



CSPDM Virtual Mini Conference Agenda

Date: June 10, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM Pacific / 11:00 AM Central / 12:00 PM Eastern / 1:00 PM Atlantic

Format: Virtual (Zoom)

Duration: 2.5 Hours

[Register Here](#)

Theme: Canadian Harmony and Managing Disability Management in Today's Geopolitical Climate

Time (PT)	Speaker	Organization / Title	Province	Duration	Topic
9:00-9:03	John Mutch	Moderator, Chair, CSPDM		3 min	Welcome & Opening Remarks
9:03-9:08	Gord Johns	Member of Parliament, Courtenay- Alberni (Federal)	Federal	5 min	Federal perspective on disability management and inclusion
9:08-9:33	Ian Lewis	Occupational Health & Safety Wellness Leader, Lewis Health Management Consulting	Saskatchewan	25 min	Mental health landscape and return- to-work
9:33-9:58	Connie Deschamps	Vice President, Return to Work, WSIB Ontario	Ontario	25 min	System performance and RTW strategies
9:58-10:03	Break	-	-	5 min	Washroom Break
10:03-10:13	Wolfgang Zimmermann	Executive Director, NIDMAR	National	10 min	Executive Perspective on Disability Management in Canada
10:13-10:43	Leslie Allan- Reed & Sue Bateman	Director – Absence and Disability Management Fraser Health & BC Nurses Union Representative	British Columbia	30 min	Employer–Union collaboration in Disability Management



10:43-11:03	Lucie Kocum & Yanbo Wang	Associate Professor, St. Mary's University & Student at St. Mary's University	Nova Scotia	20 min	Research: accommodation planning, second opinions & generative AI
11:03-11:28	All Speakers (Moderated)	Panel Q & A	-	23 min	Audience Q & A
11:28-11:30	John Mutch	Moderator, Chair, CSPDM	-	2 min	Closing Remarks

Presenter Bios & Photos

Gord Johns, MP Courtenay-Alberni



Gord Johns has spent his life serving communities on Vancouver Island and across Canada as a parliamentarian, a local elected official, and a lifelong community advocate.

He was first elected as Member of Parliament for Courtenay–Alberni in 2015 and has since been re-elected three times over ten years. In Parliament, he is known for his work on mental health and substance-use health, coastal protection, forestry transition, and community resilience. He has introduced national legislation, secured federal investments for wildfire response, biomass energy, salmon restoration, and rural infrastructure, and worked to ensure rural, coastal, and Indigenous communities are heard in Ottawa. He has received national recognition for this work, including awards for community leadership and advancing compassionate, evidence-based public policy.

Before entering federal politics, he owned and operated his own eco-clothing store and served as an elected Councillor for the District of Tofino and Executive Director of the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce. These experiences grounded him in practical problem-solving with a focus on economic development, public safety, environmental stewardship, and standing up for working people and small rural communities.

Beyond elected office, he has spent decades working alongside youth, environmental and conservation groups, labour, harm-reduction and mental-health advocates, and Indigenous partners. Whether in Parliament, council chambers, or community halls, he is driven by a commitment to social justice, public health, environmental protection, and ensuring people have a voice in the decisions that shape their lives.



Ian Lewis, M.Sc., B.Sc.(OT), OT Reg (SK)



Ian believes healthy work improves people's health. He has his Masters in Workplace Health & Well-being, is a member of the Technical Committee for the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace and currently works in a large organization coordinating their employee well-being and psychological health and safety strategies. He is also an Occupational Therapist and practiced for 20 years in workplace rehabilitation. Outside of work, he volunteers on several boards and can be found experimenting with bread recipes in the kitchen or paddle boarding on Last Mountain Lake.

Connie Deschamps, Vice President, Return to Work, WSIB Ontario



Connie Deschamps is the Vice-President, Return-to Work at WSIB. She brings more than 20 years of experience leading complex claims, disability, and return to work programs across public and private sector organizations. She is recognized for building customer focused service models that align operational delivery with enterprise strategy.

Throughout her career, Connie has held progressively senior leadership roles spanning adjudication, program management, and executive oversight. Her experience includes consulting and operational leadership within large, complex organizations, including the Government of British

Columbia and the University of British Columbia. This breadth has enabled her to operate effectively in both unionized and non-unionized environments and across diverse industry contexts.

Connie brings deep expertise in claims management, disability and accommodation practices, and system level service design. She has played key roles in developing and strengthening service models that balance policy, operational excellence, and client experience, while supporting organizational objectives. In her leadership roles, Connie is known for combining strategic insight with practical execution, enabling sustainable improvements in service delivery and outcomes. She leverages her consulting background to approach challenges analytically, while remaining grounded in operational realities.

Connie holds a Master of Business Administration from Simon Fraser University and a Bachelor of Arts from Laurentian University.

Wolfgang Zimmermann, President of PCU-WHS, Executive Director of NIDMAR

Wolfgang Zimmerman, OBC, is the President of the Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS) and the Executive Director of the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR). Having a degree in civil and forest engineering, following an industrial accident in 1977, he was retrained and continued to work for his pre-disability employer until his retirement from that organization in 2010. He became involved in the disability management field in the late 1980's and has held a wide range of private and public sector appointments in disability management advocacy such as



Chair of the Premier's Council for Persons with Disabilities, the British Columbia Workers Compensation Board, Minister's Council for Employment for Persons with Disabilities, National Advisory Board for Veterans Affairs, and has appeared before Parliamentary and Senate Committees as expert witness. He has received many awards and commendations for his work on disability prevention and rehabilitation including the Order of British Columbia, the Governor General's Appreciation Award, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, the Lieutenant Governor's BC Community Achievement Award, to name just a few.

Leslie Allan-Reed, Director, Absence & Disability Management, Fraser Health



With a track record of delivering multi-million-dollar disability cost avoidance through large-scale process improvements and change initiatives, Leslie Allan-Reed is widely recognized as an industry expert in Disability Management. As Director of Absence and Disability Management at Fraser Health — one of the largest health authorities in Canada — she leads a team of 65 professionals dedicated to reducing the organization's overall disability burden. Holding a master's degree in Disability Management and 30-years of experience in the field, Leslie brings deep expertise in best-practice DM services within complex, unionized healthcare environments, and is a skilled leader in strategic planning, organizational development, employee engagement, coaching, and conflict resolution.

Sue Bateman, RPN, CDMP, Manager, Occupational Health & Safety, BC Nurses' Union



Sue Bateman holds a Master of Arts in Leadership (Royal Roads University) and a Labour Relations Certificate from Queen's University and is a Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP). She is a healthcare leader and Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) committed to social justice and advocacy. As the Manager of OH&S at the BC Nurses' Union, she directs high-performance teams to deliver strategic safety and disability management initiatives for over 55,000 members.

With deep expertise in disability management and labour relations, Sue utilizes a thorough understanding of WorkSafeBC standards and OH&S legislation. She is an expert mediator and communicator, skilled at navigating "sticky" situations by viewing challenges from multiple perspectives to foster collaboration. She has proven ability to manage complex projects, organizational budgets, and diverse stakeholder networks. She is known for fostering psychologically healthy, safe environments and promoting professional growth through coaching and mentorship.

Dr. Lucie Kocum, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Psychology at Saint Mary's University



Dr. Lucie Kocum. PhD, is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Saint Mary's University. Dr. Kocum's work focuses on equity, accessibility, inclusion, epistemic justice, and the role of First Voice lived experience in systemic change. In partnership with disability thought leaders, researchers, and practitioners, and with funding from SSHRC, CIHR, the Nova Scotia Department of Culture and Heritage, and Saint Mary's University's Durland Fund for accessibility research, Dr. Kocum developed and tested the proof of concept for the Job Access Management web application, or JAM-app, designed to support accommodations planning and decision-making. She is currently developing an



AI-assisted version 2.0 that uses AI in a controlled, research-driven manner, trained on scientific evidence and knowledge from workers with disabilities, disability managers, and organizational leaders.

Yanbo Wang, Psychology Honours student at Saint Mary's University



Yanbo Wang is a Psychology Honours student at Saint Mary's University with an interest in workplace culture and equity-based practices in organizations. His current research interests focus on the role of generative AI in accommodation planning. He hopes to gain a better understanding of how this emerging technology may shape the accessibility process and decision-making in organizational settings.