

# **Characteristics of Developmental/ Intellectual Disability**





# Background

- Meetings with several potential employers who required some understanding of the nature of intellectual disability (e.g. Shaw, Scotiabank, Alberta Health Services)
- Ideally, we are looking for employers with an inclusive mindset who are willing to discuss creating opportunities and job descriptions that are appropriate for people with intellectual impairments
- Sometimes people can fit into current job descriptions (entry level), but most often they will require adaptations

- Manifests early on in a person's development – before 18 years (PDD requirement  $IQ < 70$ )
- Set of markers, not necessarily an identifiable cause like Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or brain injury
- Affects intellectual functioning
  - general ability to learn; often the learning curve is longer, people may learn in unique ways
- Affects adaptive functioning
  - skills needed for everyday life- conceptual skills, social skills and practical skills

# Conceptual skills

- Understanding language, expressing thoughts and ideas, reading, writing, numeracy, abstract concepts
- Retaining information, cognitive processing, decision-making, judgement, and problem solving can be impacted
- Understanding consequences

# Social Skills

- Interpersonal and communication skills often impacted
- May have difficulty understanding someone else's perspective
- May struggle with nuance and social cues, including how to respond appropriately in different social situations.
- Developing and maintaining friendships

# Practical Skills

- Personal care, housekeeping, cooking, transportation, organization, finding/maintaining employment
- May need support to learn and manage day to day activities
- Accommodations can assist people with learning practical skills

# What Developmental Disability is NOT

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Although can co-occur in some people...

- Mental health disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment

# What is important to know?

- The person (not the label) – focusing on their uniqueness, gifts, strengths, and support needs
- What type, if any, accommodations and supports are required for success
- Understanding what works and what doesn't for individual people – family and the people that know the person well are best resources for this information