

## Identification of Promising Practices & Innovation in Service Delivery Year 2025-2026

### **Introduction.**

At ODEN, we're committed to strengthening innovation and sharing promising practices across the employment services sector, especially when it comes to inclusive hiring for job seekers who have a disability. When we talk about "innovation" or "promising practices," we're referring to any approach, tool, model, or technology that meaningfully improves employment outcomes for people who have a disability.

The Special Projects & Innovation team has gathered several examples that are making a real difference in the field. The summaries below highlight what these practices are, why they matter, and how employment service providers can use them in their day-to-day work.

### **Promising Practice #1. The DCIDE Tool (Institute for Work & Health):** <https://aced.iwh.on.ca/dcide>

#### ***Introduction***

Roughly eight million Canadians live with disabilities that affect their daily activities. For many, these conditions are permanent; for others, symptoms come and go. These "episodic disabilities" can be unpredictable, often invisible, and can make it harder for people to stay employed or return to work after time away.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***About the Practice***

The DCIDE tool, or Decision-Support for Communicating about Invisible Disabilities that are Episodic too, is a free online resource that helps people evaluate whether they want to disclose a disability or health condition at work. It leads the user through five areas: their needs, goals, communication preferences, workplace supports, and the culture of their workplace. At the end, it provides a personalized summary and resources.

The tool was developed through a partnership involving researchers, people with lived experience, and community organizations, and is grounded in evidence-based knowledge translation.

#### ***Why This Is a Promising Practice***

Deciding whether to disclose a disability at work is a major turning point for many people, yet it's often something they're left to navigate alone. The DCIDE tool fills that gap by offering clear, personalized guidance that helps people make informed choices. Because it was co-designed with people who have lived experience, the tool is relevant, practical, and trustworthy. It's also free, anonymous, and doesn't require users to share

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<sup>1</sup> The DCIDE Tool | ACED Toolkit. (2026). ACED Toolkit. <https://aced.iwh.on.ca/dcide>

personal information, thus removing barriers that might otherwise prevent someone from seeking support.

Deciding to disclose an accommodation can unlock supports in the workplace that lead to increased retention, work performance, and job satisfaction, for these reasons, this tool has been identified as a promising practice to support employment outcomes for job seekers who have a disability.

***How can Employment Services Providers use the tool:***

- Help job seekers evaluate and think through disclosure in a structured, supportive way
- Incorporate the tool into job coaching and accommodation planning
- Build client confidence and autonomy around workplace communication

**Promising Practice #2: TECHNATION CareerFinder & Skill Passport:**

<https://technationcanada.ca/en/future-workforce-development/career-finder/>

***Introduction***

TECHNATION is one of Canada’s leading technology associations, bringing together industry, government, and community partners to strengthen the country’s digital economy. Their members include Canadian and global tech companies of all sizes, and their work spans advocacy, talent development, policy leadership, and innovation..<sup>2</sup>

***About the Practice***

CareerFinder is a digital platform that provides real-time labour market information about tech roles across Canada; everything from job demand and salaries to required skills and career pathways.

The Skill Passport builds on this by using AI to recommend jobs and training opportunities based on a person’s skills, experience, and goals.

***Why This Is a Promising Practice***

CareerFinder and the Skill Passport help job seekers make decisions based on current, real-world labour market data. This is especially valuable in the fast-changing tech sector.

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<sup>2</sup> Our Vision & Mission - TECHNATION. (2025, September 30). TECHNATION. <https://technationcanada.ca/en/our-vision-and-mission/>

The tools also take a skills-first approach, which can open doors for job seekers who may not have traditional credentials but do have strong transferable skills. The AI-driven recommendations allow for personalized career planning at scale, and the clear links between training and job opportunities help bridge the education-to-employment gap.

***How can Employment Services Providers use the tool:***

- Use CareerFinder and Skill Passport as part of career exploration and navigation
- Pair the tools with counselling to support skills-based pathways
- Leverage labour market insights to align services with employer demand

**Promising Practice #3: YESNet (Youth Employment Services):**

<https://www.yes.on.ca/program/yesnet/>

***Introduction***

Youth Employment Services (YES) is a long-standing Canadian non-profit that supports young people through employment counselling, skills training, and job placement. YES offers more than 25 programs, including digital skills training, financial literacy, entrepreneurship supports, and specialized services for youth with mental health needs. Their work includes one-on-one counselling, sector-specific training, paid placements, mentorship, and online learning.<sup>3</sup>

***About the Practice***

YESNet is a national initiative that supports workforce readiness through partnerships with non-profits, offering free training and resources in three key areas:

- Entrepreneurship
- Financial literacy
- Digital upskilling

It also includes training for service providers, mentorship opportunities, and access to industry-recognized learning platforms and certifications.

***Why This Is a Promising Practice***

YESNet stands out because it takes a broad, holistic approach to preparing youth for work. Instead of focusing solely on job search, it builds foundational skills such as financial, digital, and entrepreneurial that support long-term success.

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<sup>3</sup> Youth Employment Services YES. (2019). Yes.on.ca. <https://www.yes.on.ca/>

The initiative also prioritizes marginalized populations and reduces barriers by offering free, accessible programming. By supporting both job seekers and service providers, YESNet strengthens the overall employment ecosystem.

***How can Employment Services Providers use the tool:***

- Incorporate YESNet-style programming to expand workforce readiness supports
- Use its curriculum model to enhance digital and financial literacy offerings
- Build stronger community partnerships and shared learning networks

**Promising Practice #4: NEADS – Building Employment Pathways Project (Students)**

<https://breakingitdown.neads.ca/building-employment-pathways-project-students/>

***Introduction***

Since 1986, the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) has worked to ensure full access to education and employment for post-secondary students and graduates who have disabilities across Canada.<sup>4</sup>

***About the Practice***

The Building Employment Pathways Project, part of NEADS’ “Breaking It Down” initiative, supports students who have disabilities as they transition from school to work. It builds on earlier resources such as transition toolkits and employment connection guides that map programs and supports across the country.

The project focuses on improving awareness of employment programs, helping students navigate available supports, and strengthening the connection between education and the workforce.

***Why This Is a Promising Practice***

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<sup>4</sup> NEADS - About NEADS. (n.d.). Www.neads.ca. <https://www.neads.ca/en/about/>

The transition from school to work is a major challenge for many students who have disabilities. This project helps make that transition smoother by making supports easier to find and understand.

A key strength is its personalized, one-on-one coaching model. Trained Sustainable Livelihoods Job Coaches work with students and recent graduates to explore career options, prepare for interviews, and develop workplace strategies; offering guidance that is both practical and individualized.

***How can Employment Services Providers use the tool:***

- Strengthen partnerships between post-secondary institutions and employment services providers.
- Connect with virtual job coaches who can support recent grads (within their last 5 years) to access an innovative form of virtual job coaching and work readiness support.

**About Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN)**

ODEN is committed to promoting innovation and promising practices in the employment service sector and inclusive hiring for job seekers who have a disability.

**If you have any questions regarding the information presented, please email us at [info@odenetwork.com](mailto:info@odenetwork.com).**