



“THE ONLY WAY IN”:

Centring the Employment Experiences of Diverse Job Seekers

Presented by:
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Submitted to:
Community Employment
Collaboration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through this study the researchers at Mind the Gap Consulting™ sought to better understand what the employment experiences are of diverse job seekers (DJSs) in Newfoundland and Labrador. They also sought to understand what relevant and related “pain points” might be keeping Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) from supporting their clients to the best of their ability – such as personal, environmental and/or systemic challenges.

The methods for this study were focus groups and interviews with DJSs with experience of looking for work in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as with CDPs who work in the province. For the purposes of this study DJSs refers to those individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and may be perceived as

ethnically-/racially-, or culturally-different from the average job seeker in Newfoundland and Labrador. These individuals may be Black, Indigenous, or people of colour (BIPOC), but they may also have additional layers to their social identities that include culture, faith, religious attire, and/or names that may make their employment experiences more complex. CDPs are those professionals who help individuals navigate learning and employment transitions throughout their lives.

A total of 24 participants volunteered their time for this study (10 DJSs and 14 CDPs). The diversity was great within the DJS group as it relates to time in Canada, employment status, ethnicity / race, and culture; all but one of the DJS participants had used the services of at least one of the Community



Employment Collaboration's community partners in their job search/career development, and many of them had used several. Within the CDP participant group there was broad organizational representation, though it was less broad in terms of ethnicity / race, and culture.

The focus groups and interviews with DJSs allowed the researchers to learn first-hand and in their own words about their experiences and perspectives. The CDP focus groups added insight into various organizational experiences, processes, approaches, and systemic challenges. Together, these methods yielded diverse and important data.

Emerging from this study were a number of findings regarding diverse job seekers' career development experiences including:

- Facing Racism and Discrimination in Hiring and in the Workplace
- Struggling to Navigate Bureaucracy and Program Criteria
- Being Excluded from the Hidden Job Market
- Feeling Forced into "Steppingstones" Towards Meaningful Employment
- Perceiving/Experiencing Lack of Choice in Career Development Services
- Feeling Conflicted and/or Confused by Voluntary Self-Identification
- Yearning for Diversity in Community Services



DIVERSE JOB SEEKERS FACE EXTRA BARRIERS



Community partners have assets that can serve as the foundation for helping DJSs with many of these challenges. Several partners are already engaging with a significant amount of diversity in terms of the clients they serve, and through this research it was obvious how CDPs can demonstrate empathy, constructive self-reflection, and a willingness to learn and grow as it relates to working with their diverse clients.

Also, emerging from this study, however, were a number of relevant areas that limit how CDPs are able to support their clients as much as they would like to:

-
• Agencies Not Acting Collaboratively (such as being reluctant to share skills, knowledge, and access to clients’ ARMS files)
.....
- Employers Not Seeing the Benefits of Hiring Diversely
.....
- Discomfort to Discuss Race, Racism, and the Role of One’s Racial Identity in Career Development Work
.....
- Lack of Consistency in ARMS Data Entry & in Tangible Data Analysis Vis-à-Vis DJSs
.....

As a result, this study's researchers make a total of 26 recommendations, which include that the Community Employment Collaboration – and its community partners – undertake the following:

Recommendation #1:

Embed Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging as a priority area in the work of the Community Employment Collaboration

Recommendation #2:

Develop a process of deep and honest self-reflection on Career Development Practitioners' racial and cultural identities and how they influence their work with diverse job seekers

Recommendation #3:

Hire and recruit more diversely (ethnically/racially and/or culturally) at all organizational levels

Recommendation # 4:

Make a commitment to provide training for the broader Career Development sector that fleshes out key findings in this report in order to build deeper understanding of - and empathy for - diverse job seekers' experiences. This training should be, at a minimum, co-led by professionals who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour (BIPOC) themselves

Recommendation #5:

Host a facilitated panel discussion with a diverse group of Career Development Professionals to explore how racial and cultural identities and affiliations help and/or hinder the work that they do

Recommendation #6:

Partner with employer organizations to create paid work-term or mentoring opportunities that allow Diverse Job Seekers to both demonstrate their skills to employers as well as gain tangible local experience and references

For a full list of all 26 recommendations please proceed to page 130.

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT TITLE

Centring the Employment Experiences of Diverse Job Seekers

AGREEMENT DURATION

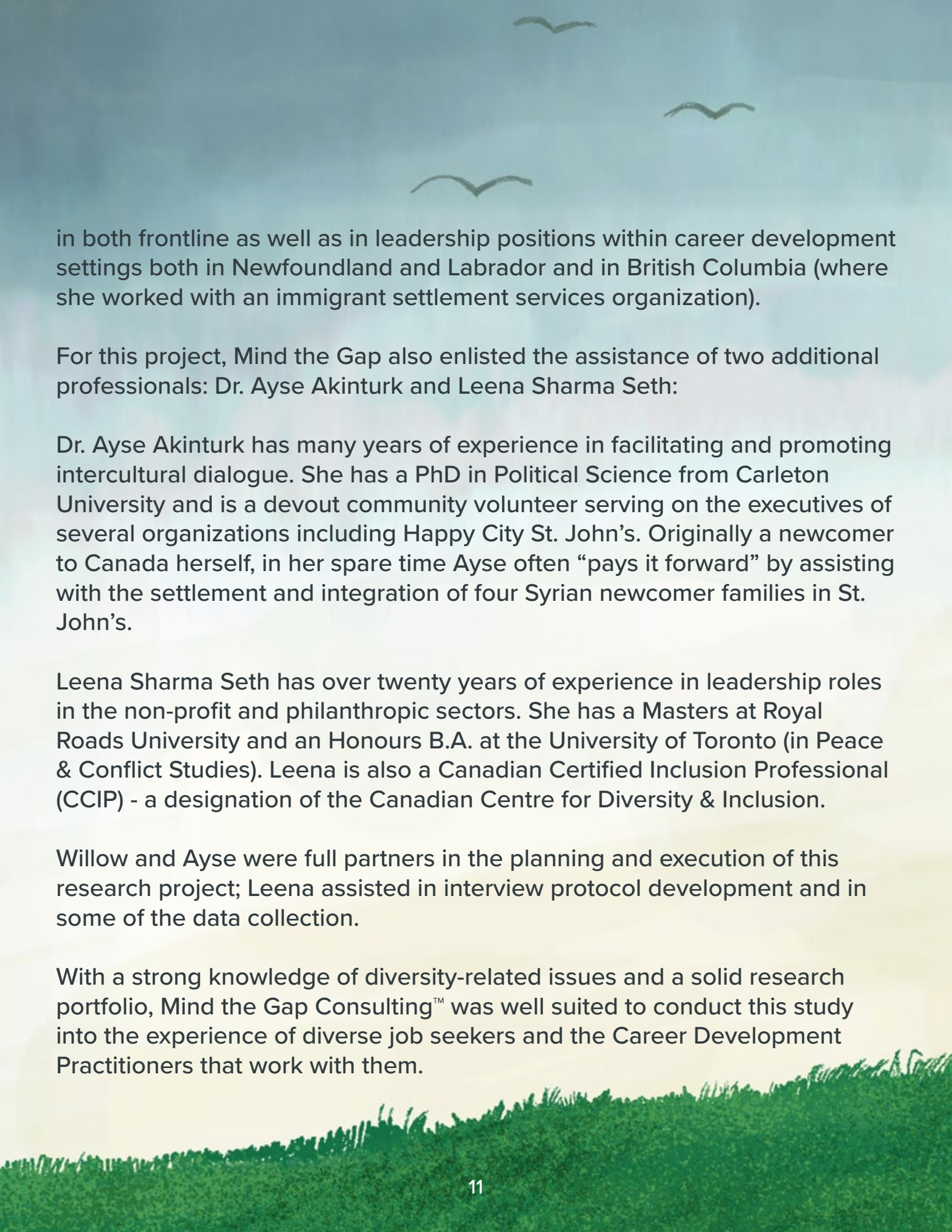
The duration of this project was from June 15, 2020 to March 12, 2021.
Please see Appendix A for a project timeline.

PROJECT PROPONENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Mind the Gap Consulting™
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PROJECT PROPONENT DESCRIPTION

Mind the Gap Consulting™ assists organizations and individuals navigate and optimize diversity so they may build their capacity to work more effectively both internally within their organizations and externally with their clients. It does so by providing professional and customizable training, facilitation, consulting, and research with a specialization in the area of cultural diversity. Principal Consultant of Mind the Gap Consulting™, Dr. Willow Anderson has focussed much of her education and experience on diversity-related issues. In fact, Willow focussed her PhD dissertation research on the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland. Willow also has experience working



in both frontline as well as in leadership positions within career development settings both in Newfoundland and Labrador and in British Columbia (where she worked with an immigrant settlement services organization).

For this project, Mind the Gap also enlisted the assistance of two additional professionals: Dr. Ayse Akinturk and Leena Sharma Seth:

Dr. Ayse Akinturk has many years of experience in facilitating and promoting intercultural dialogue. She has a PhD in Political Science from Carleton University and is a devout community volunteer serving on the executives of several organizations including Happy City St. John's. Originally a newcomer to Canada herself, in her spare time Ayse often “pays it forward” by assisting with the settlement and integration of four Syrian newcomer families in St. John's.

Leena Sharma Seth has over twenty years of experience in leadership roles in the non-profit and philanthropic sectors. She has a Masters at Royal Roads University and an Honours B.A. at the University of Toronto (in Peace & Conflict Studies). Leena is also a Canadian Certified Inclusion Professional (CCIP) - a designation of the Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion.

Willow and Ayse were full partners in the planning and execution of this research project; Leena assisted in interview protocol development and in some of the data collection.

With a strong knowledge of diversity-related issues and a solid research portfolio, Mind the Gap Consulting™ was well suited to conduct this study into the experience of diverse job seekers and the Career Development Practitioners that work with them.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Community Employment Collaboration (CEC) contracted Mind the Gap Consulting™ so that it might better understand what the employment experiences are of diverse job seekers in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The CEC also wanted to explore what relevant and related dimensions/issues might be getting in the way of Career Development Practitioners (CDP) supporting their clients to the best of their ability.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The two research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1:

What are diverse job seekers' employment experiences in the St. John's area – particularly as they relate to their lived experiences of employment discrimination?

RQ2:

What are the relevant and related “pain points” for career development practitioners?

It is important to elaborate on the key terminology used in the above research questions:

For the purposes of this study, the term **diverse job seekers** (DJSs) refers to those individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and may be perceived as ethnically-/racially-, or culturally-different from the average job seeker in Newfoundland and Labrador. These individuals may be Black, Indigenous, or people of colour (BIPOC), but they may also have additional layers to their social identities that include culture, faith, religious attire, and/or names that may make their employment experiences more complex.

In addition, **career development practitioners** (CDPs) are those professionals who help individuals navigate learning and employment transitions throughout their lives.

Finally, this study engaged the term **pain points** as a way to describe those things that might get in the way of CDPs supporting their clients to the best of their ability. These could include personal, environmental or systemic challenges/issues.



METHODS

The first part of this study was a literature review on what has been explored and learned to date about the employment experiences of diverse job seekers as well as the relationship between career development practitioners and intercultural competency. What was gleaned from this process helped shape and inform method approaches and content (such as interview and focus group protocol). *Please see Appendix B for a brief summary of the literature review.*

The methods of data collection for this study were focus groups and interviews with DJS and focus groups with CDPs. The initial goal had been to have three to four focus groups with DJSs and then supplement that data with three to four focus groups with CDPs. The beginning of the Covid19

pandemic and subsequent lock-down, however, interrupted those “best laid plans” and when organizations and individuals were up and running again requests for participation in the study yielded only a couple of DJS participants. After speaking to those individuals, the researchers conducted the three focus groups with CDPs, and then returned to speaking with additional DJS participants.

Although the researchers were forced to deviate from the original data collection design, the fact that data was collected first with DJSs, then CDPs, then DJSs again actually meant that at each data collection step the research team was able to keep the same core focus group questions while also adding questions that were responsive to what had been learned to date; that is, the focus group protocol was continually informed by

the data collected in both participant groups and this yielded important results.

It should be mentioned that all the above data collection opportunities happened online via Zoom with the exception of one physically-distanced in-person focus group with DJSs. The in-person nature of this discussion was at the request of the group and all safety precautions were taken (e.g. the room was fully sanitized before and after use, face masks were worn at all times, all individuals sat 6' apart, and contact information was collected for contact tracing purposes).

The focus groups and interviews with DJSs allowed the researchers to learn first-hand about their experiences in their own words. The CDP focus groups added insight into various organizational experiences, processes, approaches, and systemic challenges. Together, these methods yielded diverse and important data.

RECRUITMENT

In order to recruit potential participants for the study the researchers engaged the assistance of Community Employment Collaboration's community partners. How the partners assisted with recruitment varied by organization, but included: speaking to relevant clients directly about the study and inviting them to contact the researchers should they be interested, collecting names of those who might want to speak to the researchers, as well as forwarding a description of the study to relevant clients. These approaches yielded limited results and so these efforts were supplemented by the researchers contacting potential participants through their own connections.

Once contacted, all individuals were invited to register for a focus group through a Google form or via phone or email. As referenced above, participants were offered in-person distanced or online options. In addition, in order to maximize DJS participants' feelings of comfort, safety, and trust, all potential DSJ interviewees were sent a link to the bios of the three researchers and offered the opportunity to speak to either of them. This approach was successful and there were several indications that at least half of the DJS participants chose to be interviewed by individuals they perceived to have similar racial or cultural identities to themselves.

Please note: In the case of individuals showing interest, but having scheduling difficulties those individuals were invited to join a researcher for a one-on-one interview via Zoom.

PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION



A total of ten DJSs volunteered their time for this study. These individuals shared their stories, perspectives, and experiences as participants in one of either three focus groups or two personal interviews.

On the CDP side, a total of fourteen individuals volunteered their time for this study across three different focus groups.

It is worth mentioning that, although they were not factors for participant inclusion, the researchers did make

attempts to ensure that amongst the participants that there be demographic and organizational diversity. These factors included ethnic/racial identity, cultural heritage, age, gender, time in Canada, country of origin, and, in the case of CDPs, organizational affiliation. There was a fair amount of diversity amongst both participant groups (especially the DJSs); the career development group, however, was overwhelmingly white or white-passing which is reflective of the profession in this province.

DATA COLLECTION

This section will outline the procedures and processes used in data collection. First of all, in advance of their participation, all participants were told that in order to participate in the study they would need to give their formal consent. The researchers explained that the consent form was a protective measure which outlined how the researchers would keep their identity confidential, how the conversation was being recorded, and how the data would be used. All participants agreed to the consent form by either approving in a Google form or via email.

On the day of their participation, when focus group participants/ interviewees joined their session

they were welcomed, it was confirmed that all present had given their formal consent, and the conversations began. The protocol began with questions meant to put the participants at ease. The questions then moved on to broad non-directional questions (“grand tour” questions), then more directed questions. Finally, the focus groups ended with closing questions to help summarize the most important information shared. *Please see Appendix C and D for the focus group/interview protocols.*

After all the diverse job seeker focus groups ended, a \$100 gift certificate was given to two different recipients when their names were drawn from a hat.

DATA ANALYSIS

After the focus groups and interviews, all the audio recordings were transcribed. All identifying information was removed from the transcriptions, they were carefully reviewed, and the data were coded. Coded data were then grouped into themes and sub-themes. These themes serve as the basis for the following Results section.



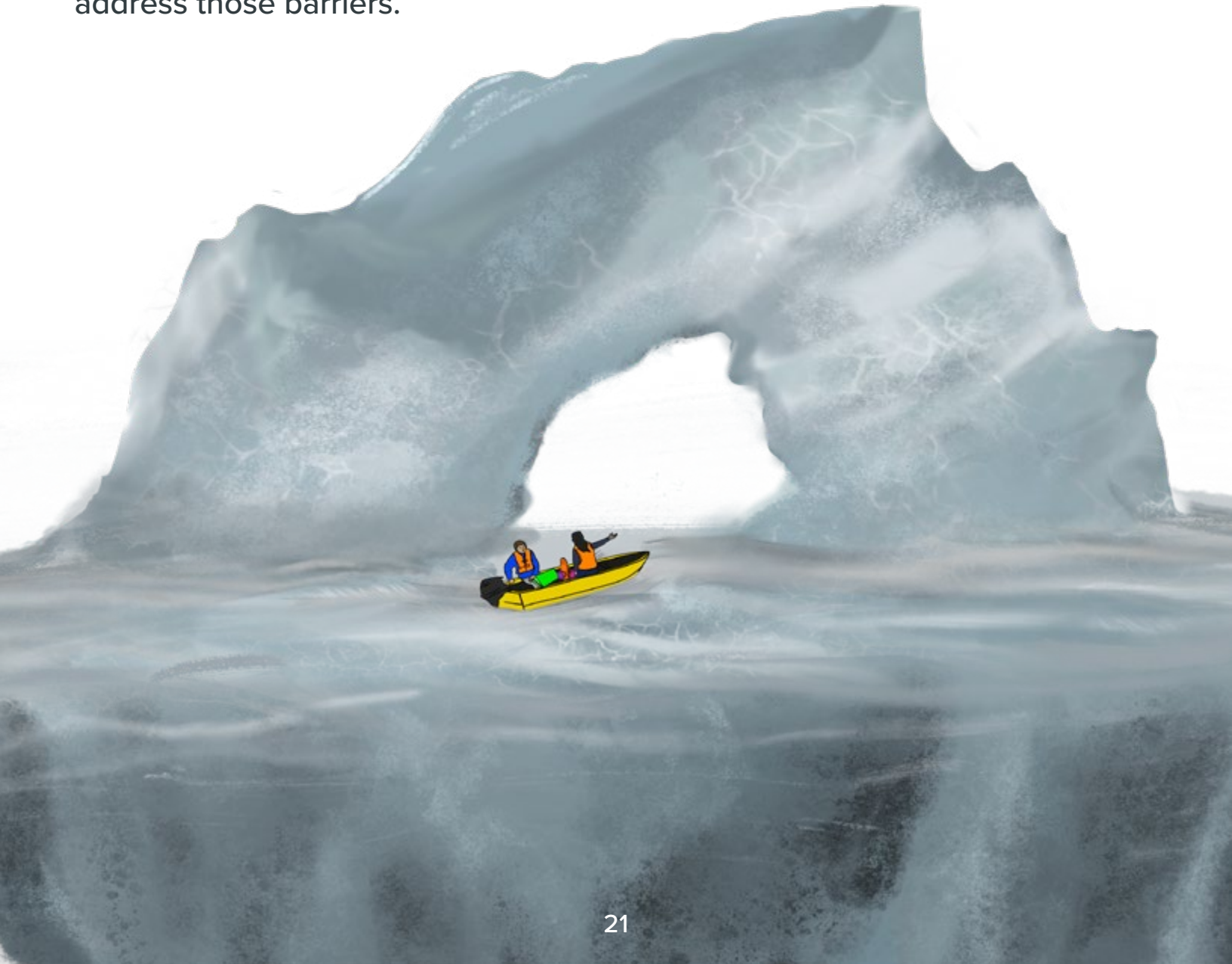
RESULTS

This study sought to both better understand what the employment experiences are of diverse job seekers (DJSs) in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, but also what relevant and related pain points might be influencing the Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) that work with these diverse job seekers. What follows is a description of the major themes that emerged from this study in three broad categories: Diverse job seekers' job search experiences, diverse job seekers' employment experiences, and their experiences with the community partners that assist them in their career development. The organization of these results intentionally centre the experience of the DJSs and supplement their experiences and perspectives with those of the CDPs that work with them. As one DJS explained

"If you really wanted to do something for somebody, and you have the intention to do it, you call those people. Who knows better how life is affecting ourselves? We are the ones living this experience."

DIVERSE JOB SEEKERS' JOB SEARCH EXPERIENCES

In talking about their employment experiences, the DJS participants in this study spoke almost exclusively of the barriers that they face in finding meaningful employment. These barriers range from employers discriminating against them due to the name they use on their resumé to how they are excluded when employers rely on the hidden job market. CDP participants unilaterally agreed that their DJS clients do face extra barriers although not all of them were able to fully acknowledge, understand, or address those barriers.



RACISM & DISCRIMINATION

One of the largest themes that emerged in talking to DJSs is that of the racism and discrimination they face while looking for work in Newfoundland and Labrador. According to the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act (Human Rights Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2010), discrimination is prohibited in every aspect of employment. It is prohibited on many grounds including: race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, social origin, religious creed, and religion. Regardless, DJSs pointed out that they faced discrimination in many forms: employers not interviewing those who have “ethnically-different names” as well as employers refusing to recognize international

credentials and work experience.

As mentioned earlier, all CDP participants admitted that DJSs do face extra barriers in their job search; only some of those individuals, however, felt comfortable in pointing to specific ways that employers can overlook and discriminate against Black, Indigenous or people of colour (BIPOC) or those they presume to be “not from here.” In fact, only one CDP used the specific word “racism” in the whole data collection process. That said, when asked, a couple of CDPs said they were confident that their DJS clients faced racism and discrimination, but all but one admitted that they had not been told of specific incidents.



RESUMÉ NAME CHANGING

One of the largest themes to emerge out of the literature review was the fact that job seekers' names play a significant role in hiring. Studies have proven, for example, that those with non-European sounding names can face significantly more barriers to getting called for an interview than those with European sounding names (Banerjee, Reitz, & Oreopoulos, 2017; Booth, 2010; Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017). One study, for example, sent simulated resumés to online job postings in several Canadian cities. The resumés contained standardized qualifications and varied only in the ethnic character of the applicant's name. The fictitious applicants with Asian (Chinese, Indian, Pakistani) names on their resumés had a dramatically lower call back rate (28% less) to an interview than those with Anglo-Canadian names (Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017). If they modified the fictitious Asian-named applicants' education and work experience so that it was international, then the fake candidates were found

to be subjected to even more severe discrimination. They were 62.5% less likely to be called for an interview than Anglo-Canadian named applicants with Canadian qualifications and experience (Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017).

An experiment in Australia had similar results, unfortunately. The researchers created over 4000 fictional individuals who applied for entry-level jobs, "varying only the name as an indicator of ethnicity" (Booth, 2010, p.2). They found there was significant discrimination; in order to get the same number of interviews as an "Anglo" applicant the Indigenous candidates had to submit 35% more applications, Chinese applicants 68% more, and those with Middle Eastern-sounding names 64%.

Since this previous research was so compelling, the researchers felt it was important to ask participants (both DJSs and CDPs) if they themselves – or those they knew – had had job search experiences that

related to their name. Participants – both DJSs and CDPs alike - affirmed that, yes, they knew of instances when job seekers' names had led to employers discriminating against them. One manifestation of discrimination was a lower call back rate to those with resumés who used an “ethnically different name.” Participants reported that this lower response rate prompts many diverse job seekers, either proactively or reactively, to adopt and use English/Christian and/or “white sounding” names in their resumés. As one participant put it, many of her friends had to use an “English” name to “to connect with the employer” and get a job.

It was noted that this issue is particularly the case for job seekers of some ethnicities and/or cultural

backgrounds more than others. As one Latina participant pointed out “our names are not a big deal... thinking in cultures such as Arabic or Chinese or Indian...of course, I know some cases from other cultures which need to change the name to receive a call [from an employer], for sure.”

Participants told us that if they or their friends received the advice to change their name it was primarily from friends who told them things such as “sometimes it works if you use a different name.” They shared stories of job search experiences that took a turn for the more positive when they took a more generically English/Christian and/or “white sounding” name. As one participant explained:

“When I got my work permit, I applied for some jobs using my real name in my resumé and I didn’t get any calls. Those resúmes didn’t get me anywhere, so after a while I decided to change my name and put my English name there and applied to the same jobs, same employers, and like four of them called me for interviews. When you talk about that, it seems like you are mentioning racism, but sometimes it’s a fact.”

Sadly, as we have referenced earlier, this participant’s experience echoes what we know to be happening in Canada.

One participant suggested, however, that there are a couple of areas where one’s name might be less of a determining factor. She suggested that multinational companies, that are more accustomed to hiring internationally, discriminate less

due to someone’s name; she also noted that if companies are hiring for minimum wage entry-level jobs then they “may not care about names” in such cases either. If a DJS is looking for a professional job at a locally owned/run organization, though, she felt discrimination based on one’s name is an issue.

Research does support some amount of this individual’s experience. Banerjee, Reitz, & Oreopoulos (2017) found that, although employers of all sizes discriminate when assessing Asian-named applicants, larger organizations are generally more receptive to Asian-named individuals. They also point out, however, that over 70% of private sector employees in Canada work for small employers; given how much hiring power small employers have in this country their discrimination against non-European sounding names can have devastating effects for DJSs.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON RESUMÉ NAME CHANGING

Career Development Practitioners also shared a fair bit about diverse job seekers changing their name in their job search. For some, this practice was fairly new and “eye-opening”; for others it was not new nor surprising. What form this practice takes varies person to person, they told the researchers, but it can take the form of job seekers anglicizing their first name, using only initials in lieu of their first name, adding an “English nickname” in brackets between a first name and surname, and changing one’s name on the resumé all together. These name changing strategies, CDPs suggested, are to avoid the discomfort and assumptions of employers; that is, they assumed that some employers may not be calling diverse job seekers with “different names” simply because they do not know how to pronounce such names

and would not want to embarrass themselves by mispronouncing them. Some also suggested that “a clearly non-Newfoundland sounding name” might “intimidate” employers or lead them to believe that the job seeker does not have the legal right to work in Canada. One CDP, however, critiqued these assumptions and argued that employers are using the excuse of not knowing how to pronounce job seeker’s names when actually they do not feel diverse job seekers are a good “fit” for their organization.

Regardless of employers’ motivations, a couple of CDPs reported that they have witnessed how this name changing strategy has been effective for their diverse clients; after changing the name listed on their resumé, their clients have received more calls for

interviews, and been offered jobs. A couple of CDPs admitted that they found this whole process sad. One explained she feels “like names are people’s identity” and she wished “people didn’t feel the need to do this.” Another mused on whether a job seeker would enjoy working for a company that would not accept them with their real name, but she empathized with the job seeker’s decision because “this was the only way in.”

Although some CDPs expressed empathy around the problematic nature of job seekers having to change their names, others reacted to the question with defensiveness and minimization. Some pointed to the rare times when “local, from-here” white folks have needed to do so too (due to having a gender, surname, or a home address that some employers might think inappropriate or untrustworthy). This reflex by some to revert to the idea that “it can affect anybody” shows a

tendency to distract attention away from racism and discrimination, revealing a discomfort or unwillingness to discuss or recognize how this can play out in hiring processes. Saying that discrimination can affect anybody also exposes a colour blindness, which is “naïve at best and dangerous at worst,” (Saad, 2020, p.79) because it erases the extra layers of discrimination that BIPOC job seekers are facing.

Similarly, some CDPs framed the choice to change one’s name on a resumé as “people’s own choice” or “individual preference.” This frame is also problematic as it minimizes the real lived experiences of diverse job seekers in Newfoundland and Labrador while minimizing the culpability of the employer in their discrimination against diverse job seekers and the harm that they can inflict. This, again, points to a discomfort that some CDPs have when issues of racism and discrimination are raised.

Unfortunately, the experiences of DJs in St. John's reflect broader Canadian research which points out that names are one of the major areas that manifest how employers can discriminate against them. DJs and CDPs alike talked about instances when changing someone's name to one that sounded more Anglo/Christian/white was "effective" in getting them more calls for interviews. The CDPs' response to this reality was mixed: some empathized with this injustice and the potential damage to one's identity when others minimized the harm and the culpability of employers in these situations.

INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Several DJSs referred to how it is very difficult to get employers to recognize any credentials and work experience one has achieved and demonstrated before arriving in Canada. Some referred to the length of time and cost associated with getting regulated professions such as medical degrees assessed; others explained that many employers will not give weight to any pre-Canada experience regardless of whether it is a regulated profession or not. One individual shared that she has a professional graduate degree from her country of origin and four years' experience working in a multinational company, but yet her advice to newcomers arriving to Canada is take any job you can get because here, whether you have a local experience or not matters.

Although this participant may have been matter-of-fact about her situation, several participants expressed more anger and frustration about having to restart their whole careers on arriving in Canada. Yet job advertisements

invite all with relevant experience to apply; as one participant complained:

“I looked at many jobs and try: Experience, experience, experience. What experience? You want newcomers? What experience? I have my experience in my country, but you don't care because it's another country. And you say 'welcome, work with us.' Really?”

A couple of participants directly refuted the argument that international credentials and work experience are the real reason why employers will not hire DJSs. As one individual pointed out:

“I think it's politics and it's not just experience because we have the horrible story now of the international students that pay three times the money of any local student or Canadian student, get a master degree, get a PhD degree, to be hired in Newfoundland as a personal care

attendant or as a security guard! Like these people are working with a PhD...That is a shame, it's infuriating."

She adds "they're sitting in the same classroom with other people, but their degree is not the same quality of the Canadian?? I don't think so. That is ridiculous." She suggests that this racist mistreatment of immigrants as cheap labour has a long history in Canada. Centuries ago, Chinese immigrants build the railroad and since then, she posits:

"we haven't learnt a thing. And we continue mistreating people. And it doesn't matter how much they showcase it in the Rooms, in CBC News, in the Telegram. Like when are we going to [get] real? When we are going to see real change and accept that all these qualified people can't be mistreated and misused? Because we are wasting their abilities, their skills, and we are making people angry."

In her mind there is no question that "the colour of the skin affects your opportunities" in Newfoundland and Labrador.

These participants have astutely identified where the real problem lies. Having a local degree does not hold as much weight if your name identifies you as "other" in some fashion; research tells us that individuals with Asian-sounding names, for example, are significantly less likely to get called for an interview than those with Anglo-sounding names, even when the individuals in question have identical local qualifications, education, and work experience (Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017). Research has also found that employers sometimes make the excuse of not calling Asian-named applicants for an interview because of "language difficulty," but they also did not call back Asian-named applicants if they had Canadian education and experience revealing the racism inherent in these decisions (Banerjee, Reitz, & Oreopoulos, 2017).

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS

CDPs are fully aware that having international credentials and/or experience can serve as barriers to diverse seekers finding meaningful employment. There was a general recognition amongst CDPs that some registered professions do require a greater level of attention to credential equivalency (such as engineering or medicine), but as one CDP suggested “but for other sectors it seems a little bit silly to have that as a barrier.” Some were frustrated when employers do not give foreign-trained DJSs a chance to prove themselves. From their perspective some skills do not have international boundaries and they said things such as “IT is IT,” “planes are planes,” and “heavy equipment is heavy equipment” regardless of where you learned the skill.

Some CDPs shared that they feel international credentials and/or experience are an excuse and can

be another way for employers to discriminate against DJSs. As one practitioner said, “I wonder, are they actually looking for credentials, or are they looking for someone they feel more familiar with.” Again, some CDPs admitted how frustrating it is to see their clients face this and that they can only imagine how hard it is for the job seekers themselves.

As a result of this potential for employers to discriminate, one CDP explained that when a diverse job seeker client of hers is applying to a job she sometimes calls ahead to the employer. She knows that without her encouraging them to look seriously at the resumé, the employer will default back to the excuse that “he didn’t do his degree here.” She does not ask for special treatment, but just that the employer gives him/her the consideration they are due.

DJSs reported how it is difficult to get employers to recognize the credentials and work experience they achieved and demonstrated before arriving in Canada. This has resulted in many DJSs having to start over. Some participants (DJSs and CDPs) refuted the assumption that employer concerns around credential equivalency have any merit suggesting that this merely serves as an excuse so employers can continue to hire people “they feel more familiar with.”



THE MYTH OF MERITOCRACY

Meritocracy is the idea that the person with the best skills, or the best qualified individual, will get ahead. The idea of meritocracy and whether it exists for diverse job seekers in Newfoundland and Labrador was a matter of some contention in our conversations with job seekers. Some participants suggested that meritocracy is a myth and that diverse job seekers do not get hired even if they are the most qualified; others defended employers' integrity and how they make hiring decisions.

Those participants who were confident that meritocracy is a myth in the local job market pointed to specific instances where non-diverse job seekers with no experience were given roles that DJSs were more than qualified for. They referenced the weight of personal connections, references, and "who you know" as factors that help individuals – primarily white "locals" - get ahead here:

"You don't apply for a job here with your qualifications; you apply here for a job because you have somebody there that is going to help to push your résumé which is horrible. It's very sad because it's not based on meritocracy; it's based on who you know there. And that culture is just pitiful and it's infuriating, it's very frustrating."

One person went as far to say that a diverse job seeker can never get a job when competing against "locals."

Other DJS participants, however, argued that meritocracy does exist in Newfoundland and Labrador; those individuals tended to blame themselves and their shortcomings for their poor job outcomes. One individual explained: "I got very less interview calls here when I came. So, I'm not blaming anybody or anything. Maybe my profile was not suited for them." Another participant, although already very qualified and highly

trained, also took responsibility for not yet being employed in her chosen area of work. She is currently taking extra courses to enhance her skills and, she hopes, better meet job market requirements.

These “believers in meritocracy” explained that they feel that if a candidate is qualified then they will get hired. Interestingly, however, two of these participants qualified how that would/could happen. They shared that they do not feel that ethnicity/race would disqualify someone after having an interview. What we know from research (and they have no doubt experienced themselves) is that your chance of getting an interview if you have a “non-English/Christian and/or white name”¹ is far less than if you are named Michael Mahone or Sarah Bourne (Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017a).

Interestingly, some of those same participants who claimed that employers always hire the most qualified candidates, later in the conversation, expressed

their disappointment with the way they were treated in hiring processes. Contradicting their earlier statements, they reported how, despite being the most qualified candidate and having a great interview, they still did not get hired nor were they given a good explanation for same.

There are a number of things that the researchers feel may be at play when DJSs minimize the discrimination they are experiencing:

- It may be a reflection of their own insecurities about their qualifications and “suitedness”
- It may reflect a deeply cultural value. For example, one individual, who described multiple experiences of mistreatment and/or extreme disrespect by potential employers, explained that he has never reported these to his CDP as he feels this would be like “backbiting” - something which, according to his religious beliefs, constitutes an immoral / sinful act

¹ Quotation marks added by researchers.

- It may be a more emotionally safe coping strategy for understanding the injustices they have experienced. Denying that employers are discriminating against them due to their race/ethnicity (a fixed part of their identity) allows them to believe that, with further training & experience, they can finally get ahead.

Whether meritocracy exists for diverse job seekers in Newfoundland and Labrador was a matter of some contention in our conversations with job seekers. Some argued it was a myth as DJSs do not get hired even when they are best suited to a role; others defended employers' integrity and talked instead about the steps they were taking to become more competitive in the labour market. Interestingly, CDPs made no overt references to meritocracy and whether it exists in the local labour market or not.



LACK OF FEEDBACK FROM EMPLOYERS

One of the challenges that DJSs told us they face in their job search is the lack of feedback from employers. In the absence of such feedback, particularly after an interview, they feel confused and frustrated because through that process they have not learned how to better prepare themselves for future competitions. One DJS shared that he has had multiple interviews with multiple employers; sometimes he got rejection letters/emails. In one case, he mustered the courage to ask for feedback, as this employer hires regularly and he was hoping to improve his application for next time. On receiving his email, however, he was told they had no feedback to share. On another occasion he was interviewed for a job for which he was well-suited. As he explained:

“According to the resumé, I was the top one. And the interview was really good. We discussed everything, even the salary. The supervisor who was there - when I was coming out of the interview, when I was at the door - he said ‘we look forward to working with you very soon hopefully.’ I said ‘oh my God, like maybe I will get this job in my field.’ It is two years since then.”

Perhaps it goes without saying, but this individual never received a response after that positive interview and he remains underemployed.

As unfortunate as it might be for job seekers, it is not uncommon for employers to not acknowledge the receipt of a resumé or job

application. However, a consistent lack of acknowledgement and attention from employers in all stages of the hiring process can lead some DJSs to wonder if discrimination is at play. One focus group participant, for example, shared that her “from here” Newfoundlander neighbour gets a reply every time he applies for a job; that has not been her experience. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that a lack of feedback from employers has the potential to do more harm to DJSs who are newcomers than non-newcomer job seekers; newcomers are aware that they may be missing some of the nuances of local job search norms and, as a result, feedback on how they might improve their approach would be particularly useful and important for them.

One job seeker shared that he hoped that CDPs would play a role in advocating for feedback on behalf of their clients. He feels that employers would be more likely to share constructive feedback via community agencies and that this intermediary role could be very useful to diverse job seekers.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

FEEDBACK FROM EMPLOYERS

Having heard from the DJS participants that a lack of feedback was a significant barrier in their employment efforts, the researchers added a question on this to the CDP focus group protocol. CDPs spoke of how they coached their clients to reach out to employers for feedback, but admitted that seldom do their clients hear back from employers.

A couple of CDPs spoke about how DJS should “not to take it personally” and that this is common across all job seeker experiences in NL. One CDP mused that perhaps employers “don’t want to open themselves up to criticism or backlash or even potentially a lawsuit,” but that she is sure that this lack of feedback is not specific to a “particular cohort or group.” These CDPs seemed unaware that cultural differences

can add extra layers of complexity to a newcomer’s job seeking experiences. For instance, a job seeker that grew up in Canada is more likely to have some idea why they were not successful in a particular job competition. Newcomer job seekers, however, do not necessarily have that deep local cultural understanding, and without specific feedback on how they did, they feel doomed to repeat their interview mistakes time after time. Those CDPs who were particularly insistent that DJS not take a lack of feedback personally minimized those job seekers’ struggles and how a lack of feedback perpetuates inequities in their job search.

Some CDPs, however, were more mindful of how that feedback might be especially important for diverse

job seekers; That said, they were sceptical of how “real” the feedback would be if the employer’s reasoning for not hiring was racist. As one practitioner suggested:

“And most people in this day and age are not going to be stupid. They’re not going to say, ‘I didn’t hire you because [racist reason]’...unless someone’s really stupid, you’re not getting that information out of them. You’ll just get, ‘No, they’re not good for our company,’ whatever. And that could be true, but it may not be.”

CDPs, then, agree with DJSs that they are not receiving enough feedback from employers after applying to positions or even after being interviewed. Some

CDPs recognized how this might be particularly problematic for newcomer clients who potentially face the added complexity of not fully understanding local interview Dos and Don’ts; other CDPs minimized diverse job seekers’ concerns about how this lack of feedback is detrimental to their ability to find meaningful employment. Regardless of their level of empathy for DJSs’ experiences on this issue, only a few CDPs talked about their employer engagement including the exploration of feedback for their clients. Those CDPs said they would feel more comfortable reaching out to those employers with whom they already have good working relationships.

HIDDEN JOB MARKET & THE IMPORTANCE OF A NETWORK

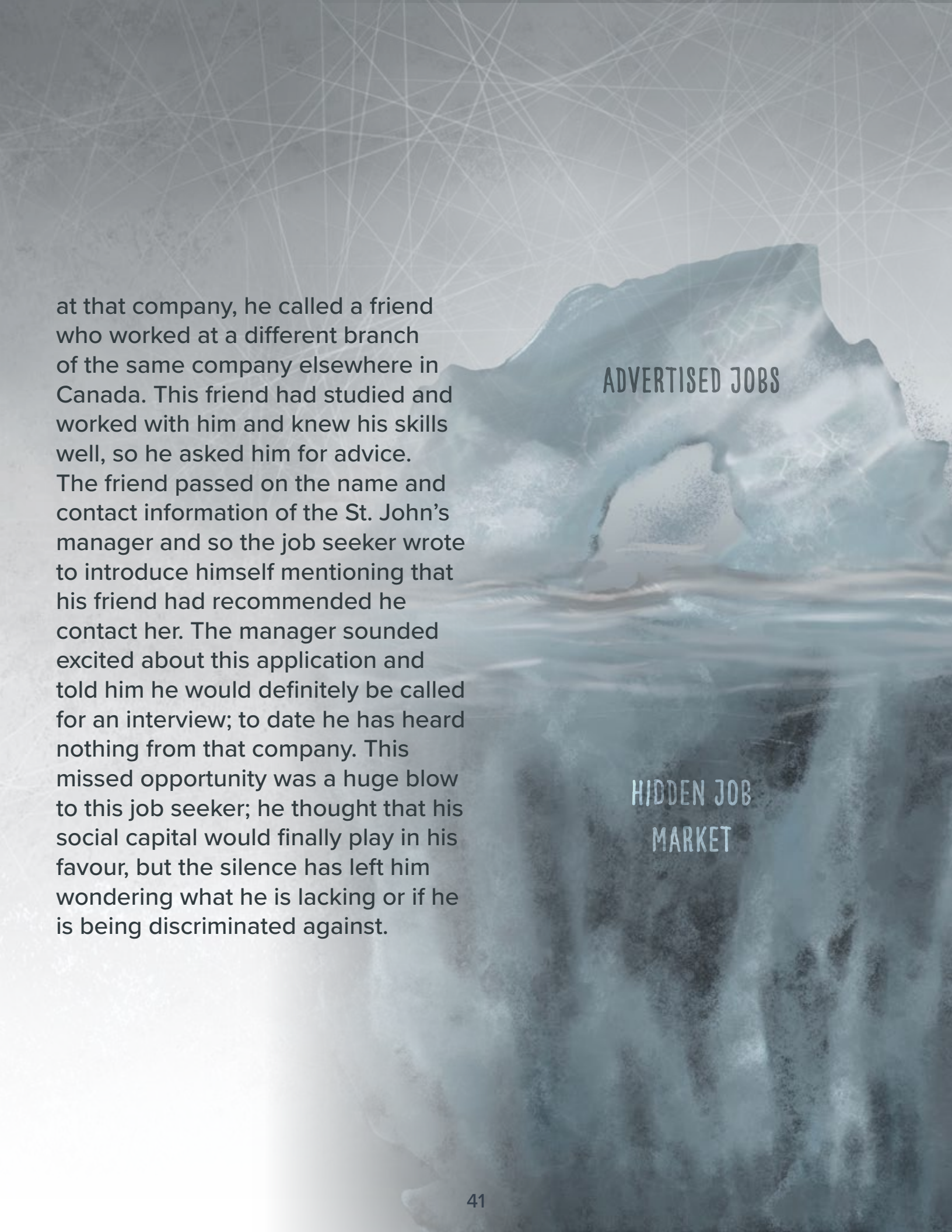
Diverse job seeker participants also noted that the existence and use of the hidden job market is particularly a problem for some DJSs. It is a closed network where 80% of jobs are not publicly advertised and only those who are connected know that the positions exist. Participants pointed out that the existence of a hidden job market puts newcomers to Canada at a particular disadvantage because they do not have an existing social network to rely on.

DJSs often raised the importance of networking in order to get a job, even minimum wage food service

“I feel everything here in employment is about networking. I don’t think you will find any job if you don’t have a contact, even in a coffee shop. You can apply to 20 different coffee shops and nobody will call you if you don’t have a contact there.”

jobs. One participant suggested: That was her experience, but it also echoes another participant’s experience. She was fully qualified for a position she was offered, but she knows she got the interview because someone internal to the organization knew her and asked that those hiring take her application seriously. After being in Canada for some time, her network led to an opportunity for her to prove all that she could contribute in a professional capacity.

Sometimes, however, having an existing connection to an employer may not pan out as one might hope it would. One participant, for example, had his eye on a local employer that was very relevant to his professional training. When a position opened up



at that company, he called a friend who worked at a different branch of the same company elsewhere in Canada. This friend had studied and worked with him and knew his skills well, so he asked him for advice. The friend passed on the name and contact information of the St. John's manager and so the job seeker wrote to introduce himself mentioning that his friend had recommended he contact her. The manager sounded excited about this application and told him he would definitely be called for an interview; to date he has heard nothing from that company. This missed opportunity was a huge blow to this job seeker; he thought that his social capital would finally play in his favour, but the silence has left him wondering what he is lacking or if he is being discriminated against.

ADVERTISED JOBS

HIDDEN JOB
MARKET

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

Although not a significant theme in the CDP focus groups, CDPs also talked about trying to help their diverse job seeker clients in building a network. They spoke of these networks as connections that could lead to relationships, support, and, potentially, employment. One CDP talked about helping connect her clients by making them aware of all “the resources that they can tap into.” Another one spoke of how community agencies could support their diverse job seekers better by helping them “get their

foot in the door with employers.” This practitioner felt that if job seekers have opportunities to talk with employers and demonstrate who they are “their personality and experiences speak for themselves.” Another practitioner thought similarly and pointed to post-secondary work-term or internship programs as a means for job seekers to prove themselves and, potentially, secure longer-term employment. She suggested that this kind of program could be a great resource to her DJS clients.

NAVIGATING BUREAUCRACY & PROGRAM CRITERIA

Navigating bureaucracy and program criteria can also create barriers for DJSs. Participants in this study expressed frustration about how some criteria lead to them being excluded from programs and support that could have assisted them in their career development.

One individual, for example, had been given the impression that she qualified for support to start a new business and after putting two months into business planning, she found out she was excluded because of a pre-existing business (something that she had already disclosed to the program officers at the beginning of the process). In another case, a DJS was told she would only qualify for funding to go back to school if she left her job and went on income assistance. She was put in a difficult situation because she could not imagine how she could provide for her family on income assistance

while also going to school; however, she also recognised she needed this funding so that she could better provide for her family in the long run. Unfortunately, she felt she had to let the opportunity pass despite her genuine interest to study and to build better career prospects.

Each of these instances of not meeting criteria can hit hard for job seekers. As one individual explained what she hears in that kind of rejection is “This is not for you. What are you doing [in Newfoundland and Labrador]?” To her, those situations make it seem “like I don’t belong here. It is a slap all the time in your face of the system telling you that you don’t belong.”

Please also see the section Centrality of Immigration Status for additional ways that bureaucracy and program criteria can create barriers for some DJSs.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

THE NAVIGATING BUREAUCRACY

As mentioned above, DJS participants spoke of their frustrations around navigating bureaucracy and not meeting program criteria. Some CDPs recognized these challenges as well. One individual spoke about how starting a business here can be bewildering to a newcomer entrepreneur and how travelling from one agency to another for licenses and permits can be “a big maze.”

Another practitioner also suggested that programming criteria should be more flexible so that programs for newcomers, for example, do not exclude them after their first year in the country. As he suggested:

“I think that not everybody is coming here, or who live here, are on the same pace, you know... one individual might come here with many challenges and might not be able to mentally, physically, emotionally, avail of services for a year.”

Another aspect of bureaucracy that CDPs referenced was DJSs’ knowledge of the availability of programming. In fact, several CDPs referenced the fact that some DJSs do not understand local systems and may not know about the support and resources available to them. CDPs saw part of their role as sharing this knowledge and information with their clients.

Finally, some CDPs admitted that not all organizations work collaboratively with each other by sharing skills and information. As a result, some suggested, clients are being shuttled back and forth between organizations and that this can lead to clients feeling frustrated. One CDP went as far as to say that the lack of collaboration between community agencies can be a barrier to diverse job seekers feeling that they “are a part of our community.”

JOB SEARCH BARRIERS SPECIFIC TO NEWCOMERS

The preceding barriers that DJSs face are those that participants in this study raised that are systemic and not necessarily specific to the experiences of newcomers to Canada. The following additional barriers (the centrality of immigration status and the centrality of English language skills), however, are extra layers of difficulty that newcomers can face (in addition to those they might face due to being considered ethnically/racially different from the “majority culture” in Newfoundland and Labrador).



CENTRALITY OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

Diverse job seeker participants reported that newcomer DJSs' experiences and employment outcomes often depend on their immigration status. A few of them noted that their employment outcomes changed, often positively, as their immigration status progressed and they became a permanent resident (PR) or a Canadian citizen.

Many agreed that those who are on a temporary work permit, such as international students and their families or temporary foreign workers, do not have access to all the same opportunities that PRs or citizens do. For example, although entrepreneurship can be a great option for some newcomers, regulations make it difficult for non-PR newcomers to explore this option. For one, in Newfoundland and Labrador a non-PR cannot incorporate their business on their own; incorporation is necessary, however, to hire employees.

Secondly, it is very difficult for some temporary residents to apply to become a permanent resident of Canada through an entrepreneurial option; unless one is an international graduate there is a clearer path to permanent residency through employment at another organization rather than through self-employment.² It is worthy of mention, however, that provinces like PEI do allow non-PRs to incorporate their business; one of our participants pointed out that should NL allow this as well she feels it would increase entrepreneurship,

² International graduates of NL institutions can receive a post-grad work permit which allows them to start a business in the province. After running the business for one continuous year, and meeting other requirements, they can then apply to the International Graduate Entrepreneur stream of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). If nominated, then they can apply to get their permanent residency as a provincial nominee. Other temporary residents may consider applying for the International Entrepreneur category of the Provincial Nominee Program, but this program has challenging criteria making this option not very viable for many temporary residents.

newcomer employment, as well as newcomer retention.

Another factor that strengthened the argument that immigration status is central to DJSs' job seeking experience is the fact that it determines the level to which some organizations can assist individuals in their career development. Participants argued, for example, that many of the Association for New Canadians' services are primarily for government-assisted refugees. For example, one participant (who is in Canada on a temporary work permit), told us that she needed to improve her English language skills in order to get a job; she was disappointed when she was told she did not qualify to study English for free with the ANC, but that she could join a class for \$250³. She did not have the money and so she studied from home and volunteered until her English was good enough to take a basic customer service job.

A couple of other participants acknowledged the important work that the ANC is doing for government-assisted refugees, but also added that they feel that non-refugee newcomers are falling between the cracks.⁴

In addition to their personal frustration with navigating bureaucratic potholes, participants were also sorry about what these multiorganizational bureaucratic potholes have meant for Newfoundland and Labrador and the province's efforts to retain newcomers: "We have lost many people here, really good skilled persons, really frustrated."

³ She added that "Now, the ANC has once weekly English classes, everyone can attend, but if you have poor English skills, this is not enough."

⁴ This is the experience of these DJSs thus far. It should be added that the researchers recognize that changes may have been made to the ANC's outreach and services since their experiences with the organization.

CENTRALITY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Most participants reported that a lack of English proficiency can be a major barrier for those DJSs who are newcomers (e.g. refugees, immigrants, permanent residents, and international students) in particular. An inability to express oneself - or to conjure the right words to describe one's skills – in an interview can have devastating results. One participant shared that her first couple of interviews in NL were over the phone and between her using a microphone for the first time and the strong Newfoundland accent she could not understand the interviewer well. In fact, she admitted that she did not even understand the name of the company that interviewed her. Later she figured out which company had called her and it had been a dream job at her dream employer, but “I missed that opportunity,” she shared.

Another individual also articulated just how pivotal strong English language skills are to successful

career development:

“If you don't have strong English skills you cannot show yourself. You are not yourself and that puts you down, so if we want to talk about empowerment the piece about communication is essential!”

This participant envisions language lessons that embed “empowerment programming” within them so that English language learners have both the ability to articulate, but also feel proud of, what they have to contribute to a workplace. Because of the centrality of strong English language skills to a successful job search, participants like the one referenced above suggested that more community agencies should offer ongoing English language training. Supporting this key element of adult literacy could support multiple client groups (e.g. Francophones, newcomers, Indigenous peoples).

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON THE CENTRALITY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

CDPs also felt that language is a significant barrier for a number of DJS clients: both newcomer and Indigenous clients. Practitioners spoke of how a lack of English language skills can make job seekers self-conscious, can keep them from being able to express themselves in an interview, but also it might hold them back from “putting themselves out there” in the first place. A couple of practitioners pointed out that newcomers who are Francophone do have full proficiency in one of Canada’s official languages, but because most employers in this province are Anglophone, they can also struggle with their language abilities in this job market.

Diverse job seekers reported a tremendous number of barriers they face as they seek employment: Racism and discrimination, a lack of feedback on job applications, and bureaucratic barriers due to immigration status to name just a few. In fact, the barriers are so great that in this study there were almost no references to positive job search experiences.

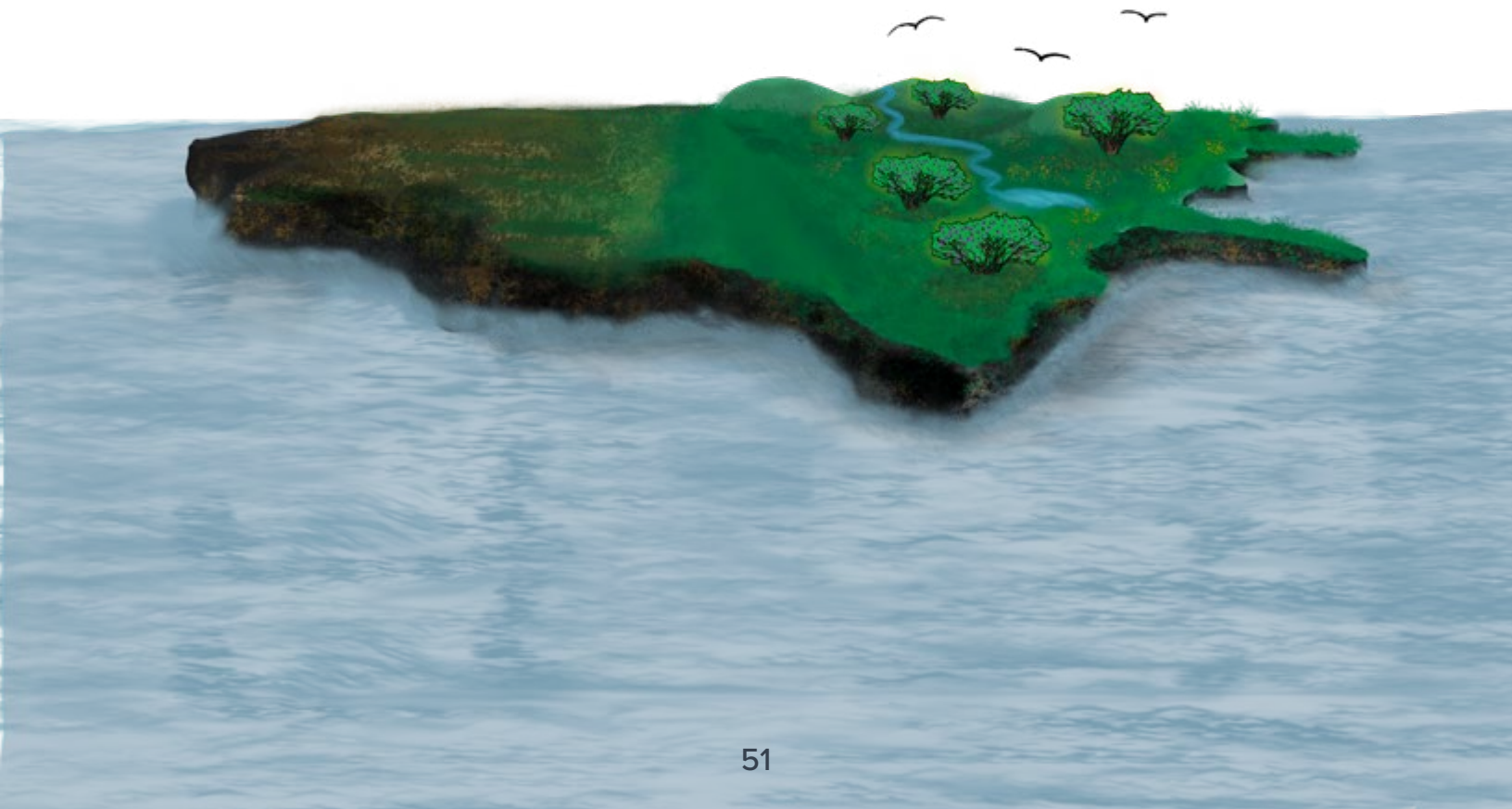
Career Development Practitioner participants did report that they see that their DJS clients face extra barriers, but there was a fairly great discrepancy within those participants in terms of each individual's ability to fully acknowledge, understand, and/or address those barriers as they seek to assist their clients. Some practitioners, for example, tended to minimize the harm that racism and discrimination inflict on DJSs; others seemed to "see" racism, but felt uncomfortable naming it for what it was; others still did not minimize the harm that racism inflicts on DJSs, but their clients have not shared with them specific instances that reflected that part of their job search experience.

That said, several CDPs did show a tremendous amount of empathy for DJS clients and described imagining how exhausted and excluded those job seekers must feel; some even talked about their own feelings of sadness and of their struggle to not become disheartened in their advocacy for their diverse clients. Unfortunately, however, **empathy is not enough** and it is clear that there is a need for CDPs to both learn about and understand the job search trials of their DJS clients; there is also a need to develop new ways to support DJSs through this process.

DIVERSE JOB SEEKERS' EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES

Participants brought up their employment experiences in addition to those specific to their job search; these experiences point to the systemic and persistent challenges that DJSs can face in their career development more broadly.

When talking about their employment experiences, participants brought up that they have faced racism and discrimination from a variety of groups: employers, colleagues, and clients. They also spoke of the idea of “steppingstones” and various strategies they have used to try to improve their employability. Finally, one participant’s story points to just how strong the effects can be of a positive employment experience.



RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Many participants in this study reported that they were subject to racism and discrimination themselves and/or know of other BIPOC employees experiencing them in the workplace. The racism and discrimination they have faced were based on a number of factors including: race/ethnicity, country of origin, and/or accent.

Participants shared several examples of how racism had been run at them by their colleagues and employers including:

• Managers overlooking BIPOC employees when giving out extra shifts and hours in favour of “their own” (read: white employees)

• White co-workers creating an angry backlash when BIPOC co-workers are recognized for their hard work with commendations like “employee of the month”

• White co-workers using derogatory, racist terms to describe their skin colour in the presence of their BIPOC co-workers

• Managers looking over BIPOC employees consistently while promoting newer, less experienced white employees

• Employers feeling the need to bring BIPOC employees “down a notch”

One participant shared that he feels these things happen “just by the colour of our skin - as soon as they see our background.”

Unfortunately, participants have also experienced – or know of others who have experienced – racism from their clients at work. A couple of stories were specifically about clients refusing to be seen or assisted by BIPOC workers. In one scenario a personal care worker was turned away from a client’s house because

she was BIPOC. Adding insult to injury, rather than deal with the situation, the manager continued to send BIPOC workers in to work with the client who continued to run racism at the BIPOC workers.

Unfortunately, this lack of response to the harm directed at BIPOC employees was fairly typical of the stories heard in this research. Broadly speaking, employers' responses were more one of avoiding conflict rather than of responding to racism head on. In no cases shared with the researchers was there serious action taken in response to racist behaviour. These scenarios highlight the harm that BIPOC workers can face and the lack of care and attention this receives from their employers. As one participant put it "The employers here, no care...They don't care about us."

In the absence of professional support and advocacy for their rights, these participants often had to navigate discriminatory workspaces alone. They did so

by trying to fit in, by avoiding arguments, by depending on fellow BIPOC employees for support, and by attempting to not bring their ethnic / cultural differences to their workplaces. As one Indigenous individual shared:

"I don't really put my background into my job. Because like I said, some white folks, or different kind of people, don't really like to bring their culture into the job. If you bring your culture into the job, you're not going to like it over time. And I don't really like to bring my culture into the job. I just, you know, put that aside, do my job and try to do that... Some people are just racist, and they just don't like the colour of the skin or just the way they look."

It may not be possible for this individual to fully hide his Indigeneity, but above he suggests that he should try at least to "put it aside" and not bring it to work as it will only cause him trouble.

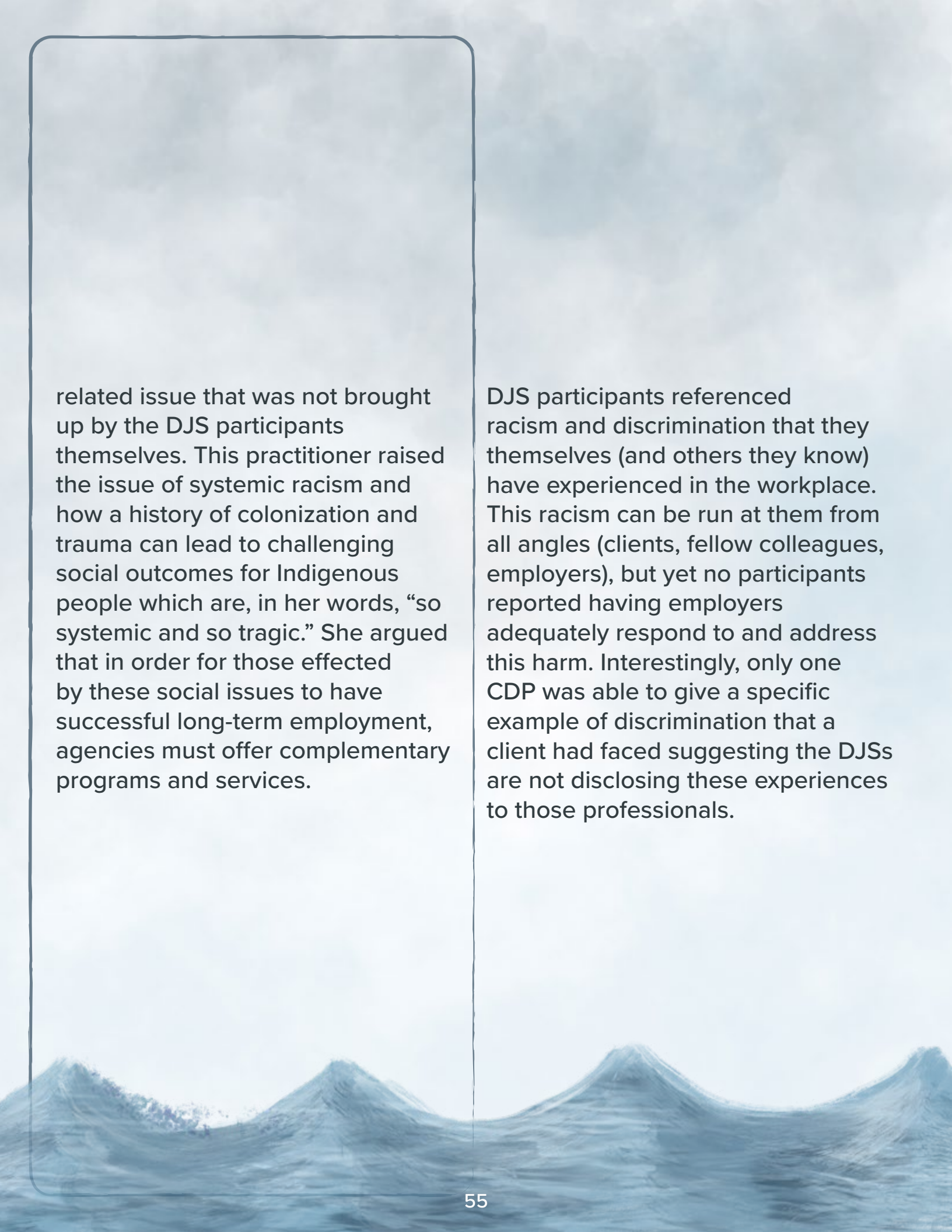
CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

One CDP brought up a specific instance when a client had experienced discrimination in the workplace. This practitioner explained that she once had a client who had a significant amount of training, but he was hired as a dishwasher and although he sought out other opportunities to “go up the ladder in that business...it never did pan out.” Through conversation with the individual, it became clear to the CDP that the employer was discriminating against her client; in the words of the CDP “the employer wasn’t seeing the skills due to the

cultural diversity.” It is commendable that the practitioner who recounted this story recognized the injustice of the situation. It is also worth noting that the language used to recount the story also reveals her discomfort with naming the employer’s behaviour as discriminatory (instead she said the employer “wasn’t seeing the skills”). She also didn’t name the employer’s issue as being her client’s race, but instead called the issue as “cultural diversity”.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that one CDP raised an employment-



related issue that was not brought up by the DJS participants themselves. This practitioner raised the issue of systemic racism and how a history of colonization and trauma can lead to challenging social outcomes for Indigenous people which are, in her words, “so systemic and so tragic.” She argued that in order for those effected by these social issues to have successful long-term employment, agencies must offer complementary programs and services.

DJS participants referenced racism and discrimination that they themselves (and others they know) have experienced in the workplace. This racism can be run at them from all angles (clients, fellow colleagues, employers), but yet no participants reported having employers adequately respond to and address this harm. Interestingly, only one CDP was able to give a specific example of discrimination that a client had faced suggesting the DJSs are not disclosing these experiences to those professionals.

VULNERABILITY

Some participants talked about the extra level of vulnerability that some DJS face. For example, a lack of permanent immigration status in Canada does add a very specific layer to one's vulnerability. One participant, for example, shared her negative experience of working with a local organization that hired her without a contract and let her work for some time without compensation; this workplace had a high percentage of newcomer employees who were particularly vulnerable. Another participant, who no longer feels vulnerable herself, now works with a lot of newcomers and still feels she is not empowered to advocate for her clients in the ways that she would like to: "It's just horrible."

Some participants expressed a frustration about this vulnerability and the feeling that they have no one to turn to. One participant said he

would not report the discrimination he feels he's faced because "they would do nothing because the system kind of sucks." Another individual shone a light on another problem which she feels is systemic; legal aid covers criminal and family issues, but not labour-related issues. Hiring a lawyer, she points out, is not a financial option for many DJSs and so "justice is not accessible."⁵ In addition, many individuals who apply to become permanent residents to Canada do so with the support of their employers making them extra dependent on that relationship. As she explains when "the employer makes you the favour [to support your immigration application]...they know they have you, under any condition."

⁵ The Human Rights Commission would be able to assist if the matter was a human right complaint.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON CLIENT VULNERABILITY

A couple of CDPs brought up how newcomer job seekers in particular may be vulnerable to workplace mistreatment. One practitioner expressed his concern that some international recruitment companies are contracted by local companies to bring in temporary foreign workers. He asserted that the compensation that these workers receive is not enough for them to sustain themselves and their families, but they feel trapped because their work permit (and their ability to stay in Canada) is connected to that employer. This CDP admitted that he has “had several clients coming to me, even crying in my office just because they had no other escape.” He asserted that the precarious and vulnerable nature of

temporary foreign workers’ status in Canada, and the lack of a living wage at their workplaces, means that many of these newcomers leave Newfoundland and Labrador when they gain their permanent residency.

A second practitioner raised the issue of DJSs’ vulnerability in the job market. She worries that some newcomer job seekers, regardless of how much training and skills they have, are so eager to get work that they will take low-paying jobs. Her concern is that those employers may hire them because of that desperation and because they feel those employees might be less likely than “born and bred Newfoundlanders” to draw limits to when and how they work.

STEPPINGSTONES

DJS and CDP participants alike talked about the extra layer of vulnerability that not having permanent residency nor citizenship in Canada does add. They described their experiences with – and concerns about – DJSs being taken advantage of because of their reduced agency, knowledge, or ability to choose.

Some newcomer participants, especially those who had strong credentials and training, reported they had had high hopes when they arrived in Canada, but as time passed, they realized that moving into their dream job immediately was not possible. This realization that their previous experience and training means nothing to many employers can make them feel like “I’m being absolutely nothing,” as one participant put it. That said, participants turned to what they called “steppingstones” to help them reach their ultimate goals: entry level jobs, further training, and volunteering.

Participants talked about taking entry level jobs (for which they are overqualified) as a means to make money, gain local experience, improve their English language skills, and/or to comprehend the local accent. For some, this sacrifice was worth it in the shorter term (assuming

that ultimately, they could get meaningful employment); for others, however, they did not want to take a menial job. As one professional explained: “I want to be useful in this country” and, from her perspective, working at Walmart was not going to be meaningful nor would it help her get where she wants to go.

Another participant spoke of volunteering as a steppingstone that has helped her. In fact, she credited volunteering experiences for allowing her to get where she is today.⁶ Through her first volunteer position in Canada, she met a man who recommended her to a manager at a workplace that offered her an entry level job. In that entry level job, she improved her English enough to increase her confidence and she moved on to another employer. That role eventually led to a role she loves, a role that challenges her in the best of ways. Interestingly, she initially proved herself to that

employer by demonstrating her skills as a volunteer; they were so impressed by her skills that they offered her an important role. As she explains:

“I literally created the space. So there the key essential part is being a volunteer. Knock at the door and say, ‘heh, I come here...I feel passion for this organization. I want to be a volunteer, give me anything.’”

As she pointed out, getting her foot in the door could have been her largest hurdle, but by volunteering, when a position became available, she already knew the organization, they knew her, and she could speak with confidence in the interview.

⁶ Please note: Some diverse job seekers did not feel that volunteering was always easily accessible to them. This will be discussed later in the report.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON STEPPINGSTONES

Career Development Practitioners also talked about entry level jobs as steppingstones. Like diverse job seeker participants, they referenced them as a means to make money, to gain local experience, and to improve their English language skills. They also framed these steppingstone jobs as a way for a job seeker to get their “foot in the door” and connect more closely to a position for which they had been trained.

Some CDPs referenced the desperation that some DJSs feel to get employment right away. One individual explained that when some clients come to see them:

“It is like ‘let’s just get employment now’ in a lot of

cases. And I get that. I mean, if you’ve landed here as a refugee, especially, I can’t even imagine how important it would be for you to go to work. I feel like that’s the paramount of getting everything.”

This focus on finding employment right away, some CDPs suggest, leads some DJSs into jobs that “just pay the bills,” often customer service jobs.

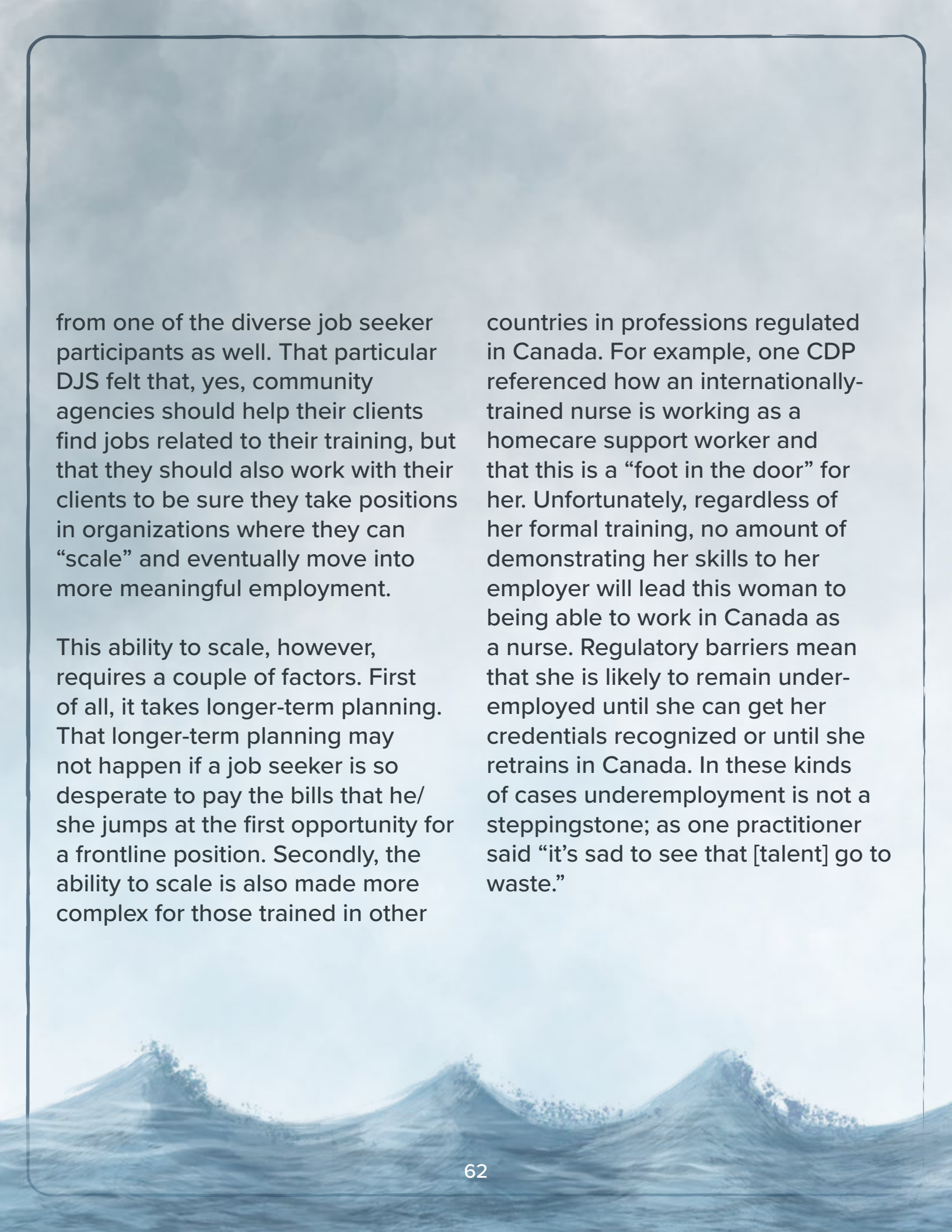
Some CDPs, however, felt that steppingstone jobs were useful in assisting DJSs in demonstrating their skills. For example, one practitioner explained how she has assisted clients whose international experience would not otherwise be recognized by an employer get “their foot in the door.” For

example, she might coach someone trained as a mechanic to get a job in customer service at a place like Canadian Tire or get work in doing detailing. Over time, she feels, that person could speak to those in the automotive department and mention their previous experience. She suggested that this existing connection (between trained mechanic and the Canadian Tire automotive department, for example) might lead to that person working as a mechanic again: “when you get talking to people...they’ll know what you can do and try to give you a chance, right.” Some CDPs, then, see these steppingstone jobs as potential bridges to something bigger.

Other CDPs, however, seemed

more sceptical about whether steppingstones can lead to anything bigger and better. One individual lamented how many international graduates of Memorial University she has seen working in frontline positions at grocery stores. She admits, in fact, that only one of her engineering student clients has found meaningful work in the province related to his degree. The rest, she is sad to say, are very underemployed and are just paying the bills. In her description of these situations there is a finality to these positions, not a suggestion that those positions will lead to anything substantial.

These various framings of what steppingstones might look like echo something the researchers heard



from one of the diverse job seeker participants as well. That particular DJS felt that, yes, community agencies should help their clients find jobs related to their training, but that they should also work with their clients to be sure they take positions in organizations where they can “scale” and eventually move into more meaningful employment.

This ability to scale, however, requires a couple of factors. First of all, it takes longer-term planning. That longer-term planning may not happen if a job seeker is so desperate to pay the bills that he/she jumps at the first opportunity for a frontline position. Secondly, the ability to scale is also made more complex for those trained in other

countries in professions regulated in Canada. For example, one CDP referenced how an internationally-trained nurse is working as a homecare support worker and that this is a “foot in the door” for her. Unfortunately, regardless of her formal training, no amount of demonstrating her skills to her employer will lead this woman to being able to work in Canada as a nurse. Regulatory barriers mean that she is likely to remain underemployed until she can get her credentials recognized or until she retrain in Canada. In these kinds of cases underemployment is not a steppingstone; as one practitioner said “it’s sad to see that [talent] go to waste.”

THE POTENTIAL POWER OF POSITIVE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES

Unfortunately, of the ten DJSs we spoke to only one participant brought up a positive employment experience. That said, the researchers feel it is important to introduce this experience as it highlights both the potential power of a positive work experience coupled with the importance of the work that community agencies can do in assisting DJSs.

The individual in question was trained in a profession that she is unable to practice in Canada. That said, through much blood, sweat, and tears (and strategizing), she has found a role in an organization that fulfils her. In fact, she credits that role with helping her turn a corner in how she feels about living in Newfoundland and Labrador. She has lived in the province for several years, but only this year did she come to feel herself again and to feel this place as home. Why now?

Because in her current role, after years of effort, she finally feels that:

“I make myself. I am the same [me] that I am in [country of origin] and that makes me feel at home. And that is employment. It’s that piece. Because I don’t like the weather, I don’t like many things, but I don’t care. I am me. I am at home. I don’t need more... I feel I am the same useful person in my country...I don’t have to prove nobody my skills. They recognize my skills. I am myself... that was my switch to say ‘I can stay here.’”

This woman’s employer sees her as a whole person with important skills and insights that contribute positively to their work. Now that she is herself again and is able to feel useful, she feels she belongs and can make Newfoundland and Labrador a permanent home.

Her experience, although an anomaly in this study, points to the potentially transformative nature of a positive work experience. Although she found this position on her own steam and without the help of a community agency, her story also suggests how the work of community agencies could help deepen feelings of belonging and potentially even improve the retention rate of diverse job seekers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In this study we heard that the employment experiences of DJSs reflect many of the barriers that can be faced by DJSs in their job search. Employers, co-workers, and clients can – and do – run racism at DJSs and, unfortunately, in this study no participants were able to share experiences when this racism was adequately responded to. In addition, DJSs – particularly those who are newcomers without permanent immigration status – face an extra layer of vulnerability in workplaces. Unfortunately, some employers exploit this vulnerability to their own advantage asking more of the employees than is fair – or maybe even legal. That said, another take-away from this research is the potential power of a positive employment experience. One participant, who struggled to find meaningful employment in Canada, shared that being eventually hired into a role that allows her to contribute to society, where her skills and whole being are valued, has made all the difference to her feeling at home in Newfoundland and Labrador.

DIVERSE JOB SEEKERS'
EXPERIENCES WITH
COMMUNITY AGENCIES



PERCEPTION OF LACK OF CHOICE

Participants reported that they felt there was a lack of choice in terms of which community agencies they could work with regarding their career development. That is, several of the newcomer (or even former newcomer) participants we spoke to reported that they felt that the Association for New Canadians / AXIS was the only place they could go to for career development assistance. When the researchers reminded and/or told them about the various agencies that existed and that theoretically DJSs should have as much choice as non-DJSs, participants pointed out that a lot of newcomers, in particular, do not know that services at other agencies exist.

In addition, a couple of participants reported ways that they had experienced things that did not make them feel welcomed or supported at some community agencies:

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- One participant described calling an organization, but the individual who answered the phone, on hearing her accent and name, suggested that she contact the Association for New Canadians. This frustrated her for two reasons. First of all, she knew that since she was a Canadian citizen ANC/AXIS could not help her. Second of all, the receptionist that answered her call had no evidence of her immigration status, but had simply assumed that she must be a potential ANC client because of her accent and name.

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- One participant said that she had heard that each job seeker represents money for a community agency and that that might be the reason why some agencies will work hard to hold to “collect” clients.

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- One participant reported reaching out to an organization about entrepreneurship, but she did not feel it was a good place for newcomers. She explained it: “is a place for Canadians... I don’t think newcomers will feel comfortable there.”

- One participant reported that she had reached out and spoken to a community agency and asked for employment assistance, but that she had never received a call back; this individual felt the reason for the silence was because she was not a refugee or a landed immigrant, but she never received confirmation of same.

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This idea that DSJs have a lack of choice in terms of career development assistance ran deep in one focus group in particular. As a result of this perception, one individual even questioned why

agencies use the word “client” because saying “client” suggests a choice that she does not feel that DJSs have.

It is worth adding a couple of notes here on the veracity of the claim that only the one agency services diverse job seekers. First of all, this study defines “diverse job seekers” as those individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and may be perceived as ethnically-/ racially- or culturally-different from the average job seeker in Newfoundland and Labrador. This definition includes newcomers who are Black or are individuals of colour, but it is not exclusive to newcomers; for example, Indigenous peoples and other Canadian-born citizens who are BIPOC are also included in this definition (a fact frequently overlooked by participants – both practitioners and job seekers alike). It is, therefore, inaccurate to say

that only the ANC can service DJSs as many diverse job seekers are Canadian citizens and have never immigrated to Canada.

Turning to those who did originally come from another country, however, it is accurate that which services – and where one can avail of those services – can be reflective of one's immigration status. That said, many Community Employment Collaboration community partners can assist permanent residents with no restrictions; they can also assist individuals with temporary work permits (although they might not qualify for some supports like wage subsidies). There are some limitations around what services

international students or graduates might be able to avail of, however, and so some community partners are referring them to the ANC or Memorial University for those pieces that might benefit them.

Technically, then, many community agencies are able to assist diverse job seekers in availing of several services. Functionally, however, it appears that DJSs' choices are limited by their lack of knowledge of the existence of various organizations, by those same community organizations' perceptions on who can help whom, and by how welcoming these organizations are to DJSs.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON PERCEIVED LACK OF CHOICE

Career Development Practitioners also referenced the fact that there is a perception that only those organizations that “specialize” in certain segments of the population should respond to DJSs’ career development needs. As one CDP explained “there is currently an assumption that the ANC will support all newcomers, and First Light will support all Indigenous people.” Part of this belief that there is only “one portal” is reinforced, this person suggested, by a lack of referrals between various agencies and a refusal to grant access to clients’ ARMS files.

Several practitioners referenced the fact that they feel clients should feel empowered to reach out to work with whichever community agency they feel will best service their needs regardless of their ethnicity, race, and/or immigration status. As they pointed out, a number of factors may influence where a DJS seeks out support: a good client-practitioner rapport, agency proximity

to where the client lives, and/or the complexity of a client’s needs. Several practitioners felt that inter-agency referrals are not happening as they should and that this means that those clients are both having a harder time integrating into their community as well as a harder time getting the career development support they need.

Some practitioners pushed back at this “one portal” frame of career development services, however, and suggested that there is more that community agencies can do to meet the current needs of DJSs. One individual suggested that more agencies could create services and programs specific to different cultural or ethnic groups, for example. Another practitioner pointed out that in addition to increased inter-agency referrals, community agencies could also be proactive and do a better job of reaching out to DJSs so that they are aware of the services and programs that multiple agencies offer.

VOLUNTARY SELF-IDENTIFICATION COMPLEX AND NUANCED

DJS participants reported that it was sometimes puzzling why on intake they were being asked for personal information on things such as ethnicity, cultural heritage, and disability. It was clear that many individuals are not sure how the information is being used and whether it is to their benefit to share it.

For example:

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- One individual had a CDP ask her if she was a visible minority even though she felt the CDP knew that she was. She was puzzled why she had to be asked – the job seeker had never been asked this before and it appears that it was not described to her how this information would be used.

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- Another participant reported how a Muslim friend of hers (who lived in another country) had been asked in a job application form if he drank alcohol. The job seeker worried that saying “no” would mean that the workplace would assume he could not fit in with “the boys.” He decided, however, that he had to be honest and to his surprise his not drinking was an asset to the employer and he got the job. The participant who recounted that story shared with us her surprise in learning that her friend’s honesty in self-disclosing had helped him, rather than hurt him, in his employment search.

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- One individual referenced how he always fills out the voluntary self-identification section when applying to government jobs, but he does so because he wants to be honest.

His explanation revealed some hesitation, however, as to whether this honesty would help or hinder his application: “I cannot read your [the employer’s] mind what you will think or decide, but for myself I feel that it is fair to give you all the information. But this is your choice whether you will select me or not.”

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meaningful employment. It is also worth mentioning that the level of confusion around the complexities of voluntary self-identification points to problems with the informed consent process.

Given that DJSs face discrimination when looking for employment, and that some are not clear on why voluntary self-identification might be asked of them, it is not surprising that some would feel hesitant to share their ethnicity, cultural heritage, and/or disability. They are negotiating difficult ground as they decide whether disclosure will be more helpful than detrimental to their finding

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON VOLUNTARY SELF-IDENTIFICATION

CDPs also talked about the complexity, confusion, and discomfort surrounding asking clients to disclose private information during the intake process. Several practitioners talked about diverse job seekers being “very protective” and not wanting to share information such as:

- Social Insurance Numbers
- First names
- Mental health status and/or disability

One practitioner explained that although she approaches the question of mental health very carefully, she gets the impression that some of her DJS clients are particularly reticent to disclose if they have mental health issues. In one unfortunate circumstance a client she worked with had significant mental health issues, but never

disclosed them. She explains: “we just kind of eventually had to stop providing a service to him, because we couldn’t get anywhere with it, because he wouldn’t acknowledge it...he wouldn’t treat it.”

How much CDPs understand this resistance to share varies individual to individual. One practitioner, for example, has become accustomed to her Indigenous clients asking “what are you going to do with this information?” and she explained that she understands that trust can initially be an issue with some of those clients. Another practitioner reported having faced a lot of resistance when working with a group of newcomers. One individual, in fact, steadfastly refused to share her SIN number and quoted the Service Canada recommendation on with whom she should share

that information. The CDP was left confused and did not understand this resistance first nor last.

Some CDPs did outline ways that they try to approach this issue with patience, clear language, and reassurance. They explain to clients that this information is required of their funders / government and that it is stored in a secure database that keeps track of what services and supports clients avail of. This reassurance does not always work, however, and one CDP admitted that a lack of this voluntary information can mean less tailored support for individuals. Without knowing what someone's challenges are "how can we best support them moving into a workplace?"

It is worth mentioning that if CDPs are proceeding in their work

without a cultural understanding of issues like mental health from the perspective of their DJS clients (family perspectives, different cultural understandings of health/illness, vulnerability, etc.) the exposure of these struggles might have problematic implications for those clients' career development. This could be one reason why some DJSs are uncomfortable with disclosure.

Although in most cases the discomfort around voluntary self-identification was on the part of the job seekers, in others it was a practitioner who was uncomfortable. For example, one CDP admitted that she often does not ask her clients if they consider themselves a visible minority. She finds that question a "tricky one" and so she often selects that category on behalf of the client.

HOW DIVERSE JOB SEEKERS FEEL COMMUNITY AGENCIES CAN BE MORE CLIENT-FOCUSSED

One of the key areas this study set out to understand was about diverse job seekers' experiences with CDPs and the community agencies that they work with. One thing that quickly emerged, however, was the reticence of some DJSs to share constructive critical feedback about those individuals and agencies. Rather than answer the question, some DJS participants were initially evasive and vague in their answers. That said, the researchers found that as participants became more comfortable, they felt safer and more empowered to be honest; they became more confident in sharing constructive feedback. As time

went on participants became more confident in sharing constructive critical feedback that community agencies might learn from.

This section outlines more detail on participants' reticence to give feedback, but also shares tangible things that DJS participants did identify as things they feel community agencies might be or do to better serve them. These needs include: equitable relationships, empowering, strengths-based approaches, cultural responsiveness, recognition of individual contexts, receiving feedback, and the importance of time.

NAVIGATING CAREER DEVELOPMENT TOGETHER



DISCOMFORT WITH OFFERING CONSTRUCTIVE / CRITICAL FEEDBACK

Input from the participants in this study showed that DJSs can be very uncomfortable with giving constructive / critical feedback to the individuals and agencies that assist them in their career development. This emerged in a number of ways. In responding to a question about whether CDPs understand what it is to be a DJS in Newfoundland and Labrador:

- One participant avoided the question by listing the services she receives from her CDP without realizing / acknowledging that they are all standard services that would be offered to all clients.
- Another responded by referring to CDPs as “humans” with “limits and boundaries” and added that she cannot ask them to “go beyond” what they have already offered her.

Her answer suggests that she views asking for additional assistance as a favour, not as part of the professional responsibility on the part of the community agency.

- One participant reported that her CDPs had always been helpful and that she is always grateful to them. She did qualify her answer, however, saying “they do the best they could with the resources at hand.”
- Another individual said he does not like to do “backbiting” and another shared that she is not comfortable with “pointing finger on what better they can do.”

Noticing this participant discomfort with offering even small constructive pieces of feedback, the researchers

took an opportunity in some focus groups to remind those in attendance that this feedback was welcomed by the agencies in question and that those same agencies do not expect that everything they do is done perfectly. Despite this reminder, some participants continued to avoid offering any constructive feedback. As one participant said:

“I don’t have any complaining because they are doing a wonderful job. They are helping me because they want to help me. That’s it. So, I should not say that they are doing something wrong.”

In fact, rather than offer constructive criticism on the community agencies that have assisted them in their

career development, a couple of participants indicated that only they themselves can be held responsible for their failure to find a meaningful job. This reflex to assume full responsibility for all failures and give all credit to CDPs for every success is problematic. As is, potentially, job seeker discomfort with providing honest feedback.

These realities suggest a couple of things: Firstly, DJSs may need to be better informed about who has what rights and responsibility in the job seeker-CDP relationship in the Canadian context. Secondly, community agencies should take into account some DJSs’ strong reticence to be completely honest when they engage in the evaluation of their services and programs.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON FEEDBACK

A couple of practitioners raised the specific topic of getting feedback from clients. One admitted that on looking into her client list for this study she noticed that “a lot fewer of my BIPOC clients are still connected to me professionally” and she expressed a clear interest in wanting to understand how she might do better. At another point in the focus group, she also mused on how her Indigenous clients might feel in the programming she creates. She explained that she works hard to create a safe environment, but she wonders if that is as they experience it.

Another individual expressed how much she welcomed learning from the perspectives of her diverse clients. In this case, she wanted to share how happy she was that this piece of work was being done

because: “I’d like to hear more feedback from them...and what they think we should be doing better, or more of, or differently.”

There was more resistance from other individuals, however. In response to the question “what more could your organization do to support diverse job seekers?” one practitioner stated that she feels that her organization is already doing all that it can do to help DJs and that any improvements have to be made on the part of others (like employers): “I feel that we are all doing everything that we possibly can to make the process of job search good and sustainable for people.” This response reveals a resistance to even considering how things might be done more, better, and/or differently and a deflection of responsibility to other actors.

NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS & CONNECTION TO LIVED EXPERIENCE

How diverse job seeker participants described their relationship with the CDP they have worked with varied from individual to individual. Some reported really appreciating the support and expertise of the CDPs they had worked with. Some, in fact, went as far as to suggest that sometimes CDPs work harder at their career development than they do. This extreme indebtedness was not described by many; however, the appreciative framing of that relationship was not uncommon amongst those in this study. Interestingly, one individual shared that one of the reasons she appreciated the practitioner she works with so much is the fact that she treats her as an equal.

Almost a third of the DJSs in this study, however, were vocal about their concerns about inequities that can be fostered between client and practitioner when there is little to

no cultural and racial diversity in the staff and leadership of community agencies. They spoke of multiple ways that this lack of diversity can influence how and whether organizations can understand and respond to their needs:

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- Organizations not knowing what diverse job seekers need in terms of services
- Environments not being conducive to newcomers speaking up when they disagree or when they do not understand
- A lack of insight on how diverse job seekers will be received (by other organizations and/or by employers)
- Career Development Practitioners not fully understanding what it feels like to be consistently rejected for jobs or programs because of one's

immigration status or background
(As one DJS pointed out “it is a slap
all the time in your face of the
system telling you that you don’t
belong”)

- Inequitable relationships that can
be condescending and patronizing

In fact, some of the participants
argued that a CDP without lived
experience of immigration or of
being BIPOC cannot have the level
of connection with a DJS that a CDP
with lived experience can. As one
participant explained:

“There is no way that a person
coming from a powerful, ‘in
charge’ background is going to
help. The empathy to understand
– ‘I am going to help [my friend]
to find a job.’ Because you know
there is a problem of balance of
power and knowledge and access
to everything. So, you have to
have somebody that was already
there, or grew up seeing their
parents doing this.”

According to participants in this
study, hiring more diversely for
professional roles – as well as
selecting more diverse individuals for
leadership on boards – would help
prevent the lack-of-representation
pitfalls mentioned above.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON THE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

On occasion, CDPs spoke of the nature of their relationship with their clients. One practitioner, for example, explained that she views her relationship with her clients as a partnership. Through the employment search process, she encourages them and helps them navigate processes “same as I would do for myself...I kind of put myself in their shoes.”

CDPs spoke with more frequency about the various ways that they seek to build relationship with their clients. They listed factors like the following as having a positive impact on their ability to build an alliance with their clients:

- An organization’s community embeddedness
- Multi-generational connections to families

- Consistency and/or frequency of contact
- Informal conversation, sharing tea
- Sharing pictures from childhood
- Common life experiences (hobbies, parenting, newness to NL)
- Showing interest in/respect for a client’s culture
- Long-term connections over time (please see p.93 for more on time)

CDPs understand how this relationship is paramount to a job seeker’s employment success. As one practitioner described it “our whole job is to build relationships with people.”

In addition, it is worth mentioning that some CDPs also referenced how

diverse staffing at their organizations – or a lack there of – can influence how they are able to do their work. One person described their office as “very white” and another explained: “we’re always offering empathy and understanding but, like, we don’t really understand. Because we can’t in a lot of instances...we haven’t lived that story, right?” This recognition that a practitioners’ lived experience can limit their ability to fully understand their diverse clients’ experiences is significant.

As much as not hiring diversely can be a pain point for CDPs, when community agencies do hire diversely organizations can see the benefits. These benefits, practitioners told us, can include:

- An understanding of the cultures of diverse clients
- An ability to project how cultural differences may influence programming, its uptake, and success

- A proficiency in multiple languages
- Reduced anxiety/apprehension on the part of the client
- Increased trust in the client-practitioner relationship
- Opportunities for creating stronger alliances with diverse clients

Those practitioners who can personally identify with the experience of their diverse clients see how their identities, skills, and experiences help them in the work they do. As one practitioner shared: “my kind of identity that I have...helps me as well with some of our clients. Definitely...it creates kind of that connection.”

Some CDPs from less diverse organizations lamented this lack of diversity and stated that they hoped in the future that they would have the opportunity to work with – and learn from – someone who was racially or culturally different from them.

EMPOWERING, STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

A theme that emerged that relates to one above (the need for equitable relationships and lived experience) is that of DJSs' need for employment agencies to appreciate their existing skills and experiences and to empower them rather than discourage them. In fact, one participant suggested that on arriving to a country, after language skills, what a newcomer client would need most is empowerment. Participants suggested that this empowerment can take the following forms:

- Teaching diverse clients about their labour rights (what employers can and cannot ask of their employees) and as well as sharing with them where to go if things go wrong
- Empowering diverse clients to identify their current skills and capabilities and encouraging them in their job search

Some participants shared their concern that sometimes the lens on DJSs is one of deficit rather than strength. One participant shared with us, for example, that the CDP she has worked with has prepared her for what she might expect in a job interview, but according to the DJS the framing was very negative. The CDP told her:

“don't say it like this, but rather say it like this. Don't show them that you are –' You know, they kind of prepare you for what to expect there, and that you will be – 'you will have to work harder because you are – you know, you are different. Your language is different. Your speaking may be different. Your listening may be different. So, you'll have more challenges than others, so be ready to face it all.”

Although the CDP in question appears to be preparing the job seeker for the extra challenges she will face, this framing focusses on her difference as deficits and squarely puts the onus on the job seeker to take on the weight of the possible injustice (when it should be on the shoulders of the employer).

One participant in particular argued quite vehemently for the benefits of a more appreciative or strengths-based approach. As she explains:

“We don’t need charity. To be condescending and paternalistic with us. We need somebody to say, you know, ‘this is a very capable person, and this man has the skills, and this woman has the skills and has ideas!’”

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

DJS participants in this study suggested that some community agencies need to be more cognizant of how cultural differences might be at play in a job seeker's career development. These differences include the roles of CDPs, how one talks (or does not talk) about one's strengths and experience, and how volunteering is framed.

DJSs may come from countries where the roles of employment counsellors are very different from those found in community agencies in Canada. One participant, for example, shared that in her country of origin, it is not uncommon for job seekers to pay agencies who will help you with your resumé, but will also connect you to employers in a kind of “match making” role. She admits that it took her a little bit of time to realize that was not the role of her CDP. It should be mentioned here that for-profit organizations in NL do offer some of the services this DJS described,

but that is not the role of CDPs in community agencies.

Regarding how one talks about one's skills: One DJS participant explained that she has had the benefit of working with other diverse job seekers in their career development. She pointed out that several of those individuals were “shy to tell about themselves.” They were not used to self-promotion and, in some cases, were not even sure what their skills were. As a result, they are at a loss in a job search system that expects job seekers to be social, outspoken, and self-promoting.

The question of whether or how a job seeker feels comfortable in self-promotion relates to another potential cultural challenge that emerged in this study: how volunteering is framed. Community agencies often point to volunteering as a means for job seekers to gain local experience and build their network.

Unfortunately, however, volunteering can be complex for some newcomer job seekers. Some countries do not embrace volunteering as wholeheartedly as Canada does and so some newcomer job seekers might be confused as to why they are being encouraged to work for free. In addition, participants told us that some job seekers might embrace the idea of volunteering, but feel challenged with volunteer applications. For example, if you come from a culture where humility is valued and you perceive volunteering as a selfless deed that should be done with humility, then, listing your skills and talents to “impress” others for the opportunity to volunteer could be considered boastful, shameful, and/or unacceptable. All of these factors mean that volunteering, although it may be beneficial for job seekers, can reveal ways that cultural differences are at play in the career development of some DJSs.

For all these reasons and more, it behoves community agencies to become acquainted to the ways that cultural differences may be at play in their efforts to help newcomer clients in particular.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Career Development Practitioners also spoke about how cultural differences might play out in their clients' job search. They primarily pointed to specific ways that newcomer job seekers might have different cultural norms around things such as shaking hands, eye contact, and resumé content and format. By knowing about these cultural differences from the beginning of the client-practitioner relationship, one person suggested, concerns around cultural differences can be mitigated with preparation before the job seeker interacts directly with potential employers.

A couple of practitioners also referenced how some clients had different expectations of what a CDP does. Some reported that some

diverse job seekers (particularly if they are new to Canada) will not take as much initiative at contacting them as compared with those who have been in Canada longer. The CDPs who mentioned this were unsure about what this reflected, but wondered if it reflects a lack of confidence, anxiety, less of a sense of agency, or perhaps misunderstanding about who is meant to get in contact with whom:

“for some people, there’s less of a sense of agency. Like a feeling that, ‘Well, I have to wait my turn and for [the practitioner] to follow up’...I think in some cases, people don’t know the system and...so, it’s hard to be demanding when you don’t know how things work.”

The above experiences with DJSs echo what we heard from DJS participants about some newcomers not understanding the nature of the client-practitioner relationship in Canada.

As it relates to cultural responsiveness more broadly, a couple of CDPs also referenced how much they have learned from their clients. In fact, one went as far to say: “every day I’m learning something new about the diversity

of the clients.” In the case of some CDPs they linked this growth to an increase in the diversity of their clientele and felt this had led to significant personal growth. One individual, for example, admitted that in the past she was not as open-minded as she is currently; now she is more “educated and aware of the differences” and feels more confident and comfortable in interacting and communicating with her diverse clients.

RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUAL CONTEXTS

In the stories and experiences participants shared another theme that emerged was the fact that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work for DJSs. Participants shared both examples of how that kind of an approach had not been useful, but also how they felt that a more customized approach might benefit them.

In some circumstances, DJS participants felt like they were being routed into existing programming that did not meet their immediate needs. For example, one participant reported that on arriving at a community agency seeking help with their career development she and her partner were invited to join a series of workshops. They found some of them helpful, but they felt it was not the hands-on assistance they needed. When doing these workshops, a job came up relevant to

the participant's partner's experience. The couple rushed to get his resumé up to snuff as the agency had not helped him with this yet. Shortly after, he was invited to an interview and he requested a mock interview at the community agency, but given the quick turnaround time, no time slot was available; she reported that he went to the interview unprepared and did not get the job. She expressed her disappointment with this situation:

“We went through all the workshop, all. We did all the recommendations, but at the end of the day we didn't get any job.”

It was also reported that CDPs are often good at informing job seekers about job opportunities, but they are not always proactively engaged in exploring whether these jobs are suitable for their diverse clients. Participants in this study suggested

that they would like their CDPs to develop with them a roadmap to get them from A to Z (from where they are now to their ultimate goal), but that the roadmap should consider their unique needs, circumstances, and long-term aspirations. We heard that sometimes, for example, CDPs recommend job seekers to jobs that do not take into account a single parent's inability to take on shifts at the last minute or how a fast-paced customer service job may apply too much pressure for a newcomer client. One participant, for example, reported feeling pressured by a CDP to accept a job like the latter and she reported "it was my worst experience in my life." Another participant suggested that a more customized career development roadmap might ultimately save time for both the CDP

and job seeker because those job opportunities would mean a better job fit.

Finally, some DJS participants felt that community agencies could assist them through facilitating employer education. One participant expressed that at her place of work clients frequently question her about her religion and about related symbols and practices. Although the employer is offering her religious accommodation, she is in the uncomfortable position of having to educate everyone around her about "different religious expressions and practice." She suggested that community agencies have a role in educating employers so that diverse job seekers are not put in such uncomfortable circumstances.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES ON INDIVIDUAL CONTEXTS

Few CDP participants in this study specifically referenced how they seek to understand a diverse job seeker's individual context. One individual, however, articulated her efforts this way:

"I think as a Career Practitioner, I'm always trying to really understand deeply, someone's personal situation and not make assumptions. And in a way, I see all of us doing a better job about that. If we're not as familiar...with somebody's cultural background, whether as an Indigenous person, or a newcomer culture, or another culture."

From this practitioner's perspective then a CDP might put extra effort into understanding a job seeker's individual context if that context is different from their own.

FEEDBACK

Diverse Job Seeker participants reported that they need, and would welcome, constructive feedback and advice from their CDPs as they feel this would help them focus on how they might improve in their job search. Several of the job seeker participants in this study, however, reported that they were not given such feedback. This led some to wonder why this was the case and whether it applies to all clients. One person expressed:

“I ask questions. I ask [CDPs] ‘What I need to work on in order to do this?’ but they haven’t given me any criticisms, you know. Constructive criticism. No. I don’t

know whether they’re being nice or whether they don’t want you to know...for me personally I’m very OK if somebody tells me ‘This is what you’re doing wrong. This is what you should look at.’ I’m OK with that.”

This lack of feedback from CDPs coupled with the lack of feedback from employers leads to a doubly difficult situation where diverse job seekers are left wondering what factors are keeping them from finding meaningful employment and how they might improve their opportunities for success.

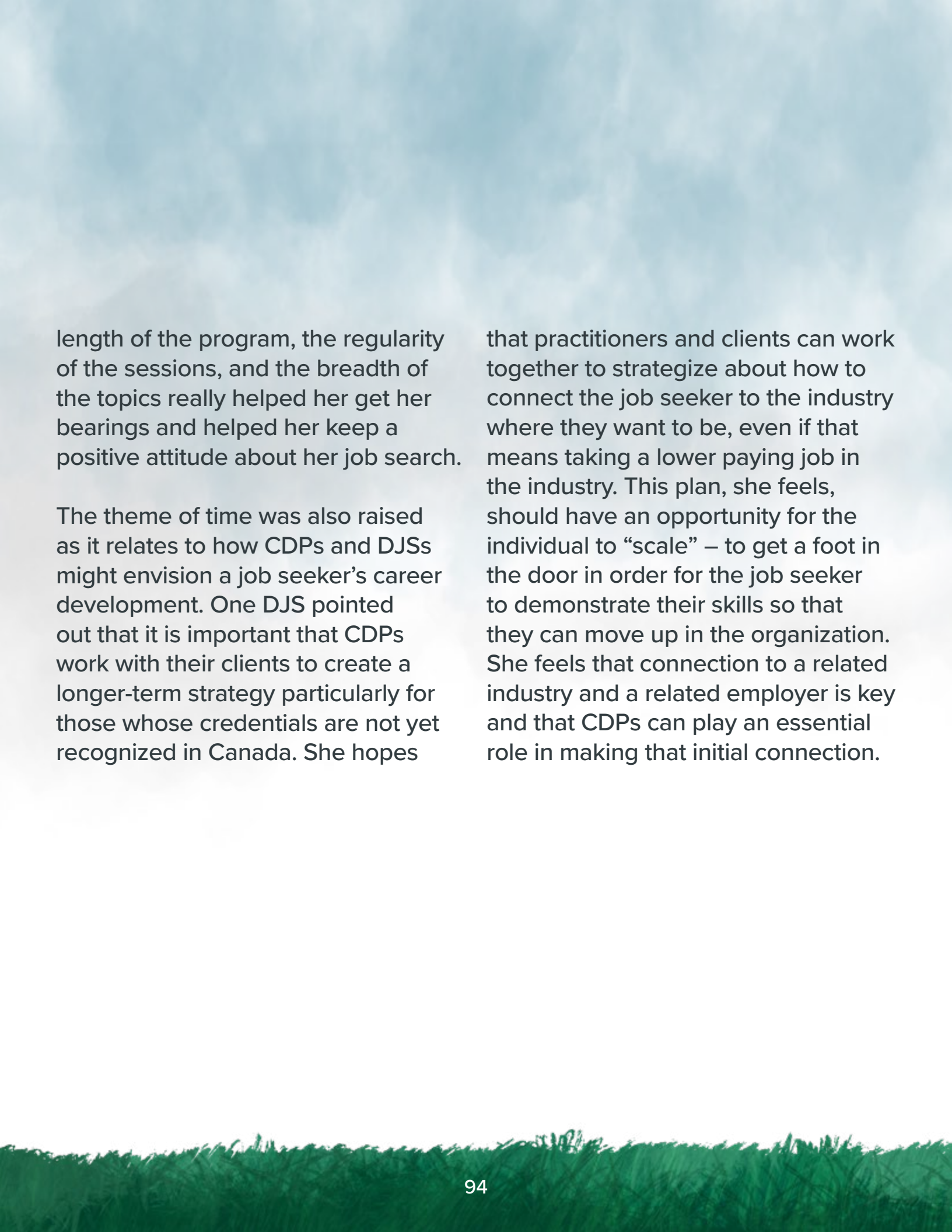
ROLE OF TIME

One salient theme that came up in talking about how community agencies might be more client-focussed is a need to recognize how time might influence how effective services and programs are for diverse job seekers. According to DJS participants in this study, more time with a job seeker can help with more effective communication, with establishing a fuller understanding of career development requirements, with the creation of a deeper relationship, and with the preparation of a longer-term strategy for a job seeker's goals.

One participant pointed out, for example, that when there is a language barrier, then, the time normally allotted for an appointment may not be enough: "Sometimes it's

very hard, it takes lots of time and lots of clarification, lots of patience for the career counsellor to really understand what the job seekers are looking for." She suggests that putting aside more appointment time for those still working on their English fluency would be helpful.

Another individual reported that she had participated in a longer-term employment program in another province and that she had found it extremely helpful. Every day for three months she got up, dressed professionally, and visited an agency where she learned about various essential parts of her career development in Canada: skills assessment, résumé preparation, interview skills, etc. She felt that the



length of the program, the regularity of the sessions, and the breadth of the topics really helped her get her bearings and helped her keep a positive attitude about her job search.

The theme of time was also raised as it relates to how CDPs and DJSs might envision a job seeker's career development. One DJS pointed out that it is important that CDPs work with their clients to create a longer-term strategy particularly for those whose credentials are not yet recognized in Canada. She hopes

that practitioners and clients can work together to strategize about how to connect the job seeker to the industry where they want to be, even if that means taking a lower paying job in the industry. This plan, she feels, should have an opportunity for the individual to “scale” – to get a foot in the door in order for the job seeker to demonstrate their skills so that they can move up in the organization. She feels that connection to a related industry and a related employer is key and that CDPs can play an essential role in making that initial connection.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

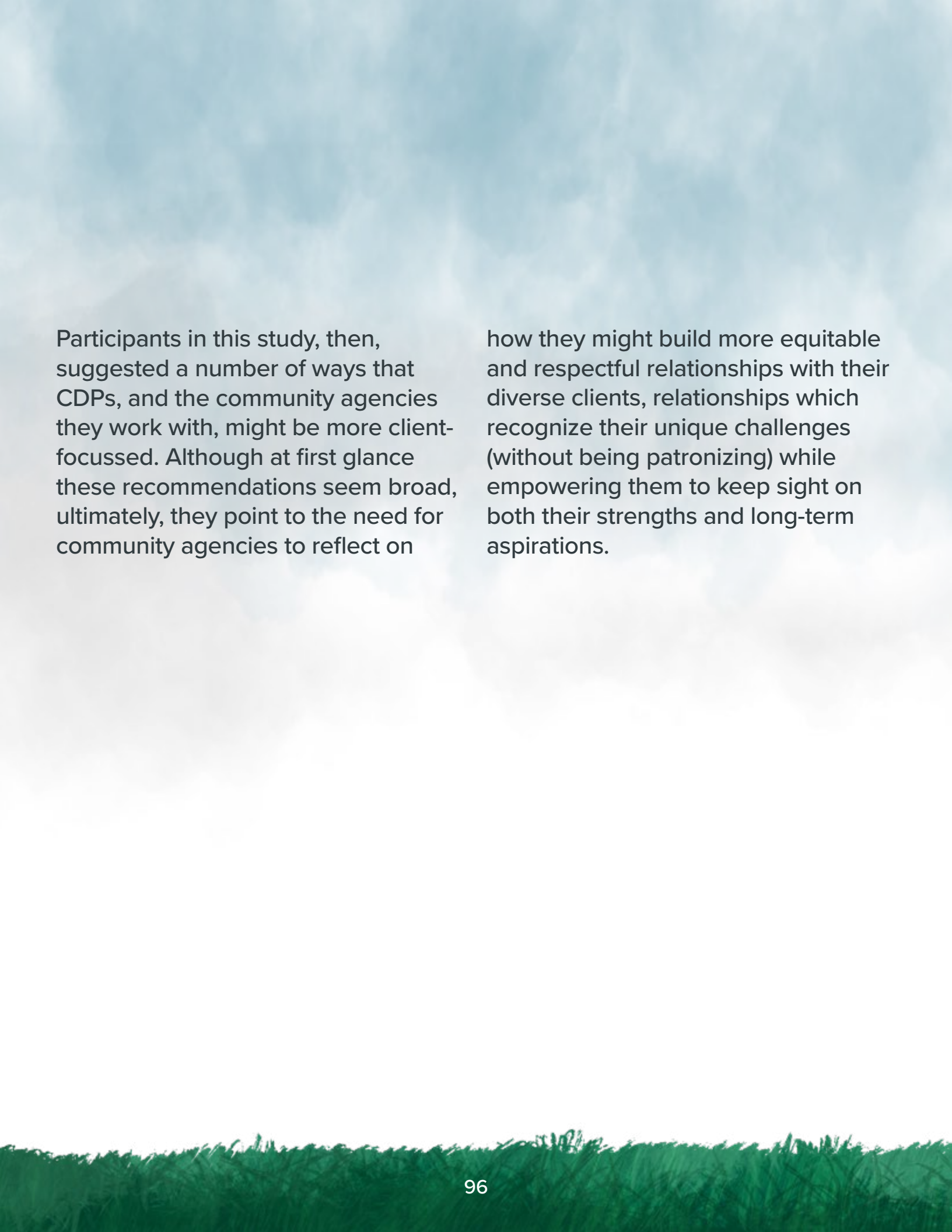
ON THE ROLE OF TIME

Career Development Practitioners also referenced the important role of time in their interactions with DJSs. Like the DJS participants, some CDPs recognize that communicating with clients who don't have English as a first language can take time; one person spoke about the need for her to "put on my patience cap so that I can really fully understand everything they're trying to tell me." In recognizing this particular challenge, that CDP makes a point to allocate more time to those appointments to allow for the necessary communication to happen.

Practitioners also talked about time as a potential means to build trust. "Different relationships take different amounts of time to build trust," as one person mentioned. One practitioner pointed out, for example, that since she is a white

woman, she imagines that her BIPOC clients may see her as a privileged person who does not understand the barriers they face. "I would guess it would take longer for them to trust me," she reflects. Another explained similarly that, because she is a white Newfoundlander, she feels her BIPOC clients are not going to share their racist experiences with her until they have had a long relationship.

Another individual pointed out that because these trusting relationships may take more time to develop, agencies need to make sure that staff caseloads are reasonable. The issue of caseloads was also raised by another practitioner who described with some detail how she ideally would like to assist her diverse job seeker clients, but went on to say "Often, I don't have enough time to be that thorough."



Participants in this study, then, suggested a number of ways that CDPs, and the community agencies they work with, might be more client-focussed. Although at first glance these recommendations seem broad, ultimately, they point to the need for community agencies to reflect on

how they might build more equitable and respectful relationships with their diverse clients, relationships which recognize their unique challenges (without being patronizing) while empowering them to keep sight on both their strengths and long-term aspirations.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS' ASSETS AND “PAIN POINTS”



ASSETS

The diverse job seekers who participated in this study shared the ways that they felt their CDPs helped them most in their career development. The areas that came up with most frequency were:

- Regular sharing of information/ knowledge/job postings
- Services and programming (such as assistance with resumés and mock interviews)
- Volunteer and/or employment opportunities (at community agencies)

These assets, although important, highlight standard career development services.

Participants also highlighted standard career development

outcomes such as how their connection with their CDPs have helped them to have better and more successful employment outcomes. A couple of individuals shared that their CDPs have helped increase their confidence and have given them hope when they most needed it. One newcomer job seeker talked about how hard it was to stomach the realization that that employers were not going to hire her for her dream job immediately:

“I would say [Career Development Practitioners] have helped a lot, because at some point I was kind of lost. I didn’t know – like, I had to reduce my hope. Like, you know when you came [to Canada] you have this kind of confidence in you, like ‘I’m going to get this. This is what I want.’ But when you are in the market you realise that

to get what you want is a little bit higher, so you have to lower down your hope. And then they connect me with somebody that kind of, you know, show me the reality that you don't have to give up on your dreams, on your hopes, but kind of find another way.”

“she always tells me she actually enjoys talking to me ... We can relate. Yeah, we can talk so much with each other, you know? Like I feel like she really understands me, and, you know, I understand her. We are like equal; we see eye to eye.”

When this job seeker most needed support she was fortunate to have a CDP who was there to remind her that her dream was not out of reach, but that they might need to find another path to get there.⁷

Another participant also highlighted an alliance that has been built with her CDP. She shared that her CDP recognizes her assets and strengths and that they have a friendly and equitable relationship:

Research tells us that a working alliance between CDPs and their clients, such as the one described above, in combination with client engagement, can be a predictor of employment success (Redekopp, Bezanson, & Dugas, 2013).

⁷ Please see Amundson, N., Niles, S., Yoon, H.J., Smith, B., In, H., & Mills, N., (2013) for an explanation of hope-centred career development.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

ON THEIR ASSETS

The researchers also sought to hear from CDPs what they feel their greatest assets are as it relates to assisting diverse job seekers. The areas that came up with most frequency were standard principles of professional practice such as:

- Strategies for helping diverse job seekers overcome employment barriers (such as steppingstones)⁸
- Putting in extra effort or going that extra mile for diverse job seekers
- Building trust through building relationship and connection through working alliances
- Developing and demonstrating empathy through working alliances

⁸ See Arthur and Collins (2013) for an explanation of culture-infused career counselling.



PAIN POINTS

One of two research questions guiding this study sought to explore what the “pain points” are as it relates to CDPs’ ability to assist diverse job seekers in their career development. That is, what things get in the way of CDPs assisting their ethnically-/racially- and/or culturally-diverse clients to the best of their abilities? What follows is a list of the major pain points as identified by CDPs themselves supplemented by those identified by DJSs, the researchers, and supporting research.

LACK OF FLEXIBILITY AND INNOVATION

Some participants suggested that community agencies are somewhat constrained in how they operate. As a result, these agencies can sometimes function like government offices and may lack flexibility, proactivity, inclusion, and innovation in their outreach to, and dealings with, DJSs (Sultana, 2018). As one job seeker described “lots of immigrants and newcomers didn’t have any idea that those services existed. I know that many of them are like a government agency. Yeah, they didn’t reach the employees and the job seekers” Some DJSs, then, feel this lack of flexibility and innovation keeps them from reaching DJSs.



DATA COLLECTION CHALLENGES

Quantitative data could be very useful in trying to understand the larger picture of the career development experiences of DJSs in Newfoundland and Labrador. Community agencies do utilize a system called ARMS which tracks what services and supports clients avail of, but this study revealed that there are a couple of challenges to this data being able to more fully inform our understanding of DJSs' experience.

As mentioned earlier, there are challenges in the intake process: clients can feel uncomfortable

disclosing information (SIN, race, disability), practitioners may not complete all fields, and/or practitioners may fill out fields on behalf of the client (regarding whether the client is a "visible minority," for example). If this is common across multiple agencies, the data they have access to are fairly incomplete and can only be so helpful.

Additionally, all the CDP participants in this study admitted that they are not aware of any of their organizations running reports to specifically inquire about the career



development experiences of their BIPOC clients. A couple of CDPs, however, did suggest that these kinds of reports might help them better understand DJSs' experiences and how they might be best supported; Intentionally looking at the outcomes of the work that CDPs do with their diverse clients might yield very important opportunities for learning. One practitioner shared that she had once gone into ARMS and did a preliminary look and did notice some differences in the outcomes for diverse clients. It is only in the analysis of that data that community agencies will get a fuller

picture of all their clients' successes and challenges. As one practitioner suggested, it would be good if it became common place "to not just collect the data but use it." ⁹

⁹ It should be noted that some community agencies are currently piloting the use of a new data collection system called PRIME.



EMPLOYERS

When CDPs were asked which things get in the way of them assisting their ethnically-/racially-, and/or culturally-diverse clients to the best of their abilities one of the most frequent answers was “employers.” Several of the practitioners we spoke to shared that they feel that employers need to be educated on the benefits of hiring more diversely. As one person shared:

“employers need to be educated as well and break down that barrier...we need a lot of workers in our province, whether or not they’re ‘from here’ or whatever. If they’re good workers, we need them.”

CDPs reported that it can be time consuming and exhausting trying to convince employers to give newcomer clients a chance. Sometimes that advocacy can continue through into the employment period. For example, one practitioner shared a story about a time when he encouraged an employer to give a newcomer client a second chance. The newcomer employee had found the fast-paced environment difficult and he was having a hard time keeping up when the employer let him go; the practitioner contacted the employer to see if he might give the newcomer another shot. Putting himself in the shoes of the



employer, the practitioner knew that the employer had to be aware of the bottom line, yet the CDP felt he had to advocate on behalf of his client: “it’s very delicate.” CDPs want to maintain good relationships with employers, but yet they see them as one of the largest barriers to their diverse clients meeting employment success.

One of the ways participants in this study – both CDPs and DJSs – felt community agencies could better support their diverse clients is by doing a better job of reaching out to employers, as well as educating them on the benefits of hiring more diversely.



INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY SKILLS

There appears to be a broad range in terms of the intercultural competency skill levels of CDPs. Some practitioners are mindful of the ways they communicate and of the values and beliefs both they and their clients hold. These individuals reflect on their own cultural and racial identities and how they might influence their work with diverse job seekers. As one practitioner shared:

“when I think of this [topic], I go back...to how I grew up, with certain ways of viewing the world and how you conduct yourself, and what our values are and what is important. And I’ve really got to be mindful of how that can differ when it’s people from different cultures.”

Other practitioners, however, are less mindful of the influence of their own cultures/identities and can be more unsure about how to communicate effectively with their diverse clients.

Some CDPs seem to broadly know what intercultural differences may be at play in their field (such as eye contact, hand shaking, and gender differences) and that exploring them with their clients might be beneficial to their clients’ career development. Yet, instead of exploring it as a matter of course, and educating themselves on how these cultural differences might play out, some practitioners appear to be expecting their diverse clients to explicitly ask for it, to educate them, and to speak up if the practitioner is ever inappropriate / offensive.

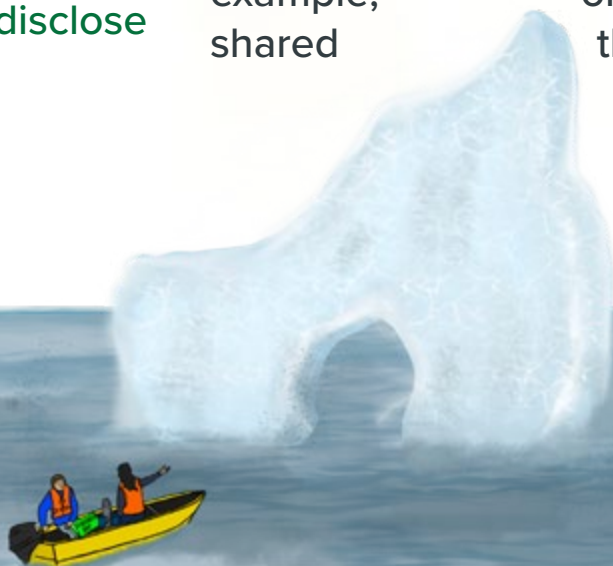


One practitioner shared how she endeavours to make a connection with a new diverse job seeker:

“I’ll talk about some of the things that I’ve, you know, my background just to make her comfortable a bit with me. And then I’ll start asking her questions. And I just, right up front, say, ‘Tell me if I ask something that’s inappropriate, or if I offend you.’ Well, I just got to know. And then I’ll ask her a few questions about her culture, just to break that barrier type thing and just make her feel like we’re having a conversation and let her know that it’s okay for her to tell me if I cross the line and I ask something that she doesn’t want to disclose right now.”

Although this approach may be well intentioned, putting the onus on clients to both educate the practitioner and “police” the boundaries of what is appropriate does not recognize the power differential between the CDPs and the DJSs. These requests can add an emotional tax as well as a huge discomfort for the job seeker particularly if from their cultural perspective they are unable to say “I don’t want to talk about that” or “That’s none of your business.”

Other practitioners, however, pointed out that they feel there is a fine balance between being interested in someone’s cultural experiences and not “othering” them. For example, one practitioner shared that she



RACE & RACIAL IDENTITY

makes a point to not lead with the question “So, where are you from?”; she knows people of colour in Newfoundland and Labrador are sick of this question and assuming that someone’s not “from here” can be problematic. Another practitioner made a point to mention that she puts the onus of learning about other cultures squarely on her own shoulders rather than waiting for someone else to school her. This self-education approach is preferable as it puts the weight of responsibility on the right shoulders and allows clients to guide any sharing on their own terms.

As has been referenced earlier, several CDP participants in this study demonstrated a discomfort in talking about race and racism. There was a tendency by some to say that some of the problematic behaviours of employers, for example “can affect anybody,” minimizing the discrimination experiences of diverse job seekers. Even those that admitted that they felt something was afoul in how their diverse clients were treated did not refer to it as racism (in fact, only one CDP used the word “racism” in the whole data collection process). The “racially coded language” (DiAngelo, 2011, p.55) used by CDPs suggests a general discomfort in talking about race and racism. For example, CDP participants referred to white people as “European perspectives,” racism as “odd reactions” or discrimination as employers who were



not “seeing the skills.” In addition, participants reverted back into talking about “cultural differences” and the experience of newcomers when the researchers continued to reference the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour more broadly.

This discomfort with talking about race extended into a lack of self-reflection on the part of some CDPs. The original focus group protocol had not included a question on how the practitioners’ own racial identity might influence their work, however, a question was added to that effect after the researchers began hearing stories of racism and discrimination from DJSs, but no specific examples of same from CDP participants. The researchers wanted to explore why DJSs seemed to not share stories of discrimination with their CDPs.

The added question pointed out that in doing this study the researchers had tried to think about their own identities and how they might influence what DJS participants would share or would not share with them. It then asked “if you were to guess, how does your identity influence your relationships with your diverse clients? (That is, if you are white and a particular client is Black, do you think that would influence how you work with each other and what or how they might share with you?)”

The responses to this question varied considerably from individual to individual. A couple of practitioners demonstrated a fair amount of self-reflection as it relates to this topic. One of these individuals (who self-identified



as white) explained:

“I think, unfortunately, it has to. I don’t believe that people say that they’re colour blind. I think we all see colour. As long as we all react the same, that’s okay. It’s okay to notice colour. But I do think that maybe because I’m not from their background, I just don’t understand some of the needs that they would have.”

Other individuals (all white or white-passing) seemed to interpret this question about the influence of racial identity to be an inquiry into whether they were racist or not (which was not the intention of the question). One person answered, defensively, that they treat everyone the same. That practitioner shared:

“I don’t know, I haven’t experienced resistance from clients. I just talk to everybody the same as I would talk to anybody. So, I don’t know. I don’t get that feeling.”

Other practitioners answered similarly, describing their clients as a “blank canvas” and saying that when their clients come in their office they feel “like there’s no colour. There’s no race. There’s no sexual orientation, or anything there. It’s just individuals.”

The researchers assured the Career Development Practitioners that they were not assuming that they treated their diverse clients differently, necessarily, but they wondered if they thought their being of a different – or the same – race as their diverse clients would influence what and/or how the clients



might share with them. Those CDPs who had more diverse backgrounds/identities responded to this question by describing the way that their backgrounds help in the work they do; some white or white-passing practitioners added how they made efforts to create connection and a safe space for their clients. One practitioner explained she felt that she did not think her racial identity would be an issue: “I mean, I’m addressing what their needs are.”

It is important to note, that the kind of defensive responses heard from some CDPs and referenced above, ironically, rather than deflecting away suggestions of racism, serve to highlight common characteristics of how racism manifests today such as *white fragility*, the false good/bad dichotomy as it relates to racism, and the myth of colour blindness.

First of all, these responses reflect

what Dr. Robin DiAngelo (2011, 2018) calls white fragility. White fragility is “a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (2011, p.54) that can get the individual out of the stress-inducing situation. When one responds with white fragility to discussions around race it serves to shut down the conversation, shut off potential learning and growth, and it is actually “a dangerous impediment to antiracism” (Saad, 2020, p.42).

Partially, white fragility exists because white people have been taught a false dichotomy about racism. It states that all racist people are bad people and that all good people cannot be racist. As a result, if anyone ever suggests that we are doing something racist what we hear is “you are a bad person.”

Antiracist educators

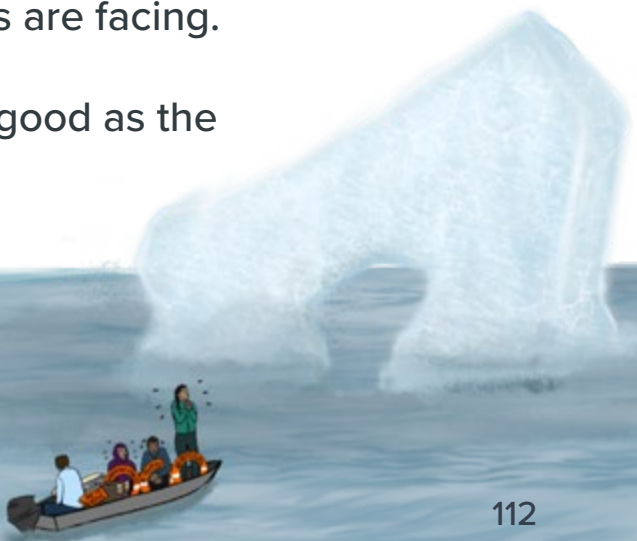


like DiAngelo and Saad point out, however, that this dichotomy is false. Good people can – and do - do racist things; until we understand and embrace this reality, we “cannot be part of the solution” because we do not yet see ourselves as part of the problem (Saad, p.43).

Finally, as referenced earlier in the report, many people feel that to be *colour blind* is to be anti-racist: that is, “if you act as if you do not see color, you will not do anything racist or benefit from racism” (Saad, 2020, p.79). But as Saad points out “the problem does not go away because you refuse to see it” (p.79). In fact, by saying that one is colour blind one is actually erasing others’ identities and, in the case of this study, is ignoring the extra layers of discrimination that BIPOC job seekers are facing.

In sum, as good as the

intent might be, treating “all clients the same” – and not acknowledging their race and/or culture – does not serve diverse job seekers. Having different cultural understandings and/or racial identities from a majority of the population means that diverse clients are not being “received” in their job search and employment in the same way that white “born and bred” locals are; to assume that they are is to do a disservice to these clients. At an individual level, CDPs need to examine how their beliefs and behaviours can be antiracist and at an organizational level, community agencies would benefit from more culturally- and racially-competent approaches, programs, and policies.





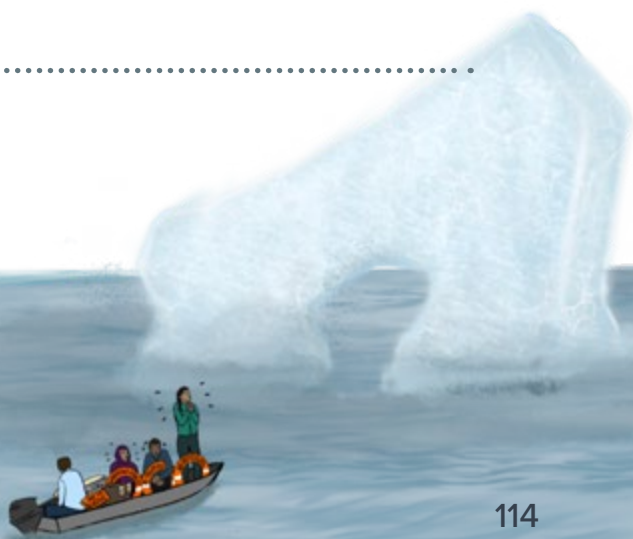
ONGOING LEARNING

Several CDP participants talked about how much they had been learning as the diversity of their clientele increased. That said, CDPs also referenced their need for further education. As one individual said “Do I understand stuff? Yeah. Do I need to learn a lot more? Absolutely!”

Not many practitioners specified what kinds of training and/or self-directed learning might be most useful, but those that did referenced the need to learn:

- Different cultural understandings
- Intercultural competency skills
- How diverse job seekers are being treated & how CDPs can/should respond

These topics for further learning reflect core domains highlighted in the Culture-Infused Counselling model (Arthur & Collins, 2013; Collins, Arthur, McMahon, & Bisson, 2015). In that study of over 100 CDPs, practitioners were asked to identify which attitudes, knowledge and skills were most important as it relates to their work. Participants placed the most importance on their *Awareness of Client Cultural Identities* (they also perceived themselves to be best in this core domain). Those same participants rated themselves within the moderately high range in terms of their awareness of their own cultural identities, values, assumptions, privileges, biases, etc. Finally, practitioner respondents



placed the least importance - and felt less personally competent - in the skills needed to have a Culturally Sensitive Working Alliance with their clients. That is, they felt least competent in their ability to become active allies for their clients by centring the relationship as a means to bridge cultural differences and address social injustices.

What we heard from local CDPs reflects some of the results from the above-mentioned study. Local CDPs do recognize the importance of understanding different cultural understandings and their need to continue developing their skills to work effectively across cultural differences; they tend to privilege

this kind of learning. Although some CDPs demonstrated self-reflection about their own cultural and racial identities, no CDPs overtly referenced their need to learn more about their own cultural identities, values, assumptions, privileges, biases, etc. Similarly, CDPs talked about working alliances with DJSs and how **CDPs need to “feel more empowered in how to respond to the issues that are coming up with diverse seekers,”** however, this type of learning was not brought up as a topic that could be explored through continued learning opportunities.

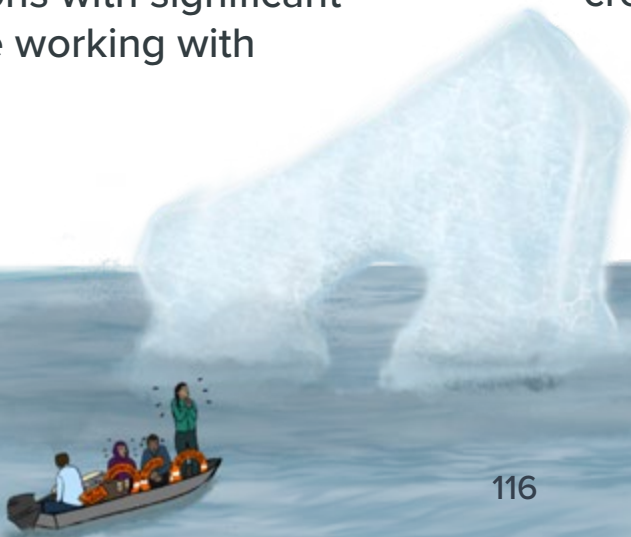


When referencing what the nature of continued learning might be, practitioners tended to talk about the need to bring in external organizations to offer training. One practitioner suggested, for example, that bringing in external individuals can challenge agencies to think of new and different ways to help DJsS overcome barriers; they might also challenge organizations to identify internal barriers that exist within their own organizations.

Although there are undoubtedly potential benefits to bringing in external sources to assist with learning, it is important to appreciate that some learning can and should be done within and between organizations. CDPs with diverse identities and backgrounds, organizations with significant experience working with

DJsS, and organizations making concerted anti-racist efforts: all have important ways they might contribute to the learning of the Community Employment Collaboration's membership.

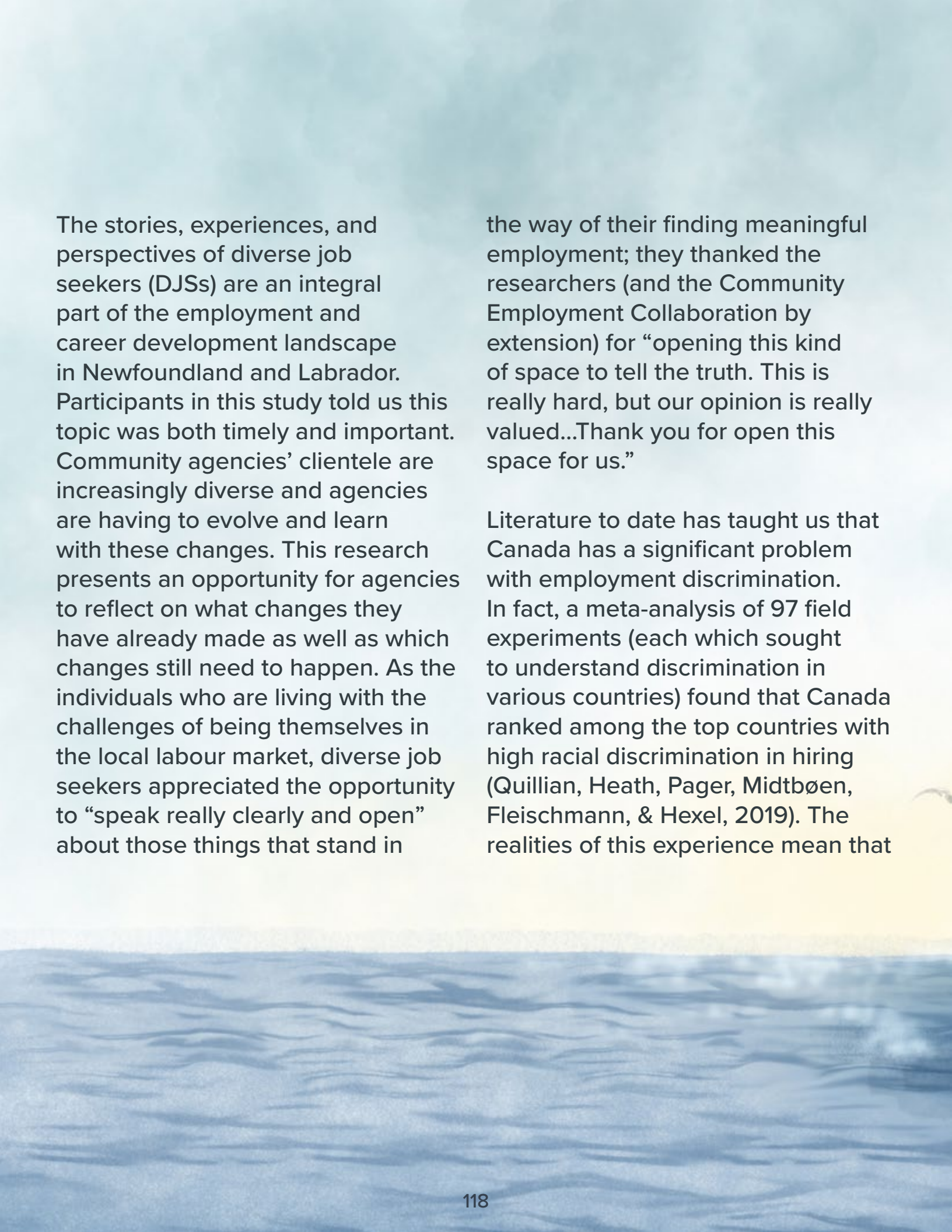
Finally, some essential pieces of learning (such as understanding one's own racial and cultural identities, biases, and assumptions) require intentional and fairly intensive self-reflection. Although this process can be guided by external sources (trainers, books, courses), ultimately the hard work must be done by the individuals themselves. It is the conclusion of this research, that only once that self-work is ongoing can practitioners fully appreciate how meaningful working alliances can be created and maintained across real or perceived differences.





CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS





The stories, experiences, and perspectives of diverse job seekers (DJSs) are an integral part of the employment and career development landscape in Newfoundland and Labrador. Participants in this study told us this topic was both timely and important. Community agencies' clientele are increasingly diverse and agencies are having to evolve and learn with these changes. This research presents an opportunity for agencies to reflect on what changes they have already made as well as which changes still need to happen. As the individuals who are living with the challenges of being themselves in the local labour market, diverse job seekers appreciated the opportunity to "speak really clearly and open" about those things that stand in

the way of their finding meaningful employment; they thanked the researchers (and the Community Employment Collaboration by extension) for "opening this kind of space to tell the truth. This is really hard, but our opinion is really valued...Thank you for open this space for us."

Literature to date has taught us that Canada has a significant problem with employment discrimination. In fact, a meta-analysis of 97 field experiments (each which sought to understand discrimination in various countries) found that Canada ranked among the top countries with high racial discrimination in hiring (Quillian, Heath, Pager, Midtbøen, Fleischmann, & Hexel, 2019). The realities of this experience mean that

applicants with “ethnically-sounding names” get called at far lower rates even if they share the same credentials as candidates presumed to be white (Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017), that candidates with foreign training and work experience are discriminated against even more (62.5% less likely to be called for an interview than Anglo-Canadian-named applicants with Canadian experience) (Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017), and that the probability of being unemployed for female Indigenous university graduates is more than twice as high as visible minority females and more than four times as high as non-minority female university graduates (Walters, White, & Maxim, 2004).

To date, research on the experience of career development practitioners (CDPs) in working with diverse clients has given us insight into

issues such as where CDPs feel their strengths and weaknesses lie. For example, a study done with more than a hundred Canadian CDPs (of which 90 % were white and 75% were female) found that although they felt “multicultural and social justice competencies” were important to career development practice, they did not feel they were fully competent in all its aspects. Participants rated themselves within the moderately high range in terms of their awareness of their own cultural identities, values, assumptions, privileges, biases etc.; however, they felt less personally competent – and rated less important – the role of being an active ally and in addressing social injustice. (Collins, Arthur, McMahon, & Bisson, 2015).

Where this research sought to contribute to current knowledge is



by exploring the degree to which the above Canadian experiences are those lived by diverse job seekers and Career Development Practitioners in this province. The study explored this via two research questions:

RQ1:

What are diverse job seekers' employment experiences in the St. John's area – particularly as they relate to their lived experiences of employment discrimination?

RQ2:

What are the relevant and related “pain points” for career development practitioners?

DIVERSE JOB SEEKERS' EXPERIENCES

Diverse job seekers in St. John's do face significant barriers to their career development, not least of which is racism and discrimination on the part of employers in both their job search and workplaces. Participants, for example, recounted how putting English/Christian and/or "white-sounding" names on their resumés increased their chances of getting called by employers; others shared how they had been overlooked by white managers who favour employees who they deem to be "one of their own" when giving out extra shifts. Diverse job seeker participants also described facing racism from clients at work and the ineptness (or unwillingness) of their supervisors to respond adequately to this harm.

Another barrier that DJS participants described in this study was the lack of feedback from employers and CDPs alike. DJSs lamented not having their job applications acknowledged nor receiving feedback after an interview. Although this is not uncommon behaviour in our labour market, a lack of feedback from employers has the potential to do more harm to DJSs - particularly those who are newcomers - than non-newcomer job seekers; newcomers are aware that they may be missing some of the nuances of local job search norms and as a result feedback on how they might improve their approach would be particularly useful and important for them. Unfortunately, some DJSs also reported not

receiving constructive feedback from their CDPs. These individuals yearned to advance in their career development, but felt an overall loss about what they are doing wrong and how they might improve their opportunities.

Faced with the reality of foreign credentials and training rarely being recognized by local employers, DJSs told us that they have to turn to “steppingstones” to help them reach their ultimate goals: entry level jobs, further training, and volunteering. The hope is that these extra efforts will eventually lead to meaningful employment; one DJS participant shared that volunteering had been key to getting her “foot in the door” with her current employer. Some CDPs echoed this same perspective on “steppingstones”

serving as tangible stages to bigger and better things; others were more sceptical. They have seen DJSs finish graduate school, for example, only to find work in grocery stores and they worry that without a longer-term career development plan that these individuals may remain underemployed because of their need to simply pay their bills. Supporting underemployed DJSs will require both a commitment to longer-term planning as well an acknowledgement and understanding of those realities that are outside the control of the DJSs; the racism and discrimination that they face in their employment experiences require specific strategies to meet those barriers head on.

In terms of diverse job seekers’

connections to community agencies, participants reported experiencing a lack of choice in terms of which community agencies could assist them. Technically many community agencies are able to assist diverse job seekers in availing of several services. Functionally, however, diverse job seekers are limited by their lack of knowledge of the existence of various organizations, by agencies not always sharing access to client files, but also by some of those same community agencies' perceptions on who can help whom.

This last issue points to a troubling assumption that emerged from this work; to be BIPOC in Newfoundland and Labrador is to have people assume you are not from here, that you are a newcomer or a Come-

From-Away. **A skin colour, a name or an accent does not a newcomer make; to assume so closes agencies' doors to potential clients and erases the experiences of BIPOC in Newfoundland and Labrador, reducing the "belongingness" of many people in our province.** When agencies' processes and policies reflect any of the aforementioned assumptions, they are reinforcing, however unintentionally, that for diverse job seekers "the only way in" is to try to shed or hide integral parts of their identity.



RELEVANT AND RELATED “PAIN POINTS” FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS

The second research question explored what personal, environmental, or systemic challenges/issues might get in the way of CDPs assisting their ethnically-/racially- and/or culturally-diverse clients as much as they might like to. It is difficult to summarize what “pain points” exist for CDPs, because this study found that there is such a broad spectrum of perspectives, experiences, and competency levels as it relates to this topic in this place. Four areas are worth noting, however: employers, CDP comfort and competency around race and racism, CDP knowledge and understanding of barriers, and a lack of diverse hiring in community agencies.

When asked about their “pain

points,” CDPs often responded quickly with “employers.” Several practitioners shared an observation that employers serve as major barriers to them assisting their DJS clients to the best of their abilities, and they reported that it can be both time consuming and exhausting trying to convince employers to give newcomer clients, in particular, a chance. The conviction amongst these practitioners is that employer education on the benefits of hiring more diversely would lead to much greater opportunities for DJSs.

The next two “pain points” reference a lack of competencies as it relates to working with DJSs. Firstly, there is an extensive range that career development practitioners find themselves on in terms of

their comfort and competency in discussing race, racism (systemic and individual), and the role of their own racial identity in their work with their clients. Some individuals do not see how their racial identity might influence their work with their diverse clients (embracing colour blindness and exhibiting white fragility) while others exhibit a deeper self-reflection on their racial identity and how it might limit their understanding of the lived experiences of BIPOC job seekers. Given the centrality of a working alliance to client engagement, increasing racially-related skills and knowledge will be instrumental to more fully assisting diverse job seekers as they navigate racism and discrimination in their career development.

There is also a great discrepancy in the degree to which CDPs believe, understand, appreciate, and respond to the employment experiences

of DJSs. Some practitioners in this study, for example, tended to minimize the harm that racism and discrimination inflicts on DJSs; others seemed to “see” racism, but felt uncomfortable naming it for what it was; others still did not minimize the harm that racism inflicts on DJSs, but their clients have not shared with them specific instances that reflected that part of their job search experience. All these realities serve as “pain points” standing in the way of practitioners being able to do their best work to help diverse clients.

Finally, several CDPs themselves told us that a lack of diverse staffing at their organizations serves as a hindrance to their ability to learn about more diverse experiences as well as to their ability to best serve their more diverse clients. Several DJS participants emphasized this point as well. Hiring more diversely, participants told us, could lead to many benefits including: a better

understanding of DJSSs' needs, more appropriate and targeted services, more equitable relationships, and the ability to provide a more welcoming and safe-feeling environment.

This final point echoes an “accidental” finding in this study. Identities and experiences shared between CDPs and DJSs can reduce a client’s anxiety and apprehension, and help to build a good working alliance. This study found evidence of this from a couple of different quarters. First of all, DJSs told us that working with CDPs with more diverse backgrounds would help them build stronger, more equitable relationships with greater levels of mutual trust and understanding. Secondly, CDPs with more diverse backgrounds told us that their various different social identities (including racial and cultural identities) as well as their additional lived experience, knowledge, and

skills gave them extra proficiencies in working with DJSs. Finally, the methods used for data collection emphasized how shared identities and experiences can reduce anxiety and increase trust and comfort. When offered the bios of three potential interviewers, at least half of the DJS participants chose to be interviewed by individuals they perceived to have similar racial or cultural identities to themselves. This evidence highlights the many benefits that community agencies might see should they hire more diversely.

There were limitations to this study. First of all, the aim was to hear from the experience of diverse job seekers on the Avalon and, as a result, both job seeker and community agency representation was focussed primarily on that

region of the province. Secondly, the onset and continuation of the Covid19 global pandemic meant that the researchers were not able to recruit as many participants as they had hoped. In addition, recruiting via community agencies appears to have made some participants more nervous to share feedback. Diverse job seekers recommended straight from agencies, and with no previous contact with the researchers, appeared less comfortable with being critical of career development practitioners and community agencies, even constructively so. That said, prolonged and broadened recruitment efforts, and intentional efforts to increase comfort and trust, eventually yielded important and rich data.

Future research in this area might explore how career development practitioners in other jurisdictions advise their clients regarding

the benefits and drawbacks of participating in voluntary self-identification on employment applications. In addition, time and attention might be given to a quantitative data analysis of the career development experiences of those diverse job seekers who are represented in ARMS. Asking the right questions of that data might well produce important results that could supplement this work.

To some extent, the question that lies at the feet of community agencies at this juncture is an ideological one. If they subscribe to technocratic or humanistic ideological frames of career guidance, then they see their role as helping individuals either take advantage of what is available in the labour market or as assisting them engage in personal growth to fulfil themselves. These frames tend to be embedded in the idea that individuals are rational actors



that can make their own choices as it relates to economic or personal priorities (Sultana, 2018). Both approaches presume that failure is the responsibility of individual job seekers. As Sultana (2018) has suggested, in these approaches job seekers are responsible to adequately “edit” themselves to become “employable” (p.69). However, if agencies subscribe to emancipatory / advocacy-based career guidance ideology, they will look at their supports and services through a social justice lens. Those agencies will want to 1) increase their knowledge of racism and how it functions in individuals and in systems and 2) work alongside their clients in responding to these injustices as they face them in their career development journeys (Sultana, 2018).

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Community Employment Collaboration – and its community partners – are to be commended for taking this important step towards better understanding the employment experiences of diverse job seekers in St. John’s, as well as the factors that might be impeding Career Development Practitioners from supporting those clients to the best of their ability.

Fortunately, community partners have assets that can serve as the foundation for further development in this area. Several agencies are already engaging with a significant amount of diversity in terms of the clients they serve, and through this research it was obvious that Career Development Practitioners can demonstrate empathy, constructive self-reflection, and a willingness

to learn and grow as it relates to working with their diverse clients. Fortunately, there are also relevant career development theories and resources at their disposal as well.

It is the hope of the researchers that this report serves as a catalyst for positive change. As one of our DJS participants pointed out, research is futile without action:

“You look at all these documents. Everybody has a research - Memorial is full, the library is full of wonderful research and reports about issues...So, you say, “oh my goodness, all these people talking, talking!” What has happened with all these talks?

If you really wanted to do something for somebody, and you have the intention to do it, you call those people. Who knows better how life is affecting ourselves? We are the ones living this experience.”

Centring the employment experiences of DJSs can – and should – continue long after this report is published. The following is a list of recommendations generated by both the researchers as well as by participants themselves (those recommended by participants are indicated with an *). Keeping this in mind, we recommend that Community Employment Collaboration – and its partner organizations – take the following steps to build upon these strengths, and address the challenges outlined in this report:

Recommendation #1:

Embed Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging as a priority area in the work of the Community Employment Collaboration

Recommendation #2:

Develop a process of deep and honest self-reflection on Career Development Practitioners' racial and cultural identities and how they influence their work with diverse job seekers

Recommendation #3:

Hire and recruit more diversely (ethnically/racially and/or culturally) at all organizational levels

Recommendation #4:

Make a commitment to provide training for the broader Career Development sector that fleshes out key findings in this report in order to build deeper understanding of - and empathy for - diverse job seekers' experiences. This training should be, at a minimum, co-led by professionals who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour (BIPOC) themselves

Recommendation #5:

Host a facilitated panel discussion with a diverse group of Career Development Practitioners to explore how racial and cultural identities and affiliations help and/or hinder the work that they do

Recommendation #6:

Partner with employer organizations to create paid work-term or mentoring opportunities that allow diverse job seekers to both demonstrate their skills to employers as well as gain tangible local experience and references

Recommendation #7*:

Practice good collaborative and client-centred practices, such as sharing clients' ARMS files and empowering clients to seek out assistance from whichever agencies they feel best meet their needs

Recommendation #8:

Take an appreciative approach in thinking about next steps as Community Employment Collaboration and the management team reflect on how to expand/ deepen the assets listed in this report

Recommendation #9:

Address data collection quality to ensure client information on race/ethnicity is collected, and regularly engage that data in order to better understand the career development experiences of diverse job seeker clients

Recommendation #10:

Provide consistent job maintenance support – such as in-job coaching and/or mentoring – to better assist diverse job seekers as they navigate challenging workplace situations such as exclusionary or discriminatory behaviour

Recommendation #11:

Encourage ongoing-while-underemployed career development planning: particularly important when working with highly-trained individuals who may be in circumstances where they feel forced to take positions that just “pay the bills,” but would like to transition to meaningful employment

Recommendation #12*:

Implement innovative outreach practices so diverse job seekers are aware of the variety of agencies that can service them

Recommendation #13:

Engage the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission in order to support clients more fully in relation to job search and employment discrimination, including when and how clients could explore making formal or informal complaints regarding their human rights

Recommendation #14*:

Ensure that Career Development Practitioners know how to manage their leadership roles in educating employers on topics such as how to avoid bias in hiring practices, and the benefits of hiring more diversely. This could be done in partnership with organizations such as the St. John's Board of Trade, Memorial University's Internationalization Office, the Harris Centre, and/or the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism

Recommendation #15*:

Engage an empowerment and asset-focussed, rather than deficit-focussed, approach, when engaging with diverse job seekers

Recommendation #16:

Develop programming or processes that assist diverse job seekers in getting the feedback they require from potential employers

Recommendation #17:

Explore broader definitions of what a diverse job seeker is (i.e. beyond newcomers), who it is that various community partners seek to serve within that broader definition, and which programs and services might best serve them

Recommendation #18:

Evaluate informed consent practices at the time of client intake (particularly around voluntary self-identification)

Recommendation #19:

Discuss with diverse job seeker clients what to expect in terms of voluntary self-identification and their job search, laying out the possible benefits and drawbacks of disclosure (e.g. being considered as part of an affirmative action program versus being discriminated against)

Recommendation #20:

Communicate clearly on which clients can be served by whom and through what programming, clearly stating any restrictions due to immigration status, etc.

Recommendation #21*:

Facilitate employer education around different religious expressions and practices and how they might manifest in the workplace (in partnership with community organizations such as faith groups)

Recommendation #22*:

Ensure that caseloads are reasonable so that enough time is afforded for building relationships of trust across potentially multiple layers of difference

Recommendation #23:

Continue fostering inter-agency learning and relationship building as it relates to working with diverse job seekers (through programs such as job-shadowing, peer-learning panel discussions, etc.)

Recommendation #24:

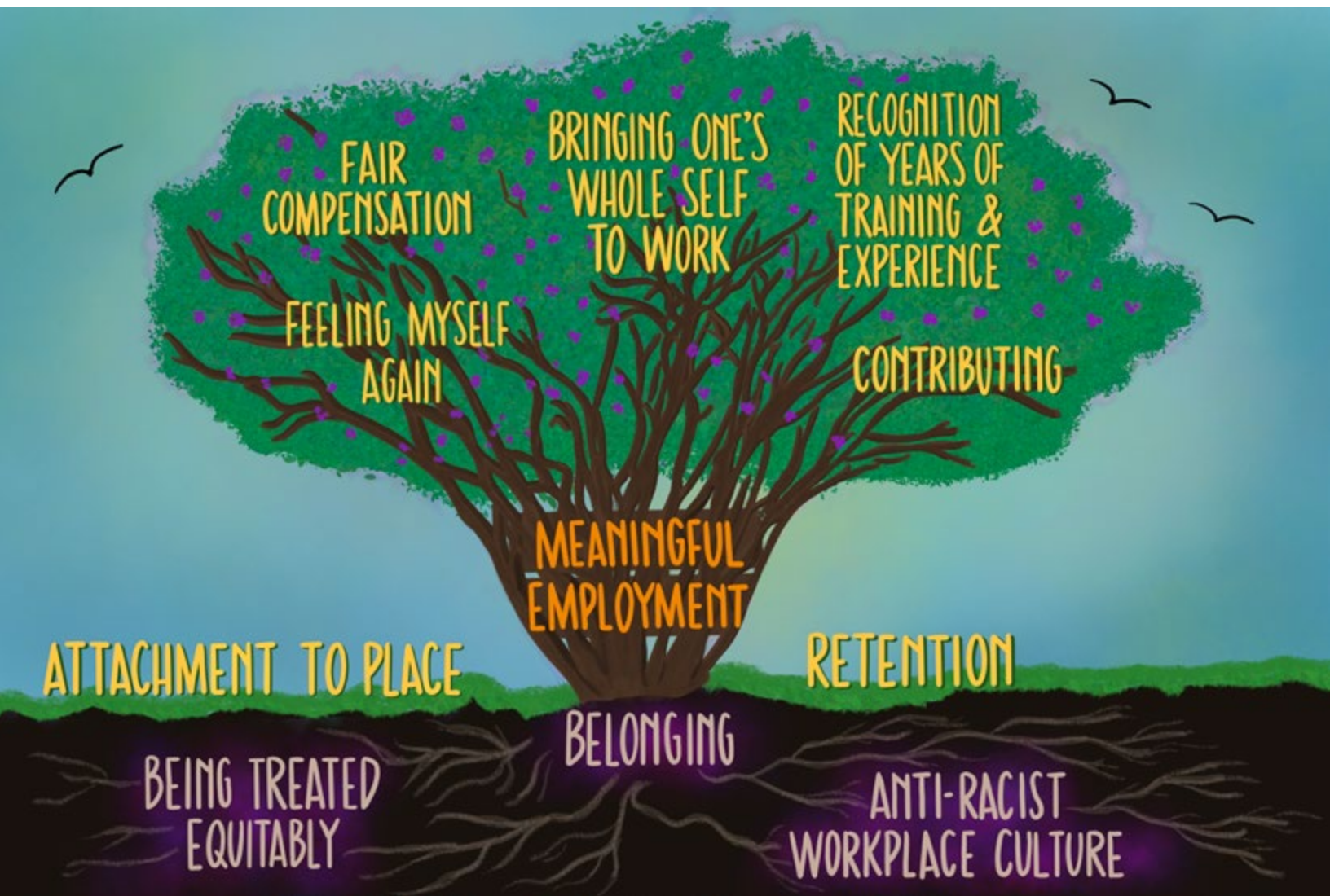
Adopt best practices on how the provision services, programs, and client environments can be more welcoming to diverse job seekers

Recommendation #25:

Lay out overtly, particularly for newcomer clients, what Career Development Practitioners and diverse job seekers roles are (i.e. who has responsibility for what and who will be in touch with whom when) and what services, timelines, and cultural assumptions may be at play

Recommendation #26:

Remain aware of some diverse job seekers' reticence to offer constructive or critical feedback when engaging in program or service evaluation



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APPENDIX A: PROJECT TIMELINE

ACTIVITY/ DELIVERABLES

TIME PERIOD

Workplan development March 2020

Workplan redevelopment June 2020, post-lockdown

Research preparation and June – July 2020
planning

Literature review & interview June – July 2020
protocol development

Participant recruitment July – October 2020

Data collection August – November 2020

Data analysis October – November 2020

Creation of final report December 2020 – March 2021

APPENDIX B: LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

- Indigenous Canadians have a harder time finding work and face higher unemployment than non-Indigenous Canadians and this gap can be even greater in economic downturns. Indigenous youth and Indigenous people without postsecondary education can be particularly effected (Statistics Canada, 2011).
- “In 2009, the average employment rate for Aboriginal people was 57.0%, compared with 61.8% for non-Aboriginal people. The gap in employment widened to 4.8 percentage points from 3.5 percentage points in 2008. At the same time, the unemployment rate rose sharply for Aboriginal people, rising from 10.4% in 2008 to 13.9%. The rate for non-Aboriginal people rose from 6.0% to 8.1%.” (Statistics Canada, 2011).
- “the probabilities of being employed full-time among those with an Aboriginal identity are quite low (0.65 for females and 0.75 for males)...the probability of being unemployed for female Aboriginal university graduates is very high (nearly .30). In fact, it is more than twice as high as visible minority females (0.14), and more than four times as high as non-minority female university graduates (0.07)...their probability is considerably higher than males who are not minorities (0.08)” (Walters, White, & Maxim, 2004).
- “Despite substantial efforts by government departments to eliminate roadblocks to career development and to foster the advancement of Aboriginal people into the Canadian federal public services executive category, the share of executive appointments to the public services for Aboriginal people continues to be disproportionate” (Dwyer, 2003, p.881).
- “Overall, there is a gap between labour market outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. The unemployment rate for Indigenous people aged 25 to 64 is 7 per cent higher than for non-Indigenous people. Indigenous people also

earn nearly \$10,000 less than their non-Indigenous counterparts” (MacLaine, Lalonde & Fiser, 2019, p.40).

- Caron et al. (2019) found interesting results as it relates to projects/companies that required the signing of Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs) versus those that did not. Signatory participants had 23% Indigenous employees while it was < 1% in non-signatory projects. Also “While non-signatory participants discussed challenges related to education, racism and equity, signatory participants mentioned issues related to language, culture, and managers’ skills.” Signatory projects had “many strategies to foster effective diversity management and meet agreement requirements. These strategies included liaison, mentoring and internal progression programs, as well as valuing Indigenous cultures in the workplace” (p.108).
- According to two Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reports, which examined 2006 (Block & Galabuzi, 2011) and 2016 (Block, S., Galabuzi, G.-E., & Tranjan, R., 2019) long Census data respectively, visible minorities in Canada (persons other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color), “encounter a firm and persistent color code that blocks them from accessing the best paying jobs” (Block, Galabuzi, & Tranjan, 2019).
- 2006 census data for labour force suggested that racialized Canadians are consistently under-represented in certain occupations (i.e. education, government service, business, and finance for men; management, and natural and applied sciences for women). Both racialized men and women are over-represented in administrative support, waste management and remediation services (low-paid, no-benefit, insecure jobs) – call centres, security services and janitorial services (Block & Galabuzi, 2011).
- 2016 census shows the unemployment rate was alarmingly high for some racialized groups (Block, Galabuzi, & Tranjan, 2019). The unemployment rates for Arabs and Black / Africans are still the highest, with the former being 85% and the latter 71 % higher than non-racialized Canadians. Unemployment rate for Arab women was even worse at 15.6% making Arab women’s unemployment rate 144% higher than non-racialized women.

- According to 2006 census data, poverty rates of racialized groups (defined in terms of the percentage of families with less than Low Income Measure After Tax) was three times higher than non-racialized families (i.e. 19.8% vs. 6.4%). This huge poverty gap slightly narrowed down but persisted until the 2016 census, recording 20.8% and 12.2% percent for racialized and non-racialized families respectively (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Block, Galabuzi, & Tranjan, 2019).

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

- A formal meta-analysis of 97 field experiments of discrimination found that Canada ranked among the top countries with high racial discrimination in hiring. It was found out that whites in Canada receive about 45 percent more call backs than non-white groups (Quillian, 2019).
- Research has shown that some employers (50% in one study) do not think that biases/cultural insensitivity are significant barriers to Indigenous recruitment, however, those same employers said that “current employees lack of awareness of Indigenous culture” was a common reason why Indigenous employees voluntarily leave their organization (ranked 3rd most strong reason) (MacLaine, Lalonde, & Fiser, 2019).
- One racist assumption that might be influencing discrimination are racist assumptions about productivity levels. In one study an employer shared: “We expect lower productivity at first, while [Indigenous employees] get into the system, while we teach them how it works.... Eventually, they achieve similar results [as non-Indigenous employees]” (Caron, 2019, p.110).
- Other assumptions/excuses influencing the employment prospects of racialized individuals include assumptions of limited language proficiency (Guo, 2009). Banerjee, Reitz, & Oreopoulos (2017) questioned employers about why they didn’t call Asian named applicants for an interview and they blamed it on “language difficulty” even though they didn’t call back those with Canadian education and experience nor did they consider whether the job required communication skills or not.

- One experiment in Australia (meant to estimate racial discrimination by employers) had over 4000 fictional individuals apply for entry-level jobs, “varying only the name as an indicator of ethnicity” (Booth, 2010, p.2). They found there was significant discrimination and that in order to get as many interviews “an Anglo applicant, an Indigenous person must submit 35 percent more applications, a Chinese person must submit 68 percent more applications, an Italian person must submit 12 percent more applications, and a Middle Eastern person 64 percent more applications” (p. 9).
- A similar experiment in Canada found that job applicants with Asian names were found to be 28 percent less likely to be called for an interview than applicants with Anglo-Canadian names (both groups had equivalent qualifications and their education and work experiences were Canadian) and those Asian-named applicants with foreign education and foreign work experience were found to be subjected to even more severe discrimination: they were 62.5 percent less likely to be called for an interview than Anglo-Canadian named applicants with Canadian qualifications and experience (Reitz, Oreopoulos, & Banerjee, 2017).
- Returning to the same data they found that regardless of the size of the employer the discrimination remained an issue and that biases against Asian-named applicants were found to be particularly evident in hiring for jobs with the highest skill levels (and, again, much stronger if they had foreign qualifications). A Canadian education did not give these applicants much of an edge. (Banerjee, Reitz, & Oreopoulos, 2017).
- Guo’s 2009 study found an ESL program which focussed on having newcomers erase their accent and change their names (directly and indirectly asking its clients to think, talk, and act like a white English-speaking Canadian). The author points out the importance of empowering immigrants and the strong link between one’s name and identity.
- According to the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act (Human Right Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2010), discrimination is prohibited in every aspect of employment. Discrimination is prohibited on many grounds including:

race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, social origin, religious creed, and religion. In pre-employment stages, employers are not allowed to ask questions which elicit information on such prohibited grounds through their job ads, application forms or interviews.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN JOB SEARCH APPROACH

- Cultural differences may influence how Indigenous job seekers look for work. Maru and Davis (2011) suggest a higher importance placed on social relationships; one employer in Caron's 2019 suggested that some Indigenous job seekers may not be as forthright/direct (as non-Indigenous) when talking about their strengths in an interview (some suggest, such as Wares et. al, 1992, that this may be due to a discouraging of self-promotion and a promotion of humility).
- "Aboriginal peoples working in an environment where individualism, interpersonal competition, and other such embraced norms and values may experience stress and conflict." (Dwyer, 2003, p.885).

MULTICULTURAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMPETENCIES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS

- A study done with 118 Canadian CPs (almost 90 % self-identifying as Caucasian and 75% were female) found that these CPs thought "Multicultural and Social Justice competencies" were important to career development practice. However, they saw themselves as not fully competent with respect to all core factors. Participants rated themselves within the moderately high range in terms of their awareness of their own cultural identities, values, assumptions, privileges, biases etc. However, participants placed the least importance and felt less personally competent in the skills competencies for having a Culturally Sensitive Working Alliance with their clients. (Collins, Arthur, McMahon, & Bisson, 2015).

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APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 1

(DIVERSE JOB SEEKERS)

1. Could you please tell us a little about yourself? How long have you been living in Newfoundland and Labrador and what do you like the most and the least about the town where you live now?
2. Are you currently working or looking for a job? Do you think you already found or will be able to find soon a job that is relevant to your background? If not, why?
3. Tell me about the name you use on your resumé. Do you use your full “real” name? Why or why not? If you don’t use your real name in your resumé, is this based on any advice you received from others? (if so, who gave you this advice?)
4. Do you think that job seekers from racially-/ethnically- and/or culturally-diverse backgrounds face extra challenges / barriers in finding employment here? If so, what are those challenges/barriers?
5. Can you think of any incident which left you with the impression that you had been treated unjustly in a hiring process and/or work setting? If so, could you please describe it? If you reported it to any professionals how did they help you?
6. How would you define your experience with career / employment counselling services? Do they help you better navigate and challenge injustices in hiring processes and/or work settings?

7. When looking for a job, a good working relationship with your Career Development Practitioner is important. Can you share an example of something a CDP once did or said that helped you to build an alliance? (when we say “alliance” we mean a professional relationship that is respectful, empowering, and to the benefit of both of you)
8. Can you think of an example of something a Career Development Practitioner did or said that you feel was not helpful to building an alliance between you?
9. Do you think the Career Development Practitioners that you have worked with understand what it is like for you to look for a job? (like unique challenges you might be faced with or cultural differences you might feel exist in how you do your job search)
10. If you could name one thing that you feel Career Development Practitioners have to fully understand or to do to better support job seekers like yourself, what would that be?
11. How do you define a successful outcome in your job search? Does (or did) your CDP seem to share / agree with your definition of a successful job outcome? If not, did this influence how you looked for a job or the kind of job you accepted?

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL 2

(CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS)

1. Could you please tell a little bit about yourself as it relates to your work? For example, what do you like most about the work you do?
2. Have you observed a change in the profile of your job seeker clients over the years you've been doing this kind of work? Briefly, how racially-/ethnically- and/or culturally-diverse would you describe them back then and now? If you were to guess, what percentage of your current clients would be in this category of diverse job seekers? (e.g. Indigenous, Black, persons of colour - not necessarily all newcomers)
3. Do you think job seekers from racially-/ethnically- and/or culturally-diverse backgrounds face extra challenges / barriers in finding meaningful employment here? If so, what do you think these challenges / barriers are?
4. Just quickly - Do you think other CDPs in NL would agree with you? If not, why?
5. Has this growing diversity of your clients influenced how you do your work? If so, how?
6. Do your diverse clients tend to keep in touch with you as much or less than other clients? If there is a difference what might be the reason?
7. Some diverse job seekers, because of cultural differences and lack of knowledge about local norms, may feel too shy or discouraged to reach out to potential employers who interviewed them (or even their own CDPs) to seek specific feedback or advice. Considering this reality, how do you feel these job seekers might best be helped before and after an interview?
8. Do you know of any diverse job seekers, from among your own clients or otherwise, who during their job search have used different names on their resumes than their real name? If so, why do you think that was the case and do you think this had an

impact on their job search experience or how they have been perceived by potential employers?

9. Have any of your diverse clients reported to you an incident which made them/you think that they were treated unjustly in a hiring process/work setting? If yes, how did you respond?
10. When doing this research, we have tried to think about our identities and how they might influence what people tell us or don't tell us - if you were to guess, how does your identity influence your relationships with your diverse clients? (That is, if you are white and a particular client is Black, do you think that would influence how you work with each other and what or how they might share with you?)
11. Research suggests that a strong alliance between employment counsellors and job seekers leads to better job outcomes for job seekers (by alliance, we mean a professional relationship that is mutually respectful, beneficial and one that empowers the job seeker). How do you think a strong alliance can be built with diverse job seekers? Can you think of an example of when you or a colleague has done something that has helped build a strong alliance with a racially-/ethnically- and/or culturally-diverse client?
12. What about the flip side of that - can you share one thing that you or a colleague did or said in the past that you feel might not have helped build a strong alliance with one of your diverse clients?
13. We are curious about Career Development Practitioners' "pain points" as it relates to supporting these kinds of clients - If you could name one thing that you feel you need to better understand or resources that you need to better support your racially-/ethnically- and/or culturally-diverse clients, what would that be?
14. Does your organization keep track of employment stats as it relates to race/ethnicity? (we know, for example, that many community agencies use ARMS, does your organization ever print reports that show how your diverse clients specifically have fared in the job market?)
15. Turning to the organizational level now - What do you feel community agencies could do more of or less of to better support job seekers who are racially-/ethnically- and/or culturally-diverse?

The logo for Drawing Change, featuring the words "Drawing" and "Change" stacked vertically in a black, handwritten-style font.

Summary visuals by **Adriana Contreras**
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The logo for Livlee, featuring the word "Livlee" in a red, cursive script font.

Supplementary visuals and report design
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