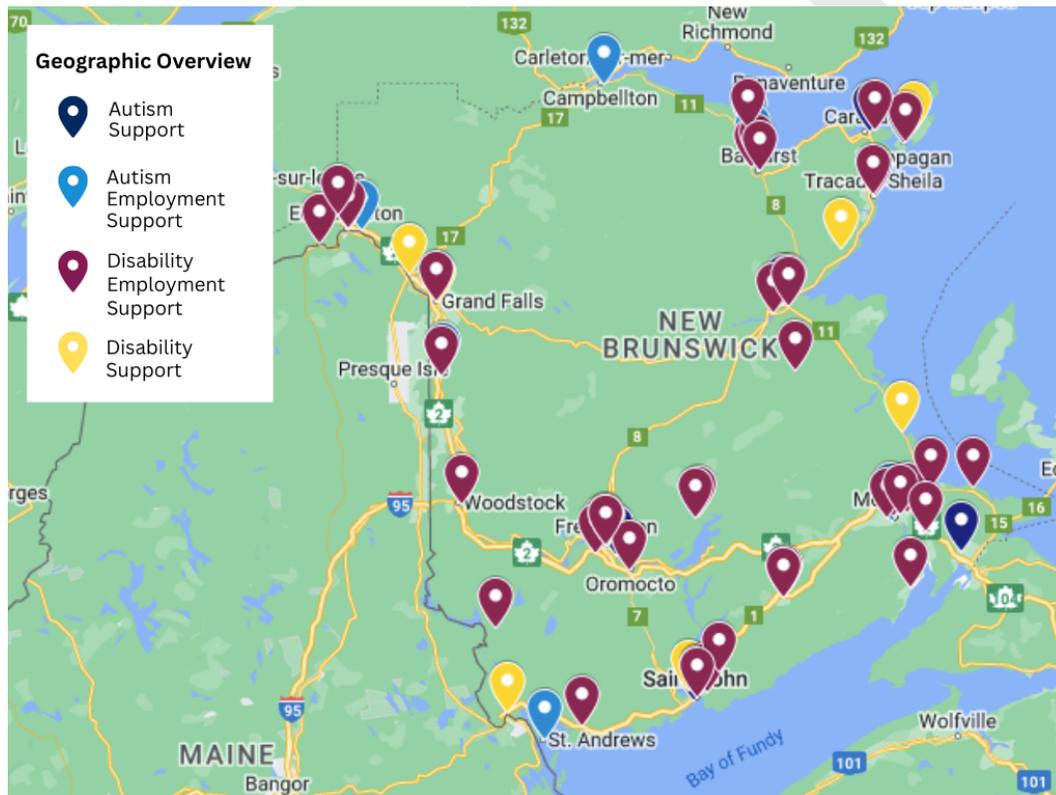
Disability support organizations, especially employment support organizations, are a lot more common and widespread across the province than Autism-specific supports, both employment and non-employment supports.

Comparatively, there is a gap in Autism-specific support organizations throughout the province. However the biggest gap is in Autism Employment Supports along the western shore, from Bouctouche to Caraquet on the Acadian Peninsula.

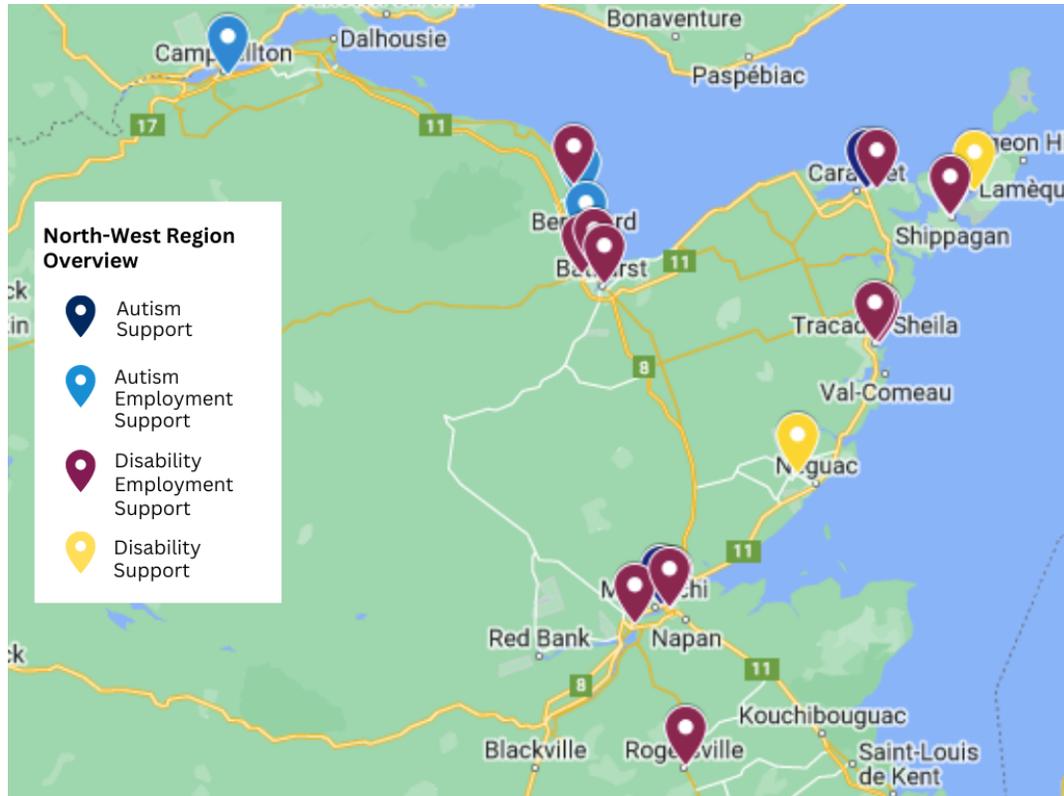
There is a blaring gap in all support services in the middle of the province, away from the more urban areas, hugging along the coasts and U.S. border. This suggests that the most rural individuals are the most disadvantaged in having physical access to support services.

Five screenshots (1a-1e) are displayed below to give an overview of the entire province, as well as in four separate regions, North-West, North-East, South-West, and South-East.

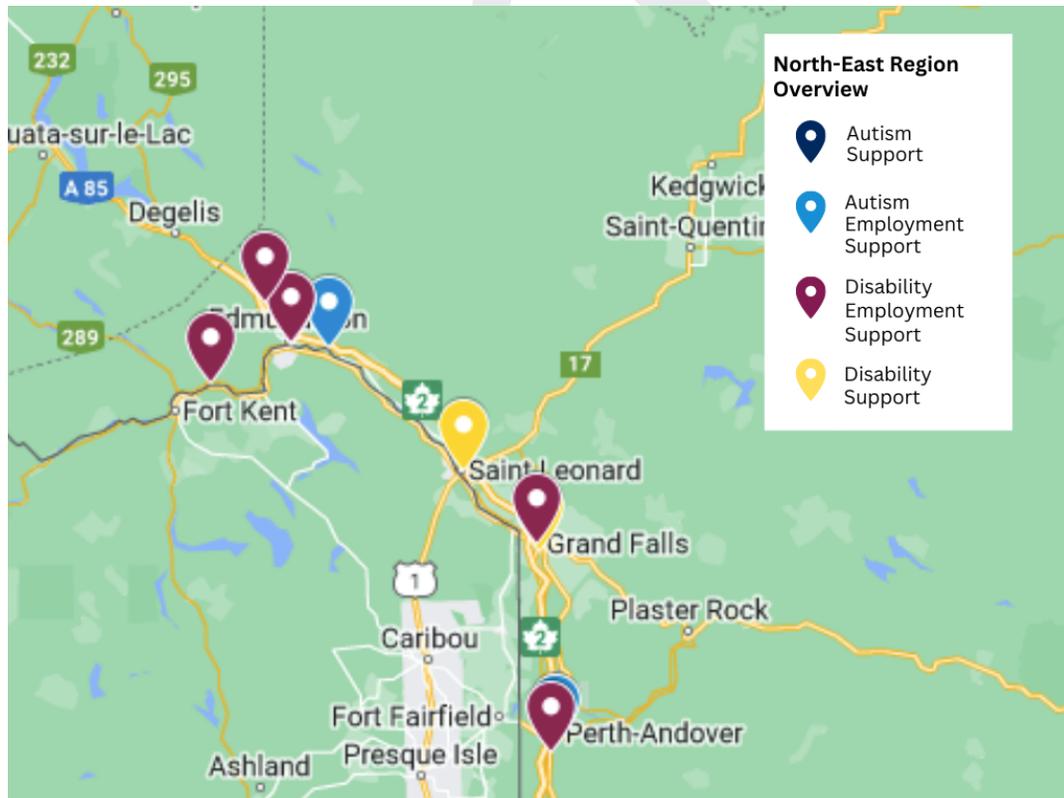
**Screenshot 1a: Geographic Overview of Organizations by Types of Supports**



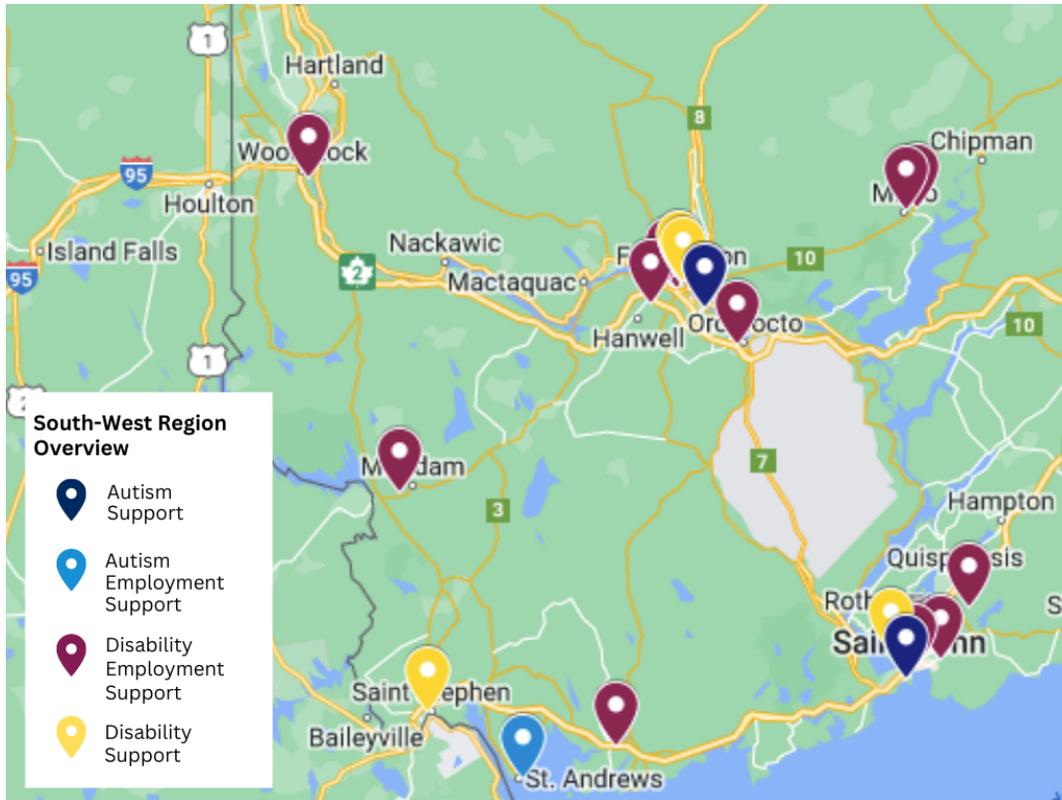
Screenshot 1b: North-West Region Overview by Types of Supports



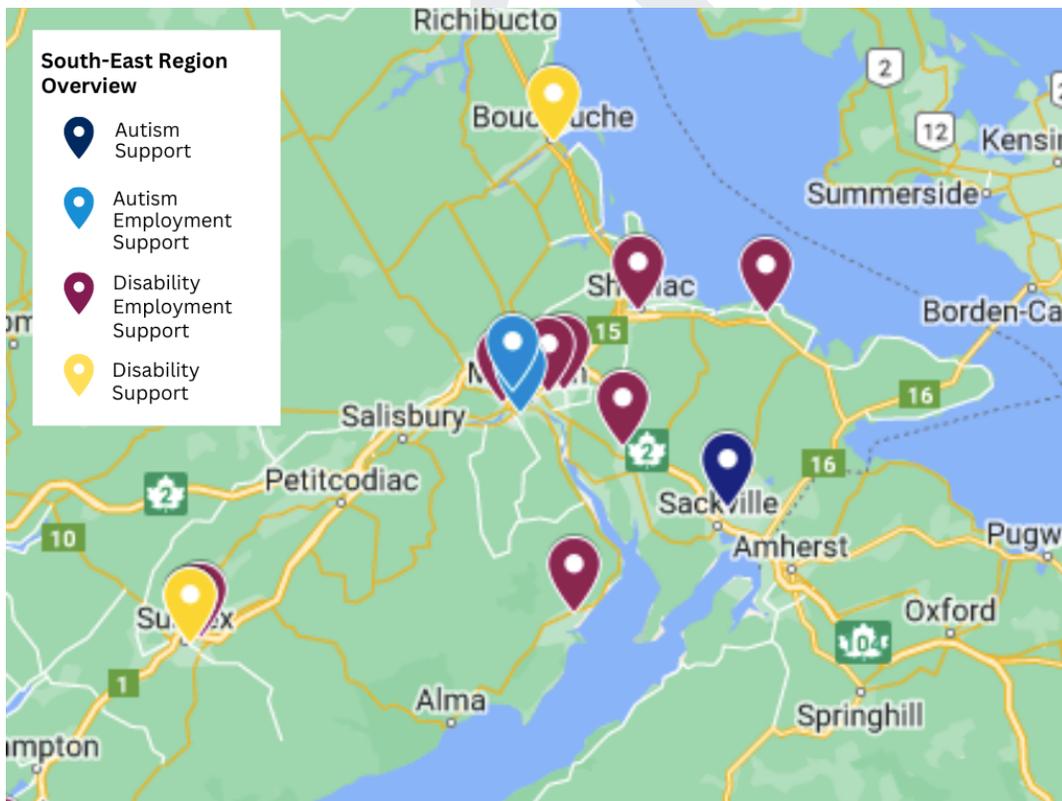
Screenshot 1c: North-East Region Overview by Types of Supports



Screenshot 1d: South-West Region Overview by Types of Supports



Screenshot 1e: South-East Region Overview by Types of Supports



## MAP #2: SUPPORT TYPES BY ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP

To interact with this map, click [here](#).

A lack of coordination and collaboration was identified in the preliminary review of some literature. Therefore, looking at what types of relevant networks and collaboration were working to support autistic people with employment or more generally was something we decided to look at as part of this project.

None of the memberships represented every type of support.

The Autism Centres are not connected to each other by a network. This was mentioned in the literature reviewed as something to work on to encourage increased coordination and collaboration.

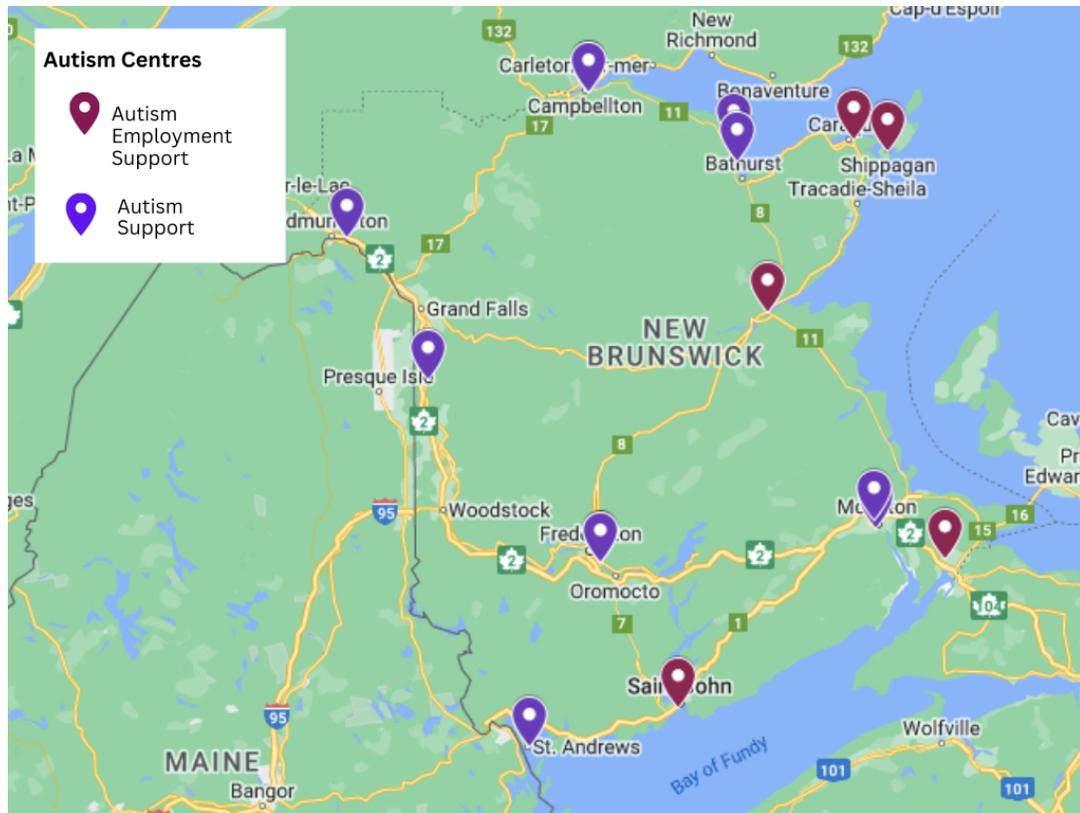
Avenue NB is a very new co-operative that is made up of disability support organizations that receive government funding from New Brunswick's Post-secondary Education Training and Labour Department (PETL), with the majority of them offering employment services as well.

NBASSE had the most diverse membership, representing three support types, while Inclusion NB only represents disability support organizations.

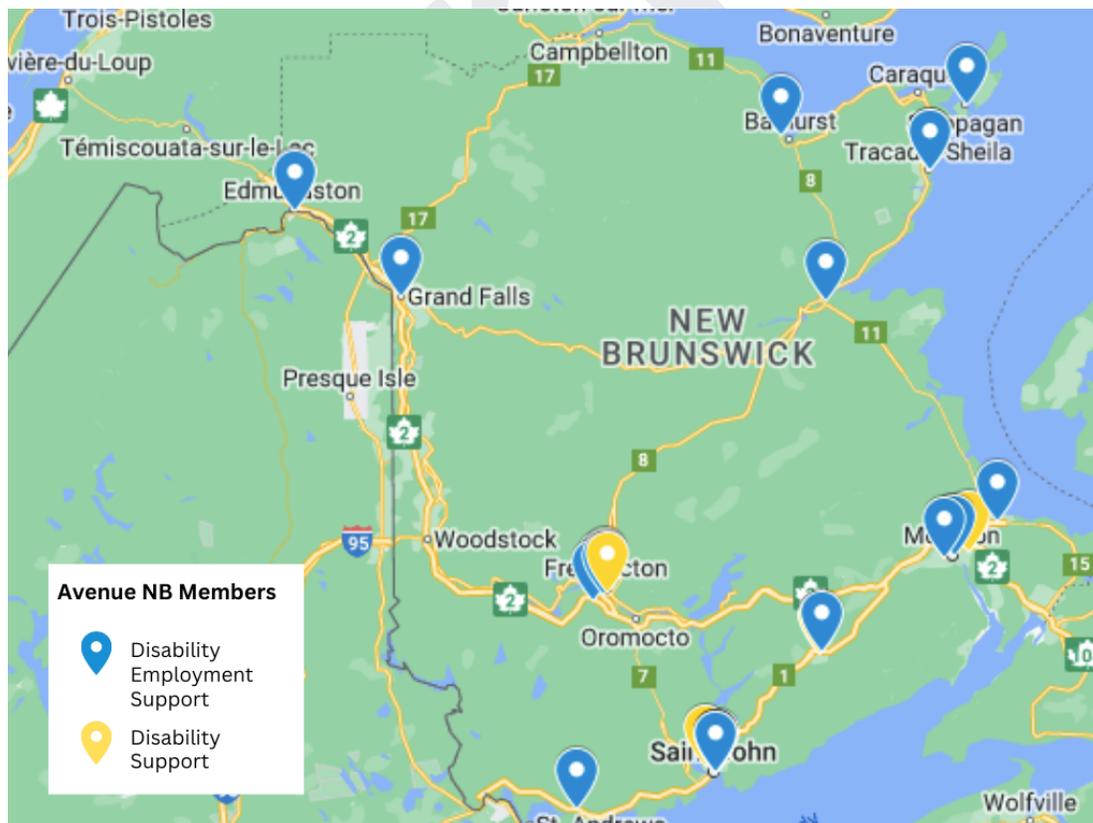
Inclusion NB (formerly NBACL) is a provincial, non-profit organization that works on behalf of children and adults with an intellectual or developmental disability and their families, to ensure individuals, with the support of their families, have the option to choose the supports they need to live meaningful lives and participate in their communities as valued and contributing members.

Each of the four screenshots below represent the distribution of each organizational network or memberships mentioned above.

Screenshot 2a: Autism Centers by Support Type



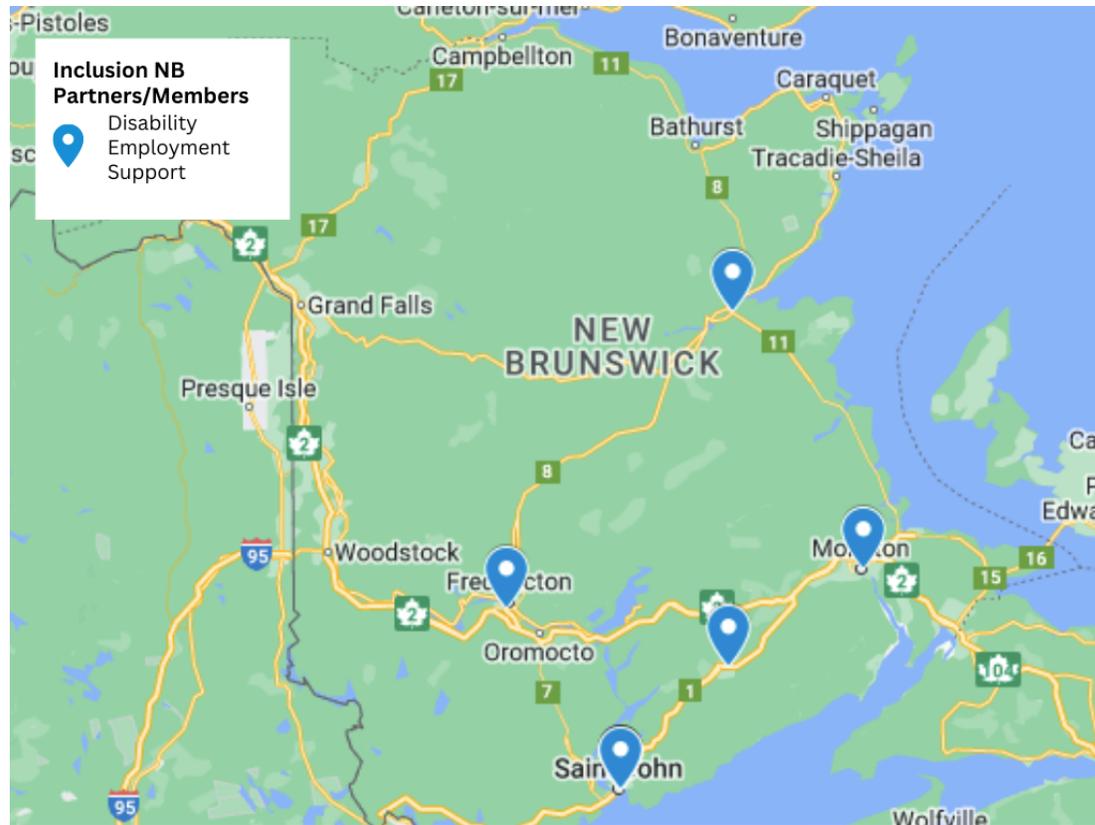
Screenshot 2b: Avenue NB Members by Support Type



### Screenshot 2c: NBASSE Members by Support Type



## Screenshot 2d: Inclusion NB Partners/Members by Support Types



### MAP #3: SUPPORT TYPES BY LANGUAGE

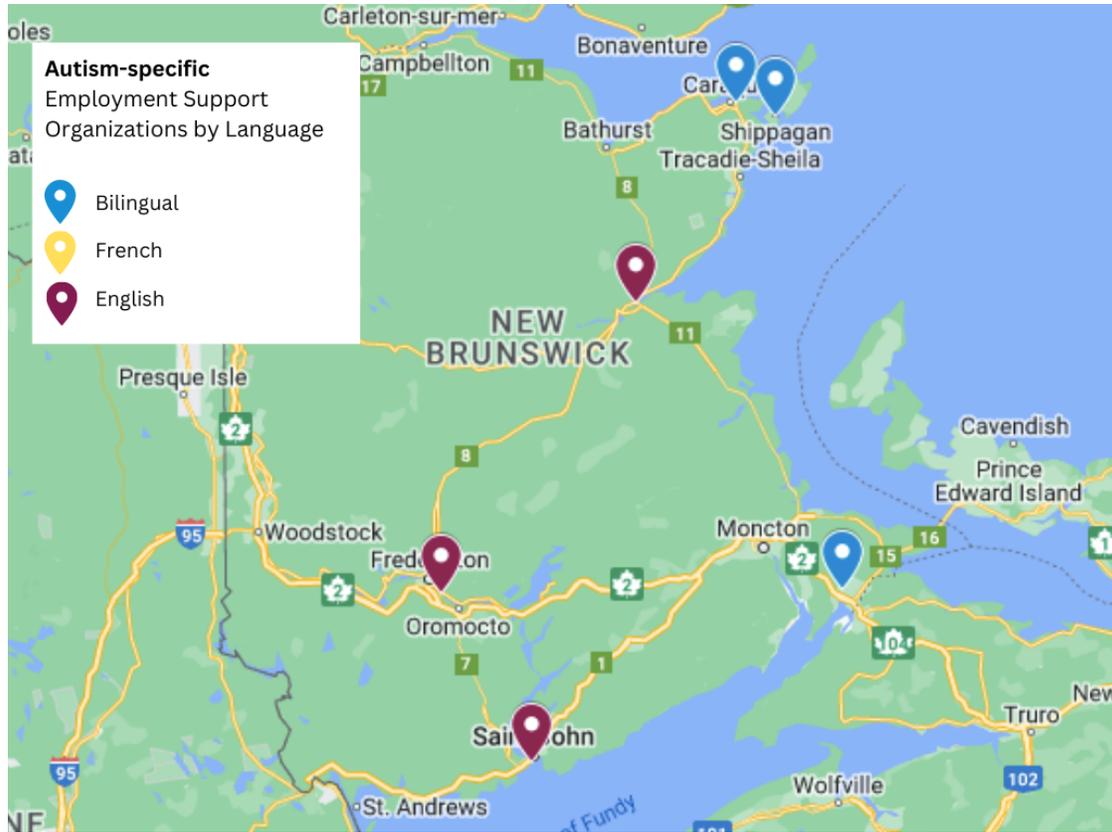
To interact with this map, click [here](#).

This map (represented by four screenshots below) was created to identify the types of services being offered in French and/or English. The findings did identify a few gaps, in which the language(s) that services are being offered are exclusionary to either French or English speakers. Most services are offered in English only, with fewer offering services in bilingual and fewer still in French only.

French dominated regions are more likely to offer services in both French and English, whereas English regions were more often to offer services in English-only.

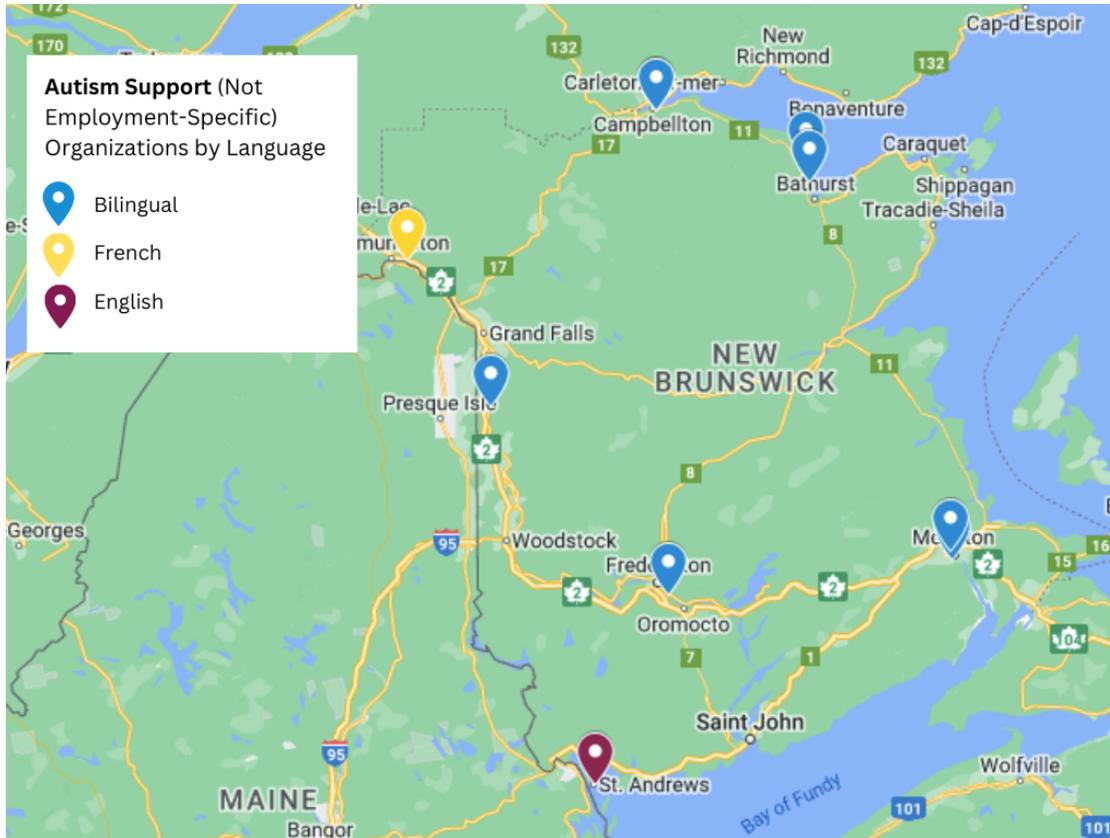
The most significant gap for French services is in the mid-Western region. Disability-specific organizations were more likely to be French-only in the Northern half of New Brunswick, creating a barrier for English speakers in that region. While the southern region offers more bilingual services.

Screenshot 3a: Autism Specific Employment Support Organizations by Language

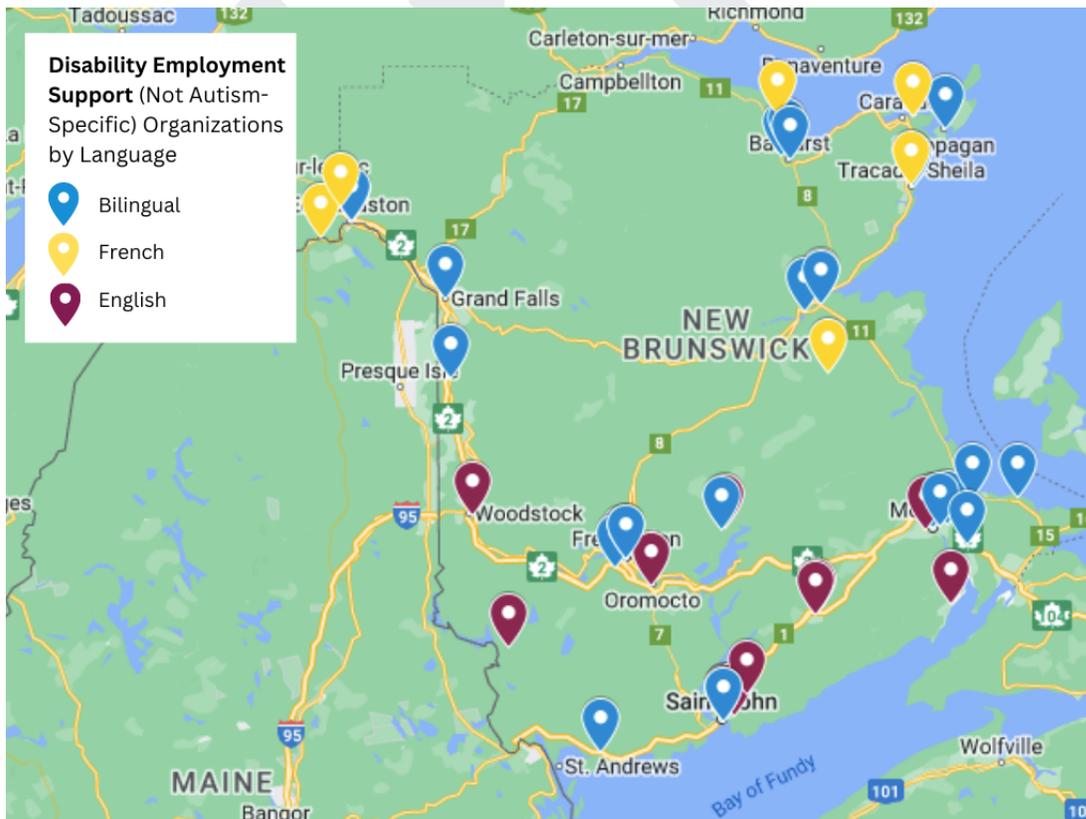


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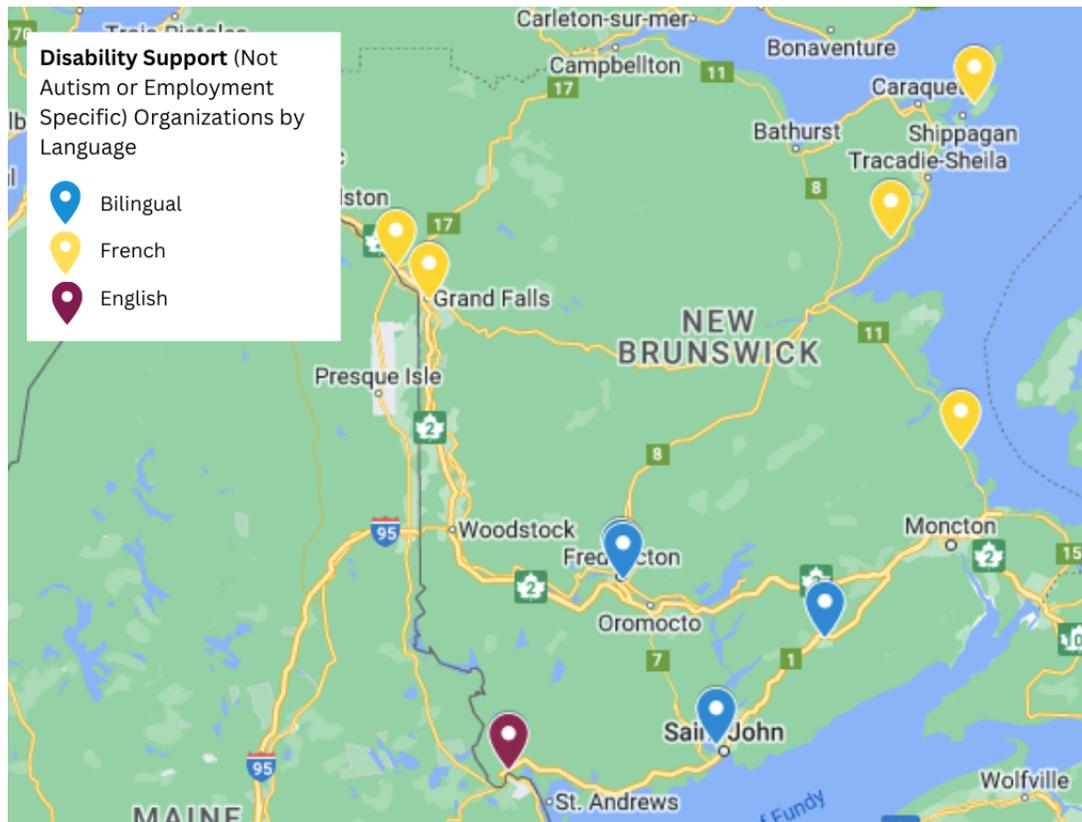
**Screenshot 3b: Autism-Specific Support (Not Employment-Specific)**



**Screenshot 3c: Disability Employment Support (Not Autism Specific)**



### Screenshot 3d: Disability Support (Not Autism or Employment Specific)



## Summary of Findings & Recommendations

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Despite some challenges with the limited timeline, change in personnel and other challenges faced during this project, the findings of this project would seem to still be very rich and a great addition to the literature and research that has already been done in the area of how employment supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum can be enhanced or increased in New Brunswick. In particular this project looked to build on other research projects that have been done.

In the interviews that were done, interaction with a wide range of perspectives was especially valuable. In particular the thoughts of self-advocates, reflections on the nature of self-advocacy and the value of 'outlier' comments. In particular the views of an economist with experience in looking at employment supports stood out as an example of why it seems very important to engage with a broad range of stakeholders and perspectives in future work that might be done in this area. This point was reinforced in several sections of this report.

Including first voice and lived experience of autistic people in this work was another critical point that came up, and it is with much regret that this point was not addressed more in this project. Building relationships and working with various people from various communities does take a lot of time, so again for the future, more time

should be budgeted for this type of work. In particular, help distributing the survey links often came more from 'warm' contacts where the researchers either already had a connection or relationship with people or organizations, or had a referral / e-intro from someone else. The value of various networks and the lack of coordination amongst various networks in New Brunswick seems to especially stand out as a barrier to increased learning, coordination and collaboration.

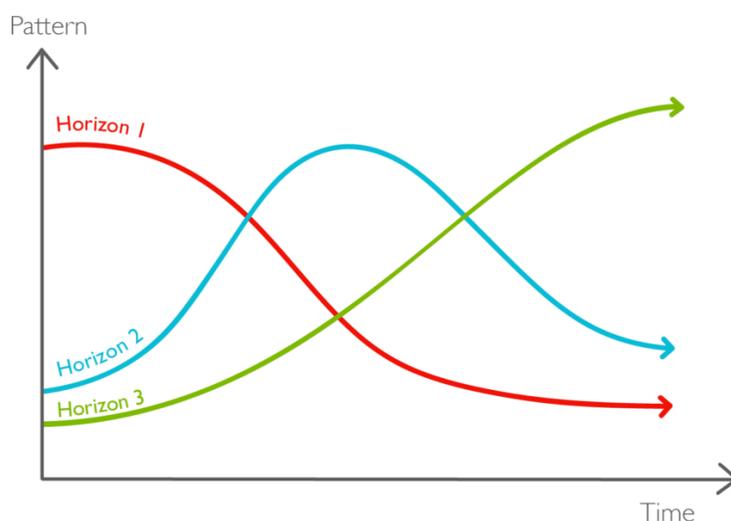
This report hopefully is a helpful 'stepping stone' along the way to enhancing and increasing employment supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. It has been a great opportunity to engage with a broad range of stakeholders, and the results are a wealth of ideas about how to move forward in this area. However, it cannot and will never be able to capture everything that is needed to accomplish the goal of this project. Much more work needs to be done. If there were a couple key points that stood out, it is that more research needs to be done, more autistic people (especially self-advocates / activists) need to be included right from the beginning of designing any project, and employment support programming for youth is critical as well.

What also stood out is a broader range of stakeholders also need to be engaged in addressing this challenge. It could also be advantageous to engage with other marginalized and racialized people and communities across the region to enhance inclusive economic development more broadly and help address tremendous labour shortages across the region as well. In this, enhancing employment for these populations can happen in various ways including: employment opportunities externally in community; employment opportunities in cohorts within social enterprise organizations; and looking at self-employment options and how enabling more learning about co-ops and the co-op model could help (especially related to those already doing work in this area).

In conclusion, this project hopefully provides a helpful shift in the story of how best to continue to work to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. An analogy that could be helpful going forward is to think about a model called Three Horizons. In this framework, Horizon 1 is the world as we know it. Horizon 3 is the future we want, and Horizon 2 is made up of the 'steps' we need to take to shift from one world to another.

If there is one key theme for this report, it is that there is a lot more work that needs to be done in this area. More learning that needs to happen, more sharing, coordination and collaboration needs to happen. More people need to be included, and more time is needed to build the relationships and networks we need to continue to go deeper in this work and to create more inclusive communities for all of us.

## Three Horizons



## Appendices

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### Appendix A: Literature Review

**\*\*Note on Language:** *We recognize that both “identity first” and/or “person-first” language are preferred by members of the autism community and so we use these interchangeably throughout the document.*

### Introduction

Overall, a significantly higher percentage of persons with disabilities experience both unemployment and underemployment in Canada compared to the general population. This is also observable in the Atlantic Canadian region (Atlantic Canada Economic Council 2020), including the province of New Brunswick which continues to have one of the highest rates of disability in the country (NB Jobs 2017; Statistics Canada 2006). Creating a more inclusive labour market would socially and economically benefit both individuals with disabilities (including Autism Spectrum Disorder) and the larger community/society. Unattachment to the labour market can significantly impact the likelihood that a person with a disability will experience poverty; while, for taxpayers there is a higher cost associated with un- or under-employment of persons with disabilities compared to the cost of implementing supports (i.e., programs, services, and policies) to improve their long-term employment outcomes (Government of New Brunswick). For example, in a U.S. context, Cimera (2009) found that working aged people with autism had a benefit cost ratio of 1.62.

In Canada, the population of persons on the autism spectrum is growing over time (Canadian Academy of Health Sciences 2022), while at the same time, the country, and more specifically the Atlantic Canadian region is facing labour market and skills shortages mainly due to shifting demographics (e.g., aging population, slow population growth, youth outmigration), among other factors (Atlantic Provinces Economic Council 2020, 2022). Atlantic Canada has a larger proportion of people with disabilities compared to the rest of country (Atlantic Provinces Economic Council 2022) so improving their participation in the labour market is essential for both individual wellbeing *and* confronting challenges around the economy and work. The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (2022) estimates that a labour market participation increase of only five percentage points of persons with disabilities could lead to 18,000 more workers in the region which would help alleviate some of the worker and skills shortages in the region. Based on recent rough estimations, there are 16,000 autistic adults between the ages of 22 and 75 living in the Maritime Provinces (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia) (CONNECT 2018). Increasing supports specifically for the autistic population could facilitate labour market participation of many capable jobseekers on the autistic spectrum and help in the future success of the economy.

Many autistic adults are capable of, and want to, work. Yet despite the decreasing availability of employment supports, high unemployment among the autistic population persists (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019; Jose et al. 2021; Nicholas 2018; Klag, Nicholas and Metayer 2021). For example, in a recent study conducted with adults on

the autism spectrum in the Maritime provinces, Jose et al. (2021) noted that only 46% of the sample were employed, and only one-fifth held full-time employment. There is consensus in the international, national, and local literature that employment supports and services for autistic adults are falling short and continue to need improvement (Jose et al. 2021; Hutchins and McDonnell 2019; Nicholas 2018; Tint and Weiss 2017); and even if supports do exist, they may not be accessible for everyone on the autism spectrum. Supporting successful employment for autistic jobseekers must extend beyond solely aiding in obtaining competitive employment and needs to also include representation of autistic adults in “good jobs” (e.g., *paid*, meaningful work with job security, access to accommodations that meet individual needs and ensure success, work that showcases individual strengths, and fair compensation).

The purpose of this literature review is to identify the needs, issues, and challenges around increasing and enhancing employment supports for autistic adults, identify current gaps in research related to employment outcomes for individuals on the autism spectrum, and identify which approaches, programs and services are working well in this area— locally within Atlantic Canada (and more specifically New Brunswick), nationally, and internationally.

## Current Needs and Challenges

Literature that discusses the process of finding and/or obtaining employment for autistic individuals describes it as “daunting and anxiety producing” (Nicholas 2020: 7). This is specifically true for *autistic adults*, for whom supports, and services significantly decrease as they leave the secondary education system, (Hutchins and McDonnell; Jose et al. 2021). Hutchins and McDonnell write, “the current system does not reflect that children with autism become adults with autism” (2019: 28). One of the large gaps in services and supports for adults on the autism spectrum is in finding and maintaining quality employment. For example, findings from the Maritimes-based CONNECT project indicate that employment counselling is among the top five services *received*; the top five services *wanted but not received*; and the top five *most needed* services for autistic individuals in the Maritime Provinces (CONNECT 2018).

There is consensus in the literature that to strengthen employment outcomes for autistic persons, support must be provided at the *individual-level*, *community-level* (including workplace and employer) and *societal-level*. Klag, Nicholas and Metayer (2021) and Nicholas et al. (2018), show that the elements creating a complex employment ecosystem for autistic individuals are multilevel and interconnected. They argue that the inability to be aware of and build solutions around interconnecting factors is the reason why there has been little long-term improvement of employment rates for individuals on the autism spectrum, despite the growth in employment supports. They describe employment as “intricately woven into so many other aspects of life and society, and as contributing to the ultimate goal of a *good life* for autistic individuals on their terms” (2021:14). Organizations who have adapted this “eco-system” approach in their work on building capacity around employment supports for autistic jobseekers have found success (see Autism NS pilot projects).

## The Individual

Beginning with the individual-level, each adult on the autism spectrum may have very different strengths and challenges. Therefore, employment supports must plan around, and accommodate the unique characteristics and needs of individuals (Nicholas 2018; Hutchins and McDonnell 2019). For example, an autistic adult may need little to no intellectual support, but may have high social support needs, which could significantly impact their employment outcomes by posing challenges related to social interactions, job interviews, or communication with coworkers (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019). At the same time, adults with little to no intellectual support needs, but high support needs in other areas (including, for example, mental health) may be excluded from many employment-related supports and services for persons with disabilities (as noted by Hutchins and McDonnell 2019 in a New Brunswick context, and Autism NS in a Nova Scotian context).

The varying challenges individuals on the autism spectrum may experience when looking for and/or maintaining employment may be attributed to, for example: difficulty understanding social cues or adapting to new routines, difficulty in sensory-sensitive environments, limited independence (Dedley, Nicholas and Zwicker 2015). It is also important to note that there are many unique strengths, interests, and skillsets of individuals with autism that could mutually benefit the individual and employer in the appropriate work environment (Nicholas et al. 2020; Dedley et al. 2015). Therefore, at the individual-level, sufficient resources for accessing employment, career planning and assistance within the workplace are important (Nicholas 2018).

Klag, Nicholas and Metayer (2021) note that markers of employment success should encompass more than simply an individual on the autism spectrum *getting a job* and their overall employment rates and consider other interconnected factors that affect employment over the life course—for example, access to mental health services, and housing. Access to services for mental health are important as preliminary findings from the *Continuity of Care and Support for Autistic Adults* (CONNECT) Project's needs assessment survey in the Maritime Provinces showed that depression and anxiety were commonly reported by autistic adults, along with the desire for more services around mental health (CONNECT 2017).

## Family, Employer and Community

Family, workplace/employer, and the broader community play a role in the employment outcomes of individuals on the autism spectrum. Employers and coworkers may not understand autism and as a result, may not recognize the benefits of hiring, and/or offering the needed accommodations to support an autistic employee (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019; Nicholas 2018; Government of New Brunswick 2012). To improve employment outcomes for the autistic population, support must also be provided to employers around educating employees on autism and enhancing their capacity to accommodate autistic employees (Nicholas 2018; Government of New Brunswick 2021).

Within local communities or regions, community support resources, for example, access to safe and affordable housing, and mental health supports can facilitate access to employment for jobseekers on the autism spectrum. Reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation is another important resource, and a lack of transportation can pose as a significant barrier in accessing services for autistic individuals (Nicholas 2018; Nicholas et al. 2018), especially for those who reside in rural areas and are geographically isolated from communities where

services are concentrated (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019). Even strong public transit infrastructure may not mean that public transportation is accessible for all individuals on the autism spectrum, as Tint and Weiss (2017) note that some participants in their study were unable to use public transit due to sensory sensitivities. In the 2012 Employment Action Plan for Persons with a Disability in New Brunswick, a strategy to ensure accessible and affordable transportation is available throughout the province was recommended (Government of New Brunswick 2012).

The lack of a formal structure, network, and collaboration among organizations and/or government services that deliver pre-employment supports in New Brunswick, specifically for persons with disabilities, including autistic individuals is noted in the literature. Thus, it is difficult to know what supports are even available, and whether those who provide key resources and services around employment have sufficient knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of individuals on the autism spectrum (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019; Government of New Brunswick 2012).

It is important to note that community, family, and physical environment are also embedded in a much larger context which shape employment supports and outcomes for individuals on the autism spectrum example: political, economic, and legal systems; technology; and values and attitudes that may shape unconscious biases toward persons on the autism spectrum (Klag, Nicholas and Metayer 2021). There are still significant gaps in the research on how employment outcomes for autistic adults are shaped and interconnected at the individual-level, community-level and broader societal-level, which is discussed in the following section.

## Current Gaps in the Literature

Self-advocates have voiced that it is important to be a part of the decisions that directly impact their lives (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019; Jose et al. 2020; Jose et al. 2021), therefore more involvement and input of autistic individuals themselves in research, policy discussions and the implementation of employment supports is desperately needed—including representation of the entire spectrum. The recent New Brunswick-based CONNECT project prioritized the participation of adults on the autism spectrum in all aspects of the research from study design to knowledge dissemination (Jose et al. 2020). Klag, Nicholas and Metayer (2021) also incorporate first-person experience in their paper by sharing the life and employment experiences of one of their co-authors who is also an autistic individual. Again, in a New Brunswick context, the authors of the report titled: *A Provincial Focus on Services for Adults with Autism: Navigating “The Cliff”* (referred to as the “Cliff Report”), note that self-advocates in their focus groups raised topics around service needs that other groups (e.g., parents, service providers) did not (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019).

With or without the direct participation of autistic adults, in general there is limited research that specifically examines the employment outcomes for adults on the autism spectrum, particularly in a Canadian context—making it difficult to discern best practices from the literature (Dedley, Nicholas and Zwicker 2015). Data limitations exist also on the local level (i.e., in New Brunswick), where there are noted limitations around baseline data on employment for persons with disabilities (Government of New Brunswick 2012). While the general disability literature on employment supports and outcomes may provide some insight; the experiences, needs and challenges of autistic persons, as noted earlier, can be extremely varied, and substantially different from the needs and challenges of persons with other disabilities—with extreme variation also existing along the autistic spectrum itself—therefore there is a limit to what this general literature can tell us.

While even cross-sectional data on employment outcomes is limited, this is even more true of longitudinal research on successful employment outcomes. Aside from an autistic individual successfully finding and obtaining employment, longitudinal research is needed to show whether successful employment is sustained over the life course of an individual (Dedley, Nicholas and Zwicker 2015; Canadian Academy of Health Sciences 2022; Klag, Nicholas and Metayer 2021). For example, a considerable finding from an environmental scan conducted by Autism Nova Scotia showed that there was higher turnover in employment of individuals on the autism spectrum compared to individuals with intellectual disabilities *and* autistic people who got jobs were much more likely to lose their job in the early stages of employment.

Another gap related to the overall lack of research on employment supports and outcomes of the autistic populations, are the intersections of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with other important sociodemographic, socioeconomic, and geographic factors that may also affect employment outcomes (e.g., gender, race, language, income, region of residence). For example, autistic women are generally underrepresented in the literature. A Canadian study conducted by Tiny and Weiss (2017) show the importance of examining women on the autism spectrum's experiences around service access, use and needs. They found that overall, women had high unmet service needs in relation to, for example, mental health and employment. Women in the sample perceived that many service providers either disregarded or misunderstood their needs, possibly because the women had subtler behaviours of ASD compared to men, and they felt that service providers were dismissive of them.

More research is also needed about the challenges and additional barriers associated with an individual's area of residence (i.e., rural, suburban or urban) and their ability to access employment services and supports due to urban areas having larger job-training centres (with potentially more resources and capacity), and concentrations of services compared to rural areas (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019). Living rurally is also very much related to challenges around affordable and accessible transportation to access services that do exist, which is also a barrier to successful employment outcomes of individuals on the autism spectrum, as noted in the literature (Hutchins and McDonnell 2019; Government of New Brunswick 2012; Tint and Weiss 2017).

The role of family continues to be another understudied area in the literature. Family may provide both networking and advocating efforts on behalf of an autistic individual when it comes to finding and obtaining employment (Dedley, Nicholas and Zwicker 2015) and serve as mediators of support between the individual and employment (Nicholas et al. 2018) but to what extent family factors into successful employment outcomes for individuals on the autism spectrum needs further examination. As the literature shows, there are many gaps in research related to employment of the autistic population, but the research that does exist points to some success factors and employment programs with successful outcomes which are outlined in the following section.

## Best Practices and Innovation

### *Eco-Systems Approach*

To identify support and service needs and create pilot programs that are collaborative while enhancing support systems' capacity, Autism Nova Scotia is one such organization that uses an "eco-systems" approach as discussed earlier. The approach uses three key steps: 1) conducting an environmental scan to identify unmet needs, priority areas, current government spending and key players; 2) create projects to pilot which meet the needs of autistic individuals but that also complement and enhance services and supports that are already being offered; and 3)

evaluate the effectiveness of set projects by those who use them (i.e., individuals on the autism spectrum themselves) and well as service providers and community stakeholders. For example, from this approach, Autism NS maintained 1:1 job coaches who provided individualized ongoing support to autistic individuals who found employment; began two pre-employment programs specific to the needs of individuals on the autism spectrum and funded an employment supports coordinator who worked with already existing agencies to build their capacity to accommodate and support the specific needs of those on the autism spectrum (Autism Nova Scotia).

Davis et al. (2018) conducted an exploratory case study of a Canadian pilot program, *Worktopia*, a federally funded employment program for individuals on the autism spectrum which was also based on an ecosystem model. The program was offered to individuals between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine who were no longer in secondary school and it reflected three core elements: 1) individualized and experiential learning—for example, gaining work experience and learning by doing in real life work settings); 2) participants, co-workers, peers and/or program staff as co-learners (e.g., an emphasis on mentorship); 3) individual goal setting; and 4) community capacity building—which included employers and the workplace in employer training and opportunities to become more aware of ASD).

Findings from the experiences of participants and stakeholders, and the perceived impacts of the program were generally positive. For example, there was expressed employer interest in hiring some of the participants and increased understanding and appreciation of ASD and participants skillsets (Nicholas 2018 et al.). Nicholas et al. (2018) writes that “services may be limited if predominately focused only on singular notions such as individual preparedness and not embedded in system-wide capacity building” (271).

### ***Employment Experience from a Young Age***

In a scoping review of the general disability literature and employment outcomes, Dedley, Nicholas and Zwicker (2015) find that a substantial success factor in finding and obtaining employment for persons with disabilities is previous employment experience (especially during secondary education). A successful program that was noted in the general disability literature in several studies (in Dedley, Nicholar and Zwicker 2015 and Nicholas 2018) is the North American Project SEARCH. The program provides internships for students in their final year of high school. 88% of the students who participated in the program ended up finding and obtaining competitive employment versus only 6% of the students who received standard education services (Wehman et al. 2014; Schall et al. 2015).

### ***Supported Employment***

Supported employment for individuals on the autism spectrum can and should encompass, if needed: pre-employment support such as resume writing and interviewing skills; on-site job coaching *immediately* after obtaining a position; and access to workplace accommodations and technology that facilitate successful employment. An example of a successful supported employment program, as noted in the general disability literature, is the American TEACCH Program. The program offers persons with disabilities training and job coaching in the workplace and the job retention rate was 89% for those who had found employment (Keel, Mesibov and Woods 1997).

## Potential of Remote Work

The pandemic has prompted a major shift in where and how we work which could be beneficial to employees on the autism spectrum. The shift to remote work for many, presents opportunities to alleviate the geographical barriers in obtaining quality work opportunities (Atlantic Provinces Economic Council 2022), as well as access to work arrangements that have long been expressed by autistic individuals but have previously fallen out of employment norms—for example, working from home, flexible hours and recording meetings with closed caption transcripts (Lindsay et al. 2018; Klag, Nicholas and Metayer 2021). As the nature of work continues to shift in coming years and these policies (i.e., remote work, flex hours) become more prevalent post-Covid-19, it will be important to examine whether this impacts the employment outcomes of adults on the autism spectrum.

## Conclusion

As the literature has outlined, despite the increase in employment supports over time, there are still significant gaps between the needs of autistic adults and the supports that are available—both noted by researchers and apparent in the persistently high unemployment rate of adults on the autism spectrum despite their willingness to work. This can be attributed to many factors, for example, the inability of more generalized supports for persons with disabilities to meet the very specific and varied needs of autistic adults. For example, supports are often focused on aiding those with high intellectual needs, and there is less support available for those with high social support needs and other co-occurring conditions, for example, poor mental health, which are both common among autistic adults.

Conceptualizing and approaching employment for adults on the autism spectrum requires consideration of the interconnectedness between an individual’s abilities with other factors, for example, the workplace and employer, family, societal attitudes, and policy. Considering these multi-layered factors is referred to as an “ecosystem” approach in the literature. Programs that have been informed by this approach have been more successful locally and nationally in enhancing employment supports for autistic adults. However, more research is needed on the employment outcomes of autistic adults, as many current gaps in the literature remain.

It is mutually beneficial for both autistic adults *and* the Atlantic Canadian region, (including the province of New Brunswick) to increase and enhance employment supports for adults (and youth) on the autism spectrum and create a more inclusive labour market. This is a crucial component in mitigating the region’s current and impending challenges around economic survival and growth. Many autistic adults want to work and have unique abilities and skillsets that will benefit the economy as the nature of work is shifting toward more technologically based and knowledge-based work. However, there remains a substantial gap to be filled related to increasing and enhancing available and accessible supports that will facilitate the economic inclusion of autistic adults.

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## Appendix B: Interview Questions

### SELF-IDENTIFICATION

- 1) How do you identify for the purposes of this interview?  
[please check all that apply]
  - Leader or staff with organization that provides employment support for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum
  - Leader or staff with organization that provides employment support for people with disabilities
  - Person with experience with autism as a professional with a community organization
  - Researcher with experience or interest in supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum and services for them
  - Government professional with experience or interest in supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum
  - Policy professional with experience or interest in supports for autistic people / people on the autism spectrum
- 2) Where are you located in New Brunswick, or which community do you identify with?
- 3) How would you describe the size of the organization you work with?
  - Small (under 10 employees)
  - Medium (10 - 20 employees)
  - Large (20+ employees)
- 4) Generally, how many autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum do you have participating in your employment support programs?
- 5) How many years of experience do you have working in the area of employment support for autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum?
  - Less than one year
  - One to five years
  - Five to ten years
  - Ten to fifteen years
  - Fifteen to twenty years
  - Twenty years or more

## DEMOGRAPHICS

- 6) How would you describe your gender?  
[For example, man, woman, transgender, non-binary, etc.]
- Female
  - Male
  - Other
- 7) How would you describe your racial or ethnic identity?
- 8) What is your preferred 1st language?

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

- 9) Do you provide job coaching services for autistic adults or adults on the autism spectrum?
- Yes
  - No
  - Not Applicable

[If Yes, then]

How quickly can your organization provide employment support such as job coaches once an autistic adult / adult on the autism spectrum obtains a job?

- Within a day
  - Within a week
  - Within a month
  - Over a month
- 10) When you are successful in attaching an autistic adult / adult on the autism spectrum to employment, are you able to provide job coaches for low and/or high support needs?
- Yes, for low support needs only
  - Yes, for high support needs only
  - Yes, for both low and high support needs
  - No
  - Not Applicable
- 11) What do you think are the top three challenges in providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick? [3 open boxes]
- 12) Do you have ideas on how to address these challenges?

- 13) What do you think are the most important success factors in an autistic adult / adult on the autism spectrum securing employment?
- 14) What do you think are the most important success factors in an autistic adult / adult on the autism spectrum in maintaining employment?
- 15) How would you describe employment success for an autistic adult / adult on the autism spectrum?

#### **BEST PRACTICE / INNOVATION**

- 16) What do you think are some of the most promising and/or innovative and effective practices related to enhancing or increasing employment support for autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick?
- 17) What do you think are some of the most promising and/or innovative and effective practices related to enhancing or increasing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum outside of New Brunswick?
- 18) Do you know of anyone (organizations or people) in New Brunswick who are currently pursuing or implementing such practices to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick?
- 19) Which organizations in New Brunswick do you consider to be the most innovative and successful in providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum? [You may include your own organization]
- 20) Why do you think these organizations are innovative and/or successful at providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick?
- 21) Who do you think are the most innovative individual leaders in research, government or policy work related to providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick? [Please include full name and how we could contact them, if possible]
- 22) Are there any current provincial policies in place that you think present barriers to employment support(s) for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum?

[If Yes, then]

If yes, what are they?

## RELEVANT RESEARCH

- 23) Are you familiar with the report, *A Provincial Focus on Services for Adults with Autism: Navigating "The Cliff"* by Rick Hutchins and Paul McDonnell, also known as the 'Cliff Report'?

[Y / N]

[If Yes, then]

If yes, what stands out to you as the most important learnings or gaps from the 'Cliff Report' related to enhancing or increasing employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum?

- 24) Are you familiar with the project, Continuity of Care and Support for Autistic Adults, also known as the CONNECT Project?

[Y / N]

[If yes, then]

If yes, what stands out for you as the most important learnings or gaps from the CONNECT project related to enhancing or increasing employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum?

- 25) Is there any research related to best practices or innovation in enhancing or increasing employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum that you recommend?

- 26) Are there any provincial policy changes you think could help enhance or increase employment supports for autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 27) Do you have any other suggestions on ways to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick? [Include both short-term and long-term suggestions if possible]

- 28) Is there anyone else you think I should be talking to?

- 29) Any questions I'm not asking, that I should be?

- 30) Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

## Appendix C: Survey Questions

### Employment Support Survey for Autistic Adults / Adults on Autism Spectrum

#### INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a short survey about employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. The findings from this survey will help to enhance employment supports and services for autistic job seekers/job seekers on the autism spectrum.

You may participate in this survey if you are:

- An autistic adult/adult on the autism spectrum currently residing in New Brunswick; or
- You are a parent, guardian or caregiver of an autistic adult/adult on the autism spectrum currently residing in New Brunswick who is not able to complete the survey on their own behalf or may require support in completing the survey

If you are a service provider, please see the link to a different survey:  
[past link here if we can]

All data collected in this survey is anonymous and nothing potentially identifying you will be shared in the results of the survey. Findings and recommendations from the survey will be included in an executive summary that will be shared with stakeholders and will be available publicly through the Ready, Willing and Able initiative.

If you are interested in staying involved with further steps of this research; and/or you have questions or concerns about your participation, please contact: [chutzpahconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:chutzpahconsulting@gmail.com)

This project is sponsored by Ready, Willing & Able, a partnership of Inclusion Canada and the Autism Alliance of Canada. Regional Partners of this project include Autism Nova Scotia and the Cooperative Enterprise Council of New Brunswick.

1) I'm aware of the information regarding the study and wish to participate in the survey:

- Yes
- No

#### SELF-IDENTIFICATION

[Please note: if you are answering the survey on behalf of an autistic adult/adult with autism who is not able to complete the survey on their own behalf, please answer the questions as they would pertain to your child or care receiver.]

2) I identify as:

- An autistic adult/adult on the autism spectrum
- A parent, guardian or caregiver of an autistic adult/adult on the autism spectrum who is not able to complete the survey on their own behalf *or* requires support in completing the survey

3) On a scale from one to five, how would you best describe your support needs in the following categories?

Overall support needs [1-very low; 2-low; 3-moderate; 4-high; 5-very high]

- Intellectual support needs
- Social support needs
- Mobility support needs
- Mental health support needs

4) Overall, how would you describe your mental health during the last six months?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

5) Are you able to access the mental health supports you need?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable – I don't need mental health supports

## **EMPLOYMENT**

6) Are you currently employed?

- Yes
- No

## **CURRENTLY EMPLOYED**

7) How long have you been employed at your job?

- Less than six months
- Six months to one-year
- 1-5 years

- More than five years

8) How many hours do you work a week on average?

- Less than 5
- 5 to less than 10
- 10 to less than 20
- 20 to less than 30
- 30 to less than 37.5
- 37.5 or over

9) Are you employed year-round at this job?

- Yes
- No

10) What is your hourly wage at this job?

[Please note: the current minimum wage in New Brunswick is \$12.75 an hour]

- Less than minimum wage
- Minimum wage to less than \$15 an hour
- \$15 an hour to less than \$20 an hour
- \$20 or more an hour
- Not applicable – I am on salary

11) On a scale from one to five, how do you feel about your employer's understanding, support, and accommodation for you as an autistic employee/employee on the autism spectrum?

- My employer has no understanding, supports or accommodations
- My employer has some understanding, supports and accommodations
- My employer has strong understanding, supports and accommodations

12) Overall, on a scale from one to five, how satisfied are you with your job?

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES & SUPPORT FOR AUTISTIC ADULTS

13) Did you use employment supports when you were preparing for employment and/or during your employment?

- Yes
- No

14) What kind of support(s) were you looking for to help you prepare for employment and/or keep your employment?

15) What supports did you use? [Please list the names of organization(s) and program(s) if possible]

16) Thinking about the support(s) you used, what worked the best for you or helped you the most to find and/or keep employment?

17) Thinking about the support(s) you used, what didn't work for you?

18) Overall, did you feel that the support(s) met your needs as an autistic person/person on the autism spectrum?

- Yes
- No

19) On the five-point scale, please indicate how close the support(s) you used were in relation to your home.

- Not at all close to my home
- Somewhat close to my home
- Very close to my home

20) Why didn't you use employment support(s)?  
[Please check all that apply]

- Did not feel I needed them
- Did not know where to find them
- They were not available in my community or in a location where I could access them
- They were not affordable
- I did not find they understood autism and how to meet my needs
- I was not eligible for them
- Other

## CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED

21) Are you interested in being employed?

- Yes
- No

22) Were you interested in being employed or have you looked for employment in the past?

- Yes
- No

23) Have you ever looked for or used employment supports?

- Yes
- No

24) Did you find the support(s) met your needs as an autistic person?

- Yes
- No

#### **KNOWLEDGE OF EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS**

25) Whether you have used them or not, what kind(s) of employment support(s), for autistic jobseekers/ jobseekers on the autism spectrum are you aware of in New Brunswick? [Please list all that you know of including organization and program name(s) if possible. If you do not know of any, please write "none"]

26) What kind(s) of support(s) do you think would be the most useful in helping you to find and keep employment?

#### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

27) Which community do you currently reside in?

28) What is your age?

29) How would you describe your gender or gender identity? [For example, man, woman, transgender, non-binary, etc.]

30) How would you describe your racial or ethnic identity? [For example, white, Black, bi-racial, etc.]

31) Do you identify as Indigenous?

- Yes
- No

## END OF SURVEY

Thank you for your time and completing the survey on employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick.

If you are interested in being involved in further research *and/or* have questions regarding your participation in this survey, please contact \_\_\_\_\_.

## Survey for Service Providers, Researchers & Policy Analysts

### INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a short survey about employment supports for autistic adults / adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. The findings from this survey will help to enhance employment supports and services for autistic job seekers/job seekers on the autism spectrum.

You may participate in this survey if you are:

- You are a service provider in New Brunswick,
- You are part of government and involved as a stakeholder or expert in providing employment supports for autistic people/people on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick,
- You are involved in policy work, or research related to enhancing employment supports for autistic people/people on the autism spectrum (primarily, but not exclusively, in New Brunswick)

If you would like to answer another survey specifically for autistic people/people on the autism spectrum related to the experiences of seeking and maintaining employment, please see the link below:

[paste link here]

All data collected in this survey is anonymous and nothing potentially identifying you will be shared in the results of the study. Findings and recommendations from the survey will be included in an executive summary that will be shared with stakeholders and available publicly through the Ready, Willing and Able initiative.

If you are interested in staying involved with further steps of this research *and/or* you have questions or concerns about your participation, please contact: [chutzpahconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:chutzpahconsulting@gmail.com)

This project is sponsored by Ready, Willing & Able, a partnership of Inclusion Canada and the Autism Alliance of Canada. Regional Partners of this project include Autism Nova Scotia and the Cooperative Enterprise Council of New Brunswick.

I have read the information regarding the study and wish to participate in the survey

Yes [Continue to the self-identification section]  
[If you do not wish to participate, please exit your browser]

## SELF-IDENTIFICATION

1) How do you identify for the purposes of this survey?

[please check all that apply]

- organization that provides employment support for people with autism/people on the autism spectrum
- organization that provides employment support for people with disabilities
- autistic adult or adult on the autism spectrum
- parent of a autistic adult (18 or over)
- parent of an autistic child (under 18)
- person with lived experience with autism as a family member
- person with experience with autism as a professional with a community organization
- researcher with experience or interest in supports for people with autism and services for them
- government professional with experience or interest in supports for people with autism
- policy professional with experience or interest in supports for people with autism

2) Where are you located in New Brunswick or which community do you identify with? [open box]

3) How many years of experience do you have working in employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum?

- Less than one year
- One to less than five years
- Five to less than ten years
- Ten to less than fifteen years
- Fifteen to less than twenty years
- Twenty years or more

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

4) When you are successful in attaching an autistic adult/adult on the autism spectrum to employment, are you able to provide job coaches for low and/or high support needs?

- Yes, for low support needs only
- Yes, for high support needs only
- Yes, for both low and high support needs
- No
- Not Applicable

5) Do you provide job coaching services for autistic adults or adults on the autism spectrum?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

[If Yes, then]

How quickly can your organization provide employment support such as job coaches once an autistic adult / adult on the autism spectrum begins employment?

- Within a day
- Within a week
- Within a month
- Over a month

6) What do you think are the top three challenges in providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick?

[3 open boxes]

7) Do you have ideas on how to address these challenges?

[open box]

#### **BEST PRACTICE / INNOVATION**

8) What do you think are some of the most promising and/or innovative and effective practices related to enhancing or increasing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick?

[Open Box]

9) What do you think are some of the most promising and/or innovative and effective practices related to enhancing or increasing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum outside of New Brunswick?

[Open Box]

10) Do you know of anyone (organizations or people) in New Brunswick who are currently pursuing or implementing such practices to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick?

[Open Box]

11) Which organizations in NB do you consider to be the most innovative and successful in providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum? [You may include your own organization]

[Open Box]

12) Why do you think these organizations are innovative and/or successful at providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick?

[Open Box]

13) Who do you think are the most innovative individual leaders in research, government or policy work related to providing employment support for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick? [Please include full name and how we could contact them, if possible]

[Open Box]

14) Are there any current provincial policies in place that you think present barriers to employment support(s) for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum spectrum?

[Y/N]

[If Yes, then]

If yes, what are they?

## RELEVANT RESEARCH

15) Are you familiar with the report, *A Provincial Focus on Services for Adults with Autism: Navigating “The Cliff”* by Rick Hutchins and Paul McDonnell, also known as the ‘Cliff Report’?

[Y / N]

[If Yes, then}

If yes, what stands out to you as the most important learnings from the ‘Cliff Report’ related to enhancing or increasing employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum? [Open Box]

16) Are you familiar with the project, Continuity of Care and Support for Autistic Adults, also known as the CONNECT Project?

[Y / N]

[If yes, then]

If yes, what stands out for you as the most important learnings from the CONNECT project related to enhancing or increasing employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum?

[Open Box]

17) Is there any research related to best practices or innovation in enhancing employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum that you recommend?

[Open Box]

## RECOMMENDATIONS

18) Do you have any other suggestions on ways to enhance or increase employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick? [Include both short-term and long-term suggestions if possible]

[Open Box]

19) Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

[Open Box]

## DEMOGRAPHICS

1) What is your age?

2) How would you describe your gender or gender identity? [For example, man, woman, transgender, non-binary, etc.]

3) How would you describe your racial or ethnic identity? [For example, white, Black, bi-racial, etc.]

4) Do you identify as Indigenous?

- Yes

- No

Thank you for your time and completing the survey on employment supports for autistic adults/adults on the autism spectrum in New Brunswick. If you would like to stay engaged with further research and/or have any questions about your participation in this survey, please contact: [chutzpahconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:chutzpahconsulting@gmail.com)

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## Appendix D: Services Scan Chart

Organization	Talked to on the phone?	# of Staff	# of Autistic people serving	Employment Supports for Autistic Youth	Mission / Purpose	Employment Services Offered	Other Services Offered
<a href="#">Open Sky</a> <a href="#">506-536-4565</a>	Yes	9	8	No	<p>Open Sky is a community-based charitable organization that provides transitional support for adults who experience barriers due to disability such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, or mental health challenges. Our co-operative structure enables members, participants, staff and volunteers to collaborate creatively, transforming lives and community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To provide residential, personal, and vocational support to adults who face barriers due to social, developmental or mental health challenges</li> <li>- To improve life skills and opportunities for independent living through transitional support of young adults living with mental health challenges or social disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>- Provide transitional residence, skills programs vocational assistance and community connections for adults</li> </ul>	<p>Employment Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employability, life skills and social skills</li> <li>- Functional skills assessment</li> <li>- Social enterprises</li> <li>- Educational workshops and speaking engagements</li> </ul> <p>Be Your Own Boss Employment Program (BYOB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keystone employment program</li> <li>- Prioritizes creation of new co-op businesses (e.g. Powerhouse Co-operative Ltd.)</li> <li>- Prepares for employment or self-employment</li> <li>- Especially helpful for people who can't fit into other peoples workplace environments - can create their own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Therapeutic agriculture and gardening</li> <li>- Transitional residential Support</li> <li>- Day programs to build transitional skills for independent living (Adults)</li> <li>- Functional Skills Assessments</li> <li>- Community education</li> </ul>

<a href="#">Dragonfly Centre for Autism</a> <a href="#">1+506-529-8002</a>	Yes	1 for 44 weeks of the year, 8-10 for 8 weeks of camp	Over 200	No	Support individuals who have autism towards self-realization and emotional confidence by offering gentle guidance and opportunity through expressive therapies and the surrounding environment		<p>* A year round resource centre with a lending library of books, DVD's, and fact sheets for families and professionals. See our Library page for listings of our books. .</p> <p>* Annual summer day camps aimed at young people between the ages of 5 years to 19 for children and started in 2016 Young Adults ages 19 ( graduated high school) to 39.</p> <p>* Various programming for youth and information sessions for parents throughout the year</p>
<a href="#">Autism Connections</a> <a href="#">1 (506) 450-6025</a>	Yes	full time - 2	Monthly: over 300 service hours	Yes	We provide support for persons with autism-spectrum disorders, their families, and their communities in the greater Fredericton region. ACF provides assistance in the form of public education, social support, advocacy, material resources, special programs and activities, and evidenced-based information. We offer on-site resources, one-on-one tutoring for students with ASD, organize special events and activities and recreation. ACF also educates on such relevant topics as disability tax credit and federal and provincial programs for persons with ASD.	<p>- Career Quest: Gives the tools and accommodations to assist building the skills to complete a job search, prep for an interview, and tailoring cover letters and resumes.</p> <p>- Employment Support Group: An online employment discussion led by first-voice concerning employment challenges, successes, and offers encouragement and support.</p> <p>*Don't directly support youth in employment, but if it is relevant to a youth in the skills and enrichment program than they would</p>	<p>- Skills enrichment Program: Providing behavioral support, social skill groups, and skill acquisition.</p> <p>- KidzCorner Crew</p> <p>- Tutoring</p> <p>- Camp</p> <p>- No limits soccer</p> <p>- Superhero Fun-run and walk</p> <p>- Celebrating the community</p> <p>- Autism Safety Registry</p> <p>- Art is a spectrum gallery-2019</p>

<a href="#">Autism Resource Centre</a> <a href="#">(506) 855-9032</a>	No				Helps create opportunities for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, their families and caregivers, as well as community members and professionals through 4 main streams of organizational focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Awareness</li> <li>- Resources and referrals</li> <li>- Supports and Socializations</li> </ul>	Unsure.  After a time of transition, the centre is developing a number of new programs and services. We are working hard to ensure we meet the needs of people of all ages with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and those affected by ASD.	
<a href="#">Community Autism Centre Inc.</a> <a href="#">506-642-1128</a>	Yes	2	2000 people (Autistic people, family members, caregivers, anyone connected or impacted by autism) from Sussex to St. Stephens  Unsure how many people they serve who are Autistic	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports families and persons living with Autism Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>- Promoting individual approach to meet cognitive, social, physical, and spiritual challenges through access to resources, education, community collaboration, advocacy and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refer youth/adults out for employment support (e.g. Key Industries).</li> <li>- Help refer them, continue to offer support during job seeking, provide them resources and on-going support and guidance during their employment</li> <li>- Offer activities and programs (when funding permits) to help develop skills such as: social skills, how to handle anxiety, and other mental health challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a resource day to take books out</li> <li>- Coffee time on Thursday gives parents with small children safe space.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Upper Valley Autism Resource Centre</a> <a href="#">1 (506) 273-6721</a>  <a href="#">Willing to connect and partner on something.</a>	Yes	1	Unsure	No	Provide support, resources, services and information to families, caregivers and professionals dealing with Autism Spectrum Disorders  Edmundston centre helps out with french translation if needed, and also will support anyone who needs french support.		Offer resources, support families with or without diagnosis, we have to fundraise for everything we provide, activities, mentoring programs in the past - good way to get youth and teens in the centre, only get tiny funds from departmental health but cant even pay wage and rent. our kids are graduating and not getting jobs, skill building through community

						<p>projects (when money available). But it is really difficult to get them out of the house to come and do things - even parents have a hard time too.</p>
<p><a href="#">Chaleur Autism and Asperger Family Centre Inc. (506) 542-9448 (didnt answer, french)</a></p>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	<p>The CAAFC is a non-profit organization that offers support, resources, and services to individuals on the autism spectrum and their family members, as well as to the intervention workers and the professionals involved in their care to ensure that they receive up-to-date information related to ASD.</p>	<p>Advocating for our Members - representation in public, politics, committees, Collaborating with other autism centres in NB, etc,</p> <p>Information and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizing workshops.</li> <li>- Documentation available to consult on site, information packages for parents and professionals.</li> <li>- CAAFC website providing information on autism.</li> </ul> <p>Promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public activities to raise autism awareness.</li> <li>- Promotion of autism awareness activities so that individuals living with autism will have the opportunity to develop their strengths and be productive members of society.</li> </ul> <p>Member Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A listening ear and support.</li> <li>- Family activities.</li> <li>- Activities and social outings for children 12 years and under.</li> <li>- Activities and social outings for teens.</li> <li>- Parent support group</li> </ul>

<p><a href="#">Autism Resources</a> <a href="#">(506)622-8137</a></p>	No	Unsure	Unsure	Yes	<p>Our drop-in resource centre currently offers a variety of services for families and individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.</p>	<p>ARM Book Nook: Employs young adults with an ASD.</p> <p>ARM Employment Project: - ARM partners with PETL and the Federal Government of Canada to offer individuals with an ASD a series of workshops to teach workplace and social skills, First Aid, CPR and WHMIS training.</p> <p>Teen Volunteer Skill Building Program Do you have a teenager who is not in school full-time and needs support to develop work-place and social skills? This program offers teens with a diagnosis of an ASD a chance to volunteer in our book store with on-site support to learn work skills, communication skills, social skills and organizational skills. This program acts as a bridge to our Employment Skills Program (no obligation).</p> <p>Career Quest Partnering with Autism Nova Scotia and the National Program 'Ready, Willing and Able,' we are proud to offer a new program that teaches job searching skills! If you're an adult with autism and WANT to work, are under/unemployed or have completed an Employment Skill Program this may be for you!</p>	<p>Teens and youth activity night, social skills summer camp, lending library, autism registry, therapy material centre, computer and internet centre, individual support for families, ASD info-packages and handouts</p>
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<a href="#">Restigouche Autism Centre</a> <a href="#">789-7391</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	<p>The Restigouche autism center provides our community with information pertaining to autism, as well as a place for families to develop a support network. We welcome individuals with autism, their families and caregivers, professionals and students in the health care and education systems, as well as anyone touched by autism.</p>		<p>We offer support groups for parents, information sessions and workshops, as well as guidance to professional resources available in our region. Our resources include; books on autism and other subjects, toys, educational games, CD's, DVD's and computer software. Our on-site services include specialized computer software such as "Boardmaker" and "Writing with Symbols". We have printing, laminating and binding services, at cost price, for any projects.</p>
<a href="#">Centre d'excellence en autisme de la Peninsule Acadienne Inc. (CEAPA)</a> <a href="#">(506) 724-0426</a>	Yes	1	200	Yes	<p>The Acadian Peninsula Autism Center of Excellence Inc. is a non-profit community organization. Its mandate is to provide support, resources, information and services to individuals, families, stakeholders and professionals in relation to autism spectrum disorder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People are referred or come here themselves - we don't advertise because were always full! Our program works really well.</li> <li>- We teach them about the workplaces - the world within themselves, prep is most important - personalize to every person</li> <li>- We put quite a bit on the market too</li> <li>- Help them with skills, get a job and follow up support</li> </ul> <p>We are making a book for based on our employment support model. Applied to have Autistic people to work on it. Book published in March and will be distributed in NB and will have curriculum around it. Designed for autistic people themselves, section for caregivers/mentors, three guides - 1 info sheet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adaptive activities</li> <li>- Teen dating</li> <li>- Program information</li> <li>- Awareness</li> <li>- Information sessions</li> <li>- Workshops and conferences</li> <li>- support groups</li> <li>- Visual aids</li> <li>- autism books</li> </ul>

						personalize to student, 1 for mentors, and 1 for employer. Free throughout NB. Bilingual. Government pays for it, free for centres in NB.	
<a href="#"><u>Centre de Ressource en Autisme du Nord-Ouest (506) 580-1080</u></a>	No	unsure	Unsure	No			<p>Toy library Library for children Reference library for adults Family Support Network Resources available Computers</p> <p>Provide a physical location to meet community information needs related to the Autism Spectrum;</p> <p>Provide access to a library of books, toys and other material educational resources;</p> <p>Allow families to develop a support network;</p> <p>Encourage education for families, professionals and the public (educational workshops);</p> <p>Expand community programs for ASD;</p> <p>Raising community awareness of ASD;</p> <p>Assist families to help them identify their needs;</p> <p>Inform families and professionals of available resources.</p>

<a href="#">Autism Intervention Centre (and Satilities)</a>	Yes	Total: 358  Region: Moncton (75) Northern (56) Saint John (116) Fredericton & Woodstock (111)	Total: 500  Region: Moncton (114) Northern (94) Saint John (154) Fredericton & Woodstock (139)	No	A preschool program for children aged 0-5		
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<a href="#">New Brunswick Association for Community Living (506) 453-4400</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	Yes	<p>The New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL/ANBIC) is a provincial, non-profit organization that works with and on behalf of children and adults with an intellectual disability and their families.</p>	<p>Thanks to Ready, Willing and Able (RWA), a national initiative by the Canadian Association for Community Living and the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance, engaging employers and raising awareness about the value of hiring people with disabilities has helped to change the hiring practices of Canadian employers.</p> <p>NBACL works in the area of assisting people with an intellectual disability in the transition from school to adult life which also includes helping them acquire a job in the regular workforce.</p> <p>Since 2001, NBACL has worked in collaboration with CCNB-NBCC to help high school students and young adults with intellectual disabilities to attend college and receive formal job skills.</p> <p>Transition Planning is a process that helps students with an intellectual disability prepare for life after High School. This Program helps students identify and learn ways to achieve their goals.</p>	<p><b>PATH Training</b> PATH is a person-centered planning tool that helps individuals plan for their future. Used widely with persons who have a disability though not limited to this use, the process involves a carefully ordered structure that uses graphics to focus energy and support memory. PATH also identifies supports and people that will help to accomplish the goals identified, guiding the individual toward the future they desire. PATH outcomes are achieved through a collaborative process by first planning backwards, from the vision of a desirable future to a detailed action plan.</p> <p><b>Sexcess Training</b> Sexcess supports individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability in achieving healthy sexuality and relationships. We are all sexual beings; however, there is often an uneasiness discussing sexuality, particularly as it relates to persons with an intellectual or developmental disability. Sexcess is a 3 day training designed to give you real-life tools to support an individual in achieving healthy sexuality and in developing positive relationships. This training will also increase confidence in ability to provide accurate and relevant information.</p> <p><b>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</b> Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training equips you with skills,</p>
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						<p>confidence, and an effective framework to safely manage and prevent difficult behaviour. This training benefits: Behavioral Health Professionals, Educators, Health Care Professionals, Human Service Professionals and Service-Oriented Professionals. Be part of something big and join thousands of other organizations in creating a safer workplace. Give staff the skills to resolve crisis moments and be confident in knowing how to choose the least restrictive intervention. Create a culture of empathy, compassion, and respect.</p> <p>The Focus on Inclusion Program, in partnership with the Department of Education &amp; Early Childhood Development, periodically delivers inclusion training to childcare staff, community partners, and parents. These trainings equip early childcare staff with the tools and resources to support children with a disability and/or additional need in a childcare setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to disability supports</li> <li>- Community participation</li> <li>- circle of support</li> <li>- Support for families and professionals</li> <li>- Support for young children</li> <li>- Social inclusion</li> <li>- voice for families</li> </ul>
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<p><a href="#">Dorey Behavioural Services Facebook only (506) 432-6843</a></p>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	<p>"Dorey Behavioural Services, offers assessment and treatment services in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), social skills, and life skills. These services are available to children and youth with Autism, ADD, ADHD, and other development delays.</p> <p>*seem to be family and child focused"</p>	<p>"Information About Services: Our number one goal is to provide services in social and life skills, meeting the needs of families in Sussex and surrounding areas, which are currently not being met. It is not our goal to replace or duplicate services already being provided.</p> <p>Secondly, we do not want to get overly detailed about services and programming, because these will be adjusted and adapted for each client based on an extensive assessment, which will include an on-site evaluation, as well as information collected from parents, teachers, healthcare providers, and other professionals who are part of the individual's story. Our services and methods are based on Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). ABA is science-based therapy which focuses on learning and behaviour. It assists us in understanding how behaviour works and how it is impacted by its environment, as well as the impact it has on learning. ABA uses our understanding of behaviour to find practical solutions to apply to real-life situations."</p>
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<p><a href="#">Centre Herbert Center</a> <a href="#">506.386.2262</a></p>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	<p>Our mission is to offer individuals and their support systems the skills required to improve their quality of life. As such, we continually aspire to expand our position as Atlantic Canada's comprehensive provider of high-quality learning and behavioural services.</p>	<p>Services:</p> <p>Learning Skills Training – The goal of learning skills training is to help individuals become comfortable learners through the strengthening of underlying learning abilities.</p> <p>Speech and Language Services – The goal of Speech and Language services is to develop communication skills through individualized speech services.</p> <p>Behavioural Intervention – The goal of behavioural intervention is to reduce challenging behaviour and teach adaptive skills using the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).</p> <p>Supervision and Practicum Program – The goal of the supervision and practicum program is to guide individuals pursuing certification and/or careers in the field of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).</p> <p>Workshops and Continued Education – The goal of the workshop and continued education program is to provide educational opportunities for families and professionals in the community.</p>
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<a href="#">Easter Seals New Brunswick</a> <a href="#">(506) 458-8739</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No			<p>The Easter Seals Abilities program is a Youth Recreation Program, created to introduce youth with disabilities to a variety of recreational activities. For participants, the program will build a sense of team work, cooperation and accomplishment along with providing an opportunity to exercise and socialize with peers. They will be exposed to a wide range of activities that will challenge them in different ways. The program will concentrate on developing independence while promoting good physical and mental health.</p> <p>Camp Rotary is an accessible, accredited summer camp</p> <p>PETAL AT Loan Program  Easter Seals has purchased an inventory of assistive technology that is on hand to be loaned to clients for as long as they used it for its intended purpose, i.e., education or employment. It would then be returned to the inventory at Easter Seals NB, refurbished, and loaned to another Working NB client for their use. Clients who returned their technologies would have future access to the AT Loan Program for additional education and/or employment trials.</p> <p>The Personal Services Program assists individuals in the province of New Brunswick who have no ability to rent or purchase equipment, no medical coverage,</p>
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							<p>and no other agency is able to provide the services requested.</p> <p>Easter Seals New Brunswick SD Equipment Recycle Program is a recycling pool for rehabilitation equipment.</p> <p>Assisted Technology Program</p> <p>Adaptive Toy Library</p>
<a href="#">Family and Child Education</a> <a href="#">1-855-383-5437</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	Working with community partners, FACE provides early intervention services that support and empower all children and their families to reach their potential, in the many environments where they live, learn and grow.		Early childhood services to support young children and their caregivers.
<a href="#">The Canadian Council of Rehabilitation Work</a> <a href="#">416-260-3060</a>	No	Unsure - Seems large	Unsure	Yes	<p>CCRW is the only national charitable organization with the sole mission of employment for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Our programs within our Employment Services serve three main purposes:</p> <p>To support job seekers (across Canada) with all types of disability, who wish to find meaningful employment</p> <p>To support businesses who wish to hire employees who are persons with disabilities</p> <p>To share our resources, experiences, and skills in order to make employment opportunities accessible for every candidate</p>	<p>Youth The Future</p> <p>This youth centered program provides comprehensive pre-employment training to groups of young job seekers while supporting all areas of their transition to paid work in their communities with engaged businesses.</p> <p>Empower</p> <p>A service for women of all ages that helps them gain the skills to receive and maintain employment.</p> <p>STEAM</p> <p>STEAM is a Skills for Success training program with the overall goal of improving employment outcomes for Persons with Disabilities.</p>	

						At CCRW, we offer job search assistance, employer incentives, accommodation assessments, consulting services, and a variety of workshops. Additionally, we provide a range of services for employers, from consulting, to hiring and retention, and disability confidence training.	
<a href="#">La Chambre de Commerce de la region d'Edmundston Inc. (506) 737-1866</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No		EMPLOIHABILITÉ Plus EMPLOIHABILITÉ Plus is a specialized employment assistance service for customers having important barriers to employment. To benefit from our services, clients must be referred by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour or the Department of Social Development. They must also be part of the following categories: person with a disability, mental health problems, offenders and young offenders, visible minorities, newcomers, Aboriginal people, older workers or workers who have been unemployed for a prolonged period. Note: no service can be offered without a reference from one of the two government departments.	

<p><a href="#">Crosswinds Occupational Activity Centre Inc.</a> (506) 432-7500</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>75 full time staff, 3 employment counsellours.</p>	<p>Unsure</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>To facilitate for persons with disabilities, increased opportunities for developing community connections, improved life skills, access to education and employment opportunities which result in an improved quality of life.</p> <p>Have employees on the spectrum, but they do not need to disclose this to us, so don't know numbers.</p>	<p>Hire people with intellectual disabilities and provide support to them. Offer residential services for adults with disabilities, if they have a request for accommodation. They also provide employment assistance services in the building, such as resume writing, pre-interview skills, job coaching etc. for external jobs.</p> <p>Use ADAPT Program</p> <p>Work Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industrial Cloth Wipers</li> <li>- Home &amp; Commercial Cleaning</li> <li>- Snow Removal</li> <li>- Lawn Care</li> <li>- Confidential Shredding</li> <li>- In-House Contracts</li> <li>- Packaging</li> <li>- Mail Outs</li> <li>- Assembly Work</li> </ul> <p>Sussex Employment Assistance Services (EAS): The EAS program provides employment related services for individuals with disabilities, including intellectual or developmental; psychological or emotional; deaf or hard of hearing and blind or visually impaired.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resume Development</li> <li>- Job Search Assistance</li> <li>- On-the-Job Supports</li> <li>- Employment Related Workshops</li> </ul>	<p>Agency-Based Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent living skills</li> <li>Cooking/menu planning</li> <li>Budget/money management</li> <li>Personal care/hygiene</li> <li>Personal safety</li> <li>Community awareness</li> <li>Recreation/exercise program</li> <li>Individual and group based activities</li> <li>Literacy program</li> <li>Individual service plans</li> <li>Skills assessment</li> <li>On the job training/support</li> <li>School to work transition</li> <li>Adult Senior Day Center</li> </ul> <p>Community Connection Program: This program promotes the development of community relationships through volunteerism and social integration with local groups and organizations. Encouraging members of the community to build valued relationships with individuals with intellectual disabilities by doing various activities - e.g. walk, movies</p> <p>EAS Community Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentations. Our trained staff will come to your workplace or community event and share our experience and knowledge about employing people with disabilities.</li> <li>- One-On-One Consultations. Whether you are an individual with a job in mind, or you run a small business and want to know more, we are happy to meet with you in</li> </ul>
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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Referrals for Community Programs</li> <li>- Access Government Funding</li> <li>- Career Coaching Referrals</li> </ul>	<p>person to go over your questions and concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workplace Assessments. Our staff can help you determine what modifications (if any) your work environment will need in order to be accessible. We can also share information on resources and potential funding assistance.</li> <li>- Job Creation. We have successfully created employment for people with disabilities where it did not exist before.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Jobs Unlimited Inc.</a> <a href="#">1.506.458.9380</a>	Yes	Self referred to as large	140 out of 715 people with intellectual disabilities that they serve	No	<p>To facilitate an improved lifestyle and enhanced dignity for individuals with intellectual disabilities through community-based programs which provide employment and developmental opportunities, and to act as advocates on their behalf.</p> <p>Target group consists of job ready, eligible clients who are adult residents of the Fredericton Region and who have an intellectual disability, cognitive impairment, ADHD, autism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate employment opportunities for individuals who face significant barriers to employment within the community</li> <li>- Assess long term employability potential and employment barriers</li> <li>- Develop resumes</li> <li>- Job readiness training</li> <li>- Employment placement</li> <li>- Provide short term on the job training and coaching when necessary</li> <li>- Provide one on one job search assistance and support</li> <li>- Long term follow up</li> <li>- Develop employment action plans</li> </ul>	

<p><a href="#">Key Industries Inc.</a> +1 (506) 634-6888</p>	No	9	Unsure	No	<p>Providing employment-first programs and personalized services to empower persons with a disability to achieve personal, community and economic independence.</p>	<p>Employment Support Services Programs The Key Industries "Social &amp; Personal Development Programs" are now operating under the new employment-first standards of the Employment and Support Services Program (ESSP). Along with our existing developmental programs, we also provide employment supports, and job readiness skills to participants whose goal is employment.</p> <p>Pre-Employment Programs Key Industries currently provides eight pre-employment programs. Registration regulations varies for each.</p> <p>Ways To Work: Our 14-week pre-employment social skills program</p> <p>Job Search Central: Our follow-up program for Ways to Work</p> <p>Job Coaching: Our onsite job coaching program</p> <p>Employment Marketing &amp; Development: Our job development program</p> <p>In Motion/Momentum: Our Social Development-funded program</p>	<p>Elite Support Services and Elite Plus Support Services Individualized one-on-one support is provided for individuals living with complex needs. These programs are targeted toward enhancing the quality of life of individuals with high needs, enabling them to participate in events and social gatherings they may normally not have had the opportunity to take part in.</p> <p>Activities are focused on health &amp; wellness, self and/or assisted care, the arts, life skills, community &amp; outdoor activities and events, and individualized communications.</p>
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						<p>WES: Our 10-week Workplace Essential Skills program that incorporates training in nine essential workplace areas</p> <p>Focus Forward/Axés vers l'avenir: Our only fully bilingual provincial pre-employment program</p> <p>The Bridge: Our innovative vocational training simulators program</p> <p>The Launch: Our daily pre-employment skills training program</p> <p>Enrichment: Our post-employment program focusing on social connection and job maintenance</p>	
<a href="#">Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick Inc.</a> <a href="#">(506) 459-7852</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	Provide support for children with learning disabilities.		

<p><a href="#">Moncton Employment &amp; Training Services Inc.</a> (506)858-9404</p>	No	3?	250 people with intellectual disabilities	No	<p>METS' mandate is to provide relevant valued services to adults whose primary disability is an intellectual disability through training, personal development, community placement and employment.</p>	<p><b>SERVICES PROVIDED</b> Individual and Group based activity Behaviour support Skill training Personal Care Facilitated Community Access Individual Service Planning Pre-employment training Employment &amp; Volunteerism support</p> <p><b>EMPLOYMENT BASICS</b> is an outcome based program designed to teach skills and behaviours that will assist in overcoming barriers to employment through classroom based training and personal development activities.</p> <p><b>WORK ACTIVITY SERVICES</b> provides a structured, productive environment using real work activity as the primary training tool. The work activity provided is intended to be labor intensive and, in many cases, is completed by teams of people working together. METS currently operates two social enterprises to facilitate work activity, as well as employment opportunities, Moncton Pallet and The Right Choice Catering.</p> <p><b>COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT AGENCY (CEA)</b> This division of METS provides</p>	<p><b>COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS</b> is designed to achieve social integration in the community. Support is provided on a 1-1 basis with the intent being for the person to develop independent relationships and connections in their community.</p> <p><b>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES</b> provides a structured, active daily schedule using activity as the primary vehicle to address the developmental needs of those served in this division. In addition to the need for activity and training, many clients of this service may require higher levels of behavioural support and personal care including; hygiene, meal and toileting assistance. Persons within these groups are offered a full day of activity in a group based setting, or individualized support within the agency and through facilitated community access. Group based activity is offered in the following categories: academic/education, leisure, recreation, self help, social, life management, communication, health and physical activities.</p>
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						<p>employment services for persons with intellectual disabilities, as well as persons with brain injury.</p> <p>Employment Counseling, Job Search, Job Match, On-Site Support, Employment Maintenance/Monitoring,</p>	
<a href="#">The New Brunswick Association of CBDCs</a> <a href="#">(506) 532-8312</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	Yes		<p>Self-Employment Benefit Program for Persons with a Disability</p> <p>The Self-Employment Benefit (SEB) Program often provides a much needed catalyst for new entrepreneurs, helping them to realize their goal of becoming a business owner by providing them with financial and coaching support during the planning and start-up phases of their business. Self-Employment Benefit (SEB) is a program which provides various types of support to eligible applicants during the initial phase of their business, including financial assistance, counseling and technical advice.</p>	

<a href="#">The Neil Squire Society</a>	No	Seem large	Unsure	Unsure	<p>We use technology, knowledge and passion to empower Canadians with disabilities.</p>	<p>Employment Programs</p> <p>Working Together helps people with disabilities prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. This unique, comprehensive and participant centered program is designed to develop the skills required to help individuals achieve their employment goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individualized and group-based learning environments</li> <li>- Career and personal development, wellness for work, and job search support</li> <li>- Ergonomic and/or assistive technology assessments and solutions</li> <li>- Potential wage subsidy</li> <li>- Continuous support from our career professionals</li> </ul> <p>Job Focus is an employment service for persons with disabilities and workplace injuries. The program offers one-to-one flexible services to help individuals work towards full or part-time employment, volunteer work, or self-employment. *Offered at our Atlantic Regional Office only.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customized services and individualized action plan to serve your specific needs</li> <li>- Professional staff who are committed to helping you reach your goals</li> </ul>	<p>Computer Tutoring Programs</p> <p>Assistive Technology Programs</p>
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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge of a variety of supports, accommodations, and assistive technologies designed to facilitate your successful transition to the workplace</li> <li>- Demonstrated knowledge of the always changing labour market</li> <li>- Strong networks with employers throughout New Brunswick</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">Options Employment Outreach Inc.</a> <a href="tel:506-652-3977">506-652-3977</a>	No	4	Unsure	Usure	Options Employment Outreach Inc is a leader in employment counseling for those with disabilities in Greater Saint John. Funded by the Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour with the Province of New Brunswick, Options has over 20 years of experience assisting both job seekers and those considering post-secondary education.	<p>Options is unique in that it not only offers assistance with resumes, cover letters and mock interviews, but Options also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assists in accessing funding for accommodations, assistive technology, and wage subsidies</li> <li>- works closely with partners to ensure 100% support for each client's needs</li> <li>- assistance with registration and information for FREE training offered in the community</li> <li>- works with local employers to promote and support job-seekers needing accommodations</li> <li>- assists in every step of the way for those moving into post-secondary, including student loans (and Canada</li> </ul>	

						<p>Study Grants), meetings with learning strategists, and summer jobs</p> <p>Specifically states Autism as one of the groups they provide services for.</p>	
<a href="#"><u>Hire Potential (Saint John Association for Community Living)</u></a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	unsure	<p>Hire Potential assists people with intellectual disabilities in finding and maintaining employment.</p>	<p>Employment Advice We will sit down with you and help you with job search assistance, preparing resumes, and cover letters. We will prepare you for interviews, and help you learn valuable skills.</p> <p>Advocacy We can help you develop your strengths and move forward. Our employment specialists can connect you with employers, refer you to appropriate services, and help find the job that works for you.</p> <p>Strategies for Success We work with employers and employees to find a job that fits. We offer information, orientation, and training on ways to successfully include employees with intellectual disabilities in the workplace.</p>	

<a href="#">Vie Autonome Peninsule Acadienne Inc.</a>	No	4	Unsure	Unsure	<p>Promote and foster the progressive responsibility of people with disabilities in the community to help them develop and manage their personal and community resources.</p> <p>A CVA is a resource center that encourages and supports people with disabilities to achieve independence by giving them the tools they need to have the opportunity to explore their options, make choices, make their own decisions and take responsibility for it.</p>	<p>The Independent Living and Advocacy Skills Development Program helps individuals access the services to which they are entitled. The Center helps individuals to defend their own rights, supporting their choices, respecting their decisions and enabling them to take risks. VAPA aims to offer various workshops, skills training, discussion groups and information sessions. In addition, people with disabilities can find help in various areas, including employment, literacy and technology.</p> <p>Employment counseling</p>	<p>Information and networking; peer support; community research and development</p>
<a href="#">MORE Services Inc.</a> <a href="#">(506) 778-6166</a> <a href="#">(506) 627-4044</a>	Yes	Employees. vocational - 9. overall - 43 full time.	Unsure	No	<p>M.O.R.E. Services, Inc. is a not-for profit agency in Miramichi, New Brunswick, which assists and supports individuals with intellectual disabilities.</p>	<p>Job Readiness Training  Job Search Skills  Leisure Time Management  Meal Planning  Money  On-the-Job Training and Support  Personal Care`</p> <p>One on one, support on sporadic placements, we may have to drop in make sure everyone is okay - starts with life skill programs, identify possible work, resume help, present themselves to an employer, apply. We provide support from a to z.</p> <p>Activities  - Client/Employer Matching</p>	<p>Relationships  Safety  School-to-Work Transition  Service Planning  Shopping  Social Skills  Cooking  Discussion Groups  Group Contracts  Household Skills</p> <p>*Essp program, residential program 30 beds</p>

						- Follow-up and Monitoring	
<a href="#">Eco Vision</a> <a href="#">(506)758-2751</a>  <a href="#">Same address as L'atelier L'artisan (also a work place for people with disabilities - must be connected)</a>	Yes	Unsure	Unsure	No	<p>Ecovision Memramcook is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide adults with intellectual disabilities with rewarding work that promotes greater inclusion within the community. Ecovision Memramcook has existed since 1982 and has had a constant evolution over the years and continues to renew itself.</p>	<p>Provide work and training support to people with disabilities, including people with Autism. They provide work placements, and send them out to other projects in the community as well.</p> <p>Provide training for whatever job they are doing.</p> <p>"Today, under the new name of Ecovision Memramcook, the organization continues to offer rewarding work to under-talented people in the Memramcook region."</p>	
<a href="#">Albert Career Development Centre</a> <a href="#">(506) 882-2604</a>	Yes	Self referred to as a small agency, at the moment, 2 full time and 2 part time	Unsure	No	<p>We offer life skills training and supportive services to help maintain or enhance social and community ties through work and volunteer opportunities</p>	<p>Vocational training and support programs  employment skills,  assessment and skill building  career counseling/assessment  transition to work readiness  job preparation, including  resumes, interviews, dress attire, workplace policies  job matching, self-directed job search  Work Essential Skills Program</p> <p>Eligibility  Adults 18 years and older  facing exceptional barriers to securing and maintaining paid employment</p> <p>Not Autism specific - but everyone gets a IEPs done when they come in, there is a lot of job coaching, and support on site.</p>	

<p><a href="#">Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour</a> 506-523-7601</p>	No	Large (serve entire province)	Unsure	Yes		<p>Training and Employment Support Services (persons with disabilities) training and employment opportunities to develop marketable skills and enter the labour force</p> <p>Overview The Training and Employment Support Services (TESS) component of the Employment Services Program provides supports to case managed New-Brunswickers who have a permanent physical, intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, or sensory disability to participate in training and/or employment opportunities.</p> <p>Eligibility A person must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have an active Employment Action Plan;</li> <li>- be a resident of New Brunswick or a First Nation Community in New Brunswick;</li> <li>- be a high school graduate; or a high school student during part time or summer employment; or be at least 18 years of age; or be enrolled into an adult learning program;</li> <li>- have a documented permanent physical, intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, or sensory disability.</li> </ul> <p>The objectives of TESS are to reduce and/or remove the</p>	
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						<p>impact of a person's disability in order to assist the person with a disability to participate in training and/or assist the person with a disability to obtain, or to resume employment when it has been interrupted, and/or maintain employment.</p> <p>It should be noted that any individual with a disability, whether or not they are receiving income support benefits, could be eligible for services under TESS.</p>	
<a href="#">South East Abilities Centre / Le Centre de Développement des Habilités du Sud Est Inc. 506-577-4809</a>  <a href="#">*Info from 211</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	Unsure	Non-profit organization providing employment and support programs to persons with intellectual disabilities	Not specified. They do provide employment support, but no website and no one answered the phone to find out more details. However, there was a voicemail message that confirmed the existence of the organization.	
<a href="#">Vocational Training Centre 506-847-4759</a>	Yes	4 full time 2 part time	5 at least	No	To provide excellent support services to adults with physical and intellectual disabilities, in order for them to gain the confidence, skill and knowledge to succeed.	<p>Job coaching, training to prepare them for work - social skills, social etiquette, job development training, resume building, job applications, and provide job opportunities through their own social enterprises.</p> <p>No specific programs for autism, but do offer one on one support with support workers.</p>	An ADAPT agency: Provides long-term care clients appropriate opportunities to learn skills in centre or community based settings.

<a href="#">Catena Jobs Plus</a> <a href="#">(506)696-5672</a>	Yes	9 full time staff	Unsure	No	<p>Our Mission is to empower persons who live with daily challenges by providing resources and skills needed to achieve independence</p> <p>Jobs Plus has been recognized as an industry leader with the employment first initiative. At Jobs Plus, we are helping those who have the desire to be employed bridge the gap from skills training to paid employment.</p>	<p>Our employment first programs are in line with the most current DSP/ESSP Standards, this allows our individuals the opportunity to be trained and given the tools needed for confidence and obtain paid successful employment.</p> <p>Support anyone who has a barrier to employment, not just people with autism.</p>	Jobs Plus provides social skills training and daily activities for our participants on a full-time basis.
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<a href="#">Oromocto Training and Employment Centre</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	<p><b>OTEC MISSION</b> OTEC exists to support individuals with Intellectual disabilities and Mental Health issues, to realize their potential to be independent members of their Community. Whenever possible this should mean employment in their Community.</p> <p><b>OTEC'S MANDATE</b> 1. To provide individualized training to enhance self-sufficiency. 2. To coordinate participant placements within the Community and workforce. 3. As a Community Resource: To develop partnerships with government, non government, and private sector entities. 4. To advocate on behalf of the participants to be productive members of their Community.</p>	<p>Oromocto Training &amp; Employment Centre Inc. (OTEC) provides vocational training and support services to adults age 19-64 who face exceptional barriers to securing and maintaining paid employment.</p> <p>Community Work Placements Training</p> <p>Teaching practical on-the-job experience that can be applied to a variety of work settings, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment skills – assessment and skill building;</li> <li>- Career counseling/assessment;</li> <li>- Transition to work readiness;</li> <li>- Job preparation – Resumes, interviews, dress attire, workplace policies, etc.;</li> <li>- Job matching – as much as possible, self-directed job search with 'job matching' primary goal.</li> </ul> <p>Focus Forward – Work Essential Skills Program Community Work Placements. In addition to helping locate and secure paid work placements, once Employment placement is underway, OTEC provides employment services and support to both the Employers and OTEC work program participants. These services</p>	<p>In addition, we offer essential daily and life skills training and supportive services to help maintain or enhance social and community ties.</p> <p>Community Service Work</p> <p>Personal Development and Community Service is an area of training wherein OTEC emphasizes the importance of building community partnerships by helping fellow non profit agencies in their work to help in bettering our community around us.</p>
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						are facilitated through a variety of means and based on individual needs, including: - On-Site Support as needed. This can mean full time support, part time support, or occasional support; - Employment Maintenance/Monitoring. Regular check-ins form a part of our service.	
<a href="#">Bathurst Employment Services and Training Group</a>  * No website, only info on 211, but phone number confirmed by voicemail to be for B.E.S.T. Group  <a href="#">506-549-5055</a>	No	Unsure	Unsure	No	Provides long term care clients appropriate opportunities to learn skills in centre or community based settings. Skills taught include: - appropriate behaviour - respect of daily schedules - dress - social habits - adult living skills - Provided both full and part time	For adults with disabilities and people under 19 years may apply for job training services through local schools.	
<a href="#">Le Phare des Services Communautaires Inc</a>	No			No	Discover the services offered by the Lighthouse to ensure the well-being of people with special needs and adults with a loss of autonomy.		
<a href="#">St. Croix Vocational Centre</a>	No		40	No	We are a vocational training Centre teaching work, literacy and life skills to 40 intellectually disabled adults in St. Stephen and surrounding areas.		
<a href="#">Atelier Beausoleil</a>	No			No	Atelier Beausoleil offers services to people with intellectual disabilities.		

<a href="#">Carleton-Victoria Community Vocational Board Inc.</a>	No	80-100		Yes	<p>From its beginning in 1985, CVCVB has evolved its mandate from providing vocational services for people with disabilities to offering a range of community based support services, employment assistance and training programs for youth and adults.</p>	<p><b>CAREER INFORMATION CENTER</b>  Job Developers are on hand to provide employment related information such as local labour market information, assistance with job search and interview techniques, assistance with resume and cover letter writing. The Career Information Center has a library of employment and training related resource material. Internet, photocopying, faxing and telephone service is available.</p> <p>Our Resource Library has videos and other materials on:  Personal Development  Education and Training  Getting and Keeping a Job  Employer Issues  Resume Writing  Interviewing Techniques</p> <p>Assessment of your needs for:  Employment &amp; Training</p> <p>Referral to: Employment Counsellors &amp; Other Services</p> <p><b>EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING</b>  Career Counsellors  Job Search Strategies  Networking</p> <p><b>EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICE</b>  Employment Assistance counsellors assist clients</p>	<p><b>COMMUNITY INCLUSION PROGRAMS</b>  Programs are designed to offer participants an opportunity to learn skills relevant to their unique situations. CVCVB's programs support community access, work projects, social skills/life skills, recreational and leisure.</p> <p><b>FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES</b>  Family Support Services and Programs are designed to provide support, assistance and/or intervention based on client individual needs and provide assistance to support activities such as; SUPERVISED VISITS and TRANSPORTATION.</p> <p><b>PARENT AIDE</b> supports a holistic approach to family support and strives to provide the participants with an array of information that will assist them in the management of their personal affairs and of their family unit.</p> <p><b>MENTORING</b> programs are designed to provide children and youth with individual support in the acquisition of social and coping skills.</p> <p><b>INDIVIDUAL LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS</b>  Programs are designed to provide assistance to support daily living activities such as money management, personal safety, anger management, partner abuse, decision making and goal setting for individual clients.</p>
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					<p>uncover their skills, abilities and other assets they have to offer the world of work. Counsellors provide assistance with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Career Decision Making</li> <li>- Skills Enhancement</li> <li>- Resume and Cover Letter Writing</li> <li>- Interview Preparation</li> <li>- Job Search Techniques</li> <li>- Entrepreneurial Development Support</li> <li>- Local Labour Market Information</li> <li>- Employment Assistance</li> </ul> <p>Services are offered in English and French.</p>	<p>ESSP Employment Supported Service Program – Services provide long-term care clients with intellectual disabilities (ages 19-64) opportunities to learn and participate in community based activities and supported employment</p> <p>HOME SUPPORT SERVICES</p>
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<a href="#">Community Industries Employment Vocational Association Inc. (CIEVA)</a>	No	7	CIEVA is currently supporting fifty clients in job situations on-site and in the community.	No	To provide support services to adults with intellectual disabilities that enable them to become productive contributing citizens within their community.	<p>Community Industries Employment Vocational Association (CIEVA) provides support services to adults from the age of nineteen with intellectual disabilities, enabling them to become productive citizens within their community. Through various facilitating and designing opportunities, we help develop their individual strengths and awareness, helping them find supported job opportunities, while also developing their vocational skills.</p> <p>CIEVA has 5 Social Enterprises / business ventures to help better the community, while also providing training and job placement for many clients. CIEVA's First Impressions KIOSK (trophies and engraving), Redemption / Recycling Center, Beyond the Box Woodworking, Hungry Hippo Shredding Service and our community work crews offer work-related opportunities and support for our clients.</p> <p>CIEVA offers supported services in the development of:</p> <p>Job Skills</p>	<p>Social Skills Personal Development Community Access</p>
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<a href="#">La Fleur De L'Espérance Inc.</a>	No			No	Work, activity and learning center for adults with special needs.		
<a href="#">Lakeland Industries Sheltered Workshop/Lakeland Resource Centre</a>	No	10 staff, 50 volunteers	31 clients (not necessarily with Autism)	No	<p>an organization that teaches employment and life skills to individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities.</p> <p>Our mission is to provide a safe, positive, socially stimulating, meaningful and productive place of employment for persons with developmental and/or physical challenges, and to provide ongoing, individualized life skills coaching and guidance so that our clients are able to reach their full potential and enjoy greater participation in meaningful and productive employment, and social and recreational activities in their community.</p>	<p>Lakeland Industries Sheltered Workshops uses a series of workstations to manufacture and assemble various products such as survey stakes and pallets.</p> <p>Lakeland Industries also provide daily transportation to and from work for clients attending the workshop.</p>	In recent years Lakeland Industries added a comprehensive Resource Centre where they operate a food bank and thrift store with clothing and dry goods that serves low income families in the McAdam – Harvey area

<p><a href="#">Minlak Training Programs</a></p>	<p>No</p>			<p>No</p>	<p>provides a wide range of services and support for adults between the ages of 19 and 64 with disabilities located in the Grand Lake area.</p> <p>Our mission is to assist the intellectually and physically disabled adult in reaching his/her full potential by promoting self-sufficiency and personal responsibility in all aspects of his/her life.</p> <p>Our goal is to provide participants appropriate opportunities to learn skills in centre or community-based settings. Through a supported environment we will focus on the development and provision of valued training and activities, and encourage appropriate behavior, respect of daily schedules, acceptable social habits, and all other expectations put on the adult individual.</p>	<p>General Assessment: Participants will be observed in various situations/settings to allow the supervisor a chance to determine individual strengths and needs.</p> <p>Skills Training: Participants will be involved in specific skill areas offered by the agency: housekeeping, simple meal preparation, life skills, personal care/hygiene, work skills, social skills, computer skills and personal safety and health.</p> <p>Community Work: Community employment may be the long-term goal for participants who have required the necessary skills and who desire that result.</p> <p>Minlak provides life skills training, supported employment and vocational services with regularly updated and revised assessments. Programs vary and depend on the needs of the participants and funding, but skills also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social/Recreational Services</li> <li>- School-to-Work Transitional Training</li> <li>- Services Assessments</li> <li>- Advocacy and Support Services</li> <li>- Entrepreneurial Services</li> <li>- Community Awareness and Access</li> </ul>	<p>Community Integration: Participants will be given opportunities to participate in community activities that will increase their social skills, community safety and awareness.</p> <p>Recreation: Participants will be involved in community-based recreation (bowling, local events as schedule permits).</p>
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					<p>Small work crews, accompanied by Minlak staff help Cleanco perform various cleaning services at local churches and businesses. An entrepreneurial service developed to incorporate community and life skills is a key to Minlak's partnership with Minlak Copy &amp; Print, Jay's Delivery Service and Minlak Creations. Minlak also has an in-house program developed to enhance life skills with Janet Bake Shoppe and Dawg Bone Production.</p> <p>Minlak Training Programs, established in 1996, successfully operates Minlak Recycling, a collection and sorting depot for recyclable products. Minlak Training Programs Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides day programs for adults with intellectual and physical disabilities.</p>	
<a href="#">Atelier De L'Amitié</a>	No		No	L'Atelier de l'Amitié is a non-profit organization. The workshop is an activity center for adults with needs with a training and employment program.		
<a href="#">Atelier Edouard-Roy</a>	No		No			

<a href="#">Atelier la Fabrique</a>	No	4	No	The La Fabrique workshop develops the physical and intellectual potential of people aged 19-64 with an intellectual disability, all through social, manual and cognitive activities aimed at the greatest possible autonomy.	We offer the Disability Support Program Employment and Support Services program. Centered on the person through an employment-first approach, the Espace La fabrique de Tracadie strives to provide the necessary support for meaningful participation in the community through various initiatives.
<a href="#">Atelier La Rencontre</a>	No		No	Promote community integration and development of adults with special needs through the development of residential, vocational and recreational services while stimulating and encouraging an adequate understanding of the problems encountered by the target population in our communities.	The Atelier La Rencontre shop promotes the talent of its participants and allows them to be paid for their work.
<a href="#">Atelier Les Hirondelles</a>	No		No		Participants work on different projects such as loom weaving, knitting, making rugs, bracelets, necklaces, cards and many more.
<a href="#">Centre d'Activités LaRuche</a>	No		No	La Ruche Activity Center offers accompaniment and support services to adults with special needs.	
<a href="#">Centre d'apprentissage Dexter Learning Center</a>	No	9	No	The mission of the Dexter Learning Center is to support the person living with a disability by developing an individual plan to enable them to make better decisions on a personal, social and professional level. We encourage dialogue and the establishment of a network that	

					allows the individual to flourish in his community.	
<a href="#"><u>Centre De Formation et de Soutien a l'Emploi St. Leonard</u></a>	No			No	Day center that offers support services to adults with special needs. ADAPT Program (Adult Developmental Activities, Programs and Training)	

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