



## Summary

### **Inclusive employment for workers with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) Best practices and insights from employment services for workers with disabilities**

**Melissa Pagliaro**, Researcher, Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)

In this presentation, Melissa Pagliaro from the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) emphasized the importance of creating inclusive and accessible workplaces for individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). MCS is a disabling chronic condition triggered by exposure to chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) found in everyday products. It can cause symptoms affecting the respiratory, neurological, and cardiovascular systems, severely impacting a person's ability to work. Despite affecting nearly 4% of Canadians, MCS remains under-recognized by employers, contributing to unmet accommodation needs and lower employment rates.

The presentation outlined several best practices for accommodating workers with MCS. These include the implementation of scent-free and lowest-emission policies, improvements to indoor air quality through ventilation and filtration, and the adoption of flexible work arrangements such as remote work and adjustable schedules. These accommodations benefit not only workers with MCS but also the broader workforce, improving wellness, retention, and morale. Data collected from employers in CCRW's network show high levels of satisfaction with the outcomes of implementing such practices, indicating that accommodations are not only feasible but also effective.

Despite these advantages, significant barriers to implementation remain. Employers often hold misconceptions about the cost and complexity of accommodations, particularly those related to air quality and policy enforcement. However, most necessary accommodations—like modifying schedules or enforcing scent-free policies—are low- or no-cost, and financial assistance is often available through grants and public programs. The presentation emphasized that these misconceptions can be overcome through education, resources, and support from accessibility organizations and employment services.



The presentation concluded with a strong call to action for employers to take proactive steps toward inclusion. By dismantling misconceptions, promoting awareness, and utilizing available tools, employers can create work environments that accommodate and empower individuals with MCS. These efforts align with broader goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion, creating benefits that extend to all employees. Ensuring workplace accessibility for individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is not only a matter of legal compliance but also a fundamental issue of fairness, health, and human rights.

### **Citations**

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