

Resource Persons: Iñaki Navarete (Seminar Series Coordinator), Alizeh Ladak (Seminar Coordinator), Bwighane Mwenifumbo (Rapporteur)

Organized by: McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, in conjunction with the Human Rights Working Group Disability and the Law Portfolio

Summary of Seminar

In this last installment to the seminar series “Autonomy and Security in the Context of Independent Living”, Iñaki Navarete moderated an interdisciplinary panel on how independent living and integration in the community can be achieved.

Fahreen Nanji spoke for persons with disabilities that living with a disability is quite expensive and the recent government cuts in social services have worsened the situation for many persons with disabilities. While government programs are very helpful, they are still considered institutions and do not provide the support that one’s own home might provide, such as living with one’s children. Additionally, many persons with disabilities fall in an income bracket that disqualifies them from receiving governmental disability-related services. While it is important to maximize limited resources, the most important decisions about who gets support are dictated by individual needs.

He spoke on his experiences at ARCH Disability Center which specializes in testing and advocating for disability rights. He focused on the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the workforce. Despite the advances in the understanding of disability from the medical model to the social model, there is still a strong remnant of the legislative structures. An investigation in Ontario revealed that persons with disabilities were working in some jobs that paid below the minimum wage as a form of discrimination. Such a situation is not creating work opportunities for PWDs. Such

most schools in the province still segregate students with intellectual disabilities. New Brunswick has developed a new inclusive education policy that creates a template for other provinces to follow.

Marie-Christine Beshay approached independent living from a community perspective and shed light on the work done by occupational therapists. Occupational therapists (OTs) look at the individual as a whole and consider physical abilities, cognitive abilities, and emotional functions in order to assess the impact of the disability on a person's ability to engage in their occupation and take care of themselves. OTs also consider the physical environment and advocate for environmental modifications that allow their clients to engage in their occupations. The main priority of OTs is to avoid occupational deprivation for their clients because occupations allow participation and engagement in life. The 9(u)-1(n)-1(i)s1(d)-11(y)al