

**Title: APPLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING TOWARD A CONTRIBUTIVE FUTURE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Descriptive Abstract (25 Words):**

Early contribution analysis research findings by UBC / G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre with in-patient and out-patient populations experiencing DPM applied cognitive psychological education will be presented.

**Topic Track(s):**

- **Psychological Well-Being: Addressing the Mental Barriers to Returning to Work - Applied Empirical Study**
- **Success Stories, Case Studies, and Solutions for Stakeholders – Applied Empirical Study**

**Extended Abstract (500-1500 words):**

People suddenly facing the effects of a disability have to overcome both physical and mental challenges in order to address the new life changes in themselves, their families, and workplaces. Despite supportive DM policies, legislation, employer incentives, and workplace based supports, individual and family adjustments to disabling conditions can prolong recovery and return to work outcomes. At any stage in the recovery process after a disabling injury or occupational illness, hope, belief in self, resiliency, and strength are essential both for quality of life and return to work outcomes. This study focuses on the DPM (Discovering the Power in Me) 2 day 12 module program of integration of the rehabilitation of the mind and spirit along with the rehabilitation of the body in a major trauma hospital in British Columbia with both in-patient and out-patient populations with spinal cord injuries. In addition to this research underway, DPM has been delivered to a cross-disability group and is being evaluated by the University of Toronto. DPM has also been utilized in Washington State and Canadian Forces military populations in recognition that military members returning from combat or long term stressful environments with visible or invisible (PTSD, TBI, , etc.) may struggle in navigating their post deployment lives and in managing transitions to future civilian employment.

“Discovering the Power in Me – Creating a Future of Strength and Hope” was conceived, designed, and developed in British Columbia through a collaborative effort of persons with disabilities who had successfully transitioned in their own lives (and were ‘thought leaders’ in NGOs, government, foundations, etc.), healthcare professionals, and The Pacific Institute (a global leader for almost 40 years empowering individuals and organizations for growth and personal excellence). The program took two years to complete and is delivered in clinical and organizational settings to provide persons with

disabilities, their families, and care-givers with the necessary tools to manage change, build strength, resiliency, and self-efficacy. The 12 module video based program includes peer counselors, group discussions and is facilitated in group settings. The practical tools and concepts conveyed to participants are designed to lessen the depth of despair following the onset of a disability, shorten the transition from previous normal to a new normal, and to enable participants to implement steps toward positive changes and contributive futures. As renowned cognitive psychologist Dr. Albert Bandura (Stanford University) stated: “Unless you believe you can, you have no incentive to act”. In this study DPM addresses the formation of beliefs. Thus enabled and with new skills to manage their own thinking effectively, return to work through DM and productive employment are more probable outcomes.

The contributive research project at UBC/G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre included pre and post survey methodology with follow-up coaching to anchor the concepts and enhance positive goal setting. Early results from the applied research surveys (Multidimensional Health Locus of Control, Moorong Self-Efficacy Scale, Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale, Reintegration to Normal Living Index, and Life Satisfaction Questionnaire) will be presented along with the relevance of the program to DM practitioners and future developments.

The Principal Investigator is Dr. Andrea Townsen, MD, FRCPC, GF Strong Site Medical Lead; Head, UBC Division of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with support from Research Assistant Aaron Chan, Jane Hsieh, M.Sc. Executive Director of the Translational Research Program and Interim Executive Director of the Knowledge Translation-Knowledge Mobilization Program for the Rick Hansen Spinal Cord Injury Solutions Network and Blake Williams contributor to National Institute for Disability Management and Research (Canada), Centre for National Research on Disability & Rehabilitative Medicine (Australia), and The Pacific Institute (U.S.A.) .