



REALIZE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

**At the Intersections of HIV, Aging,
Disability and Wellbeing**

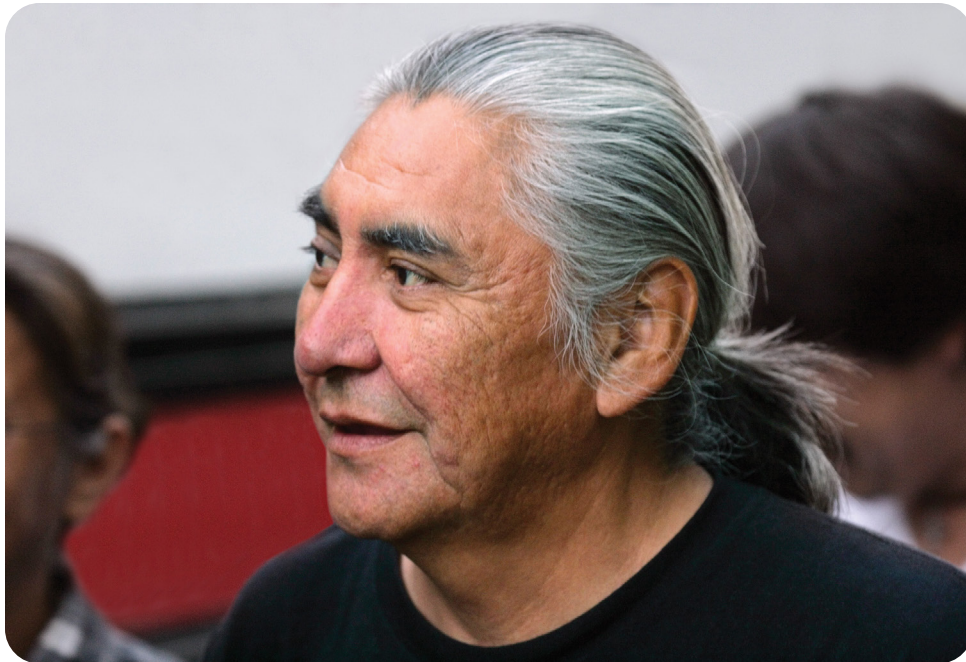
Land Acknowledgement

Realize acknowledges the land on which we work, Turtle Island, is the territory of diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on this land.

Within the cultural mosaic of Canada, we acknowledge the many peoples, and their traditions, and backgrounds, who have contributed to this place we call home.

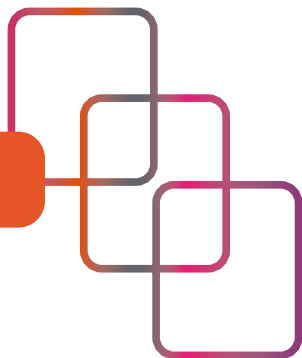
You, your families, and your ancestors, all have roles to play in making this an inclusive and welcoming space that upholds people's rights. For that, all of us at **Realize** say, Thank You!



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Front Cover: July 30, 2022, Montreal. Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, is pictured at the Disability Networking Zone (DNZ) within the Global Village at AIDS 2022. **Realize** co-hosted both the DNZ and the first ever Silver Zone (for older adults living with HIV) at the international AIDS conference, with much of the preliminary organizing occurring in the year covered by this Annual Report. Our goal was to draw attention to ongoing ableism and ageism in the global HIV response, advocate for change and create a space for community members to share their experiences. Pictured with Dr. Tam are **Realize** Executive Director, Tammy Yates-Rajaduray (left), and **Realize** Board Member and DNZ volunteer, Daniel Sands (right) in their wheelchair, "Diva". (Dr. Tam was the keynote speaker on the first day of our 2nd National Summit on Episodic Disabilities and Employment – a special session on Long-COVID – in March 2022.)

About *Realize*



Realize is the leading national, charitable, organization working to improve the health and well-being of people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities, across their lifespans, through integrated research, education, policy, and practice (www.realizecanada.org).

Realize promotes innovation and excellence in rehabilitation in the context of HIV and other episodic disabilities with a primary focus on healthy aging, optimal access to rehabilitation and meaningful social inclusion. **Realize** is multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary in its membership and activities. Members come from across Canada, as well as internationally, and include people living with HIV and other chronic conditions, members of community-based HIV and disability organizations, national associations of health professionals, government agencies, private businesses, universities, and the employment sector.

During the year covered by this Annual Report, our work continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The HIV, aging, and disability communities we serve have been affected both directly and indirectly during COVID-19; in some cases, experiencing higher risks of infection and illness, but also through increased social isolation and challenges in accessing needed supports and services.

For people living with ongoing illness from COVID infection itself (“long-COVID”) our work on episodic disability has become increasingly important. **Realize** is dedicated to bringing people and communities together to improve quality of life for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities – work that has become even more significant amidst the uncertainty and disruption of COVID-19.

We can only make this happen with your help!

- Become a **Realize** advocate and share our work with the people you know.
- Become a **Realize** member – see our website at www.realizecanada.org.
- Make a donation (<https://www.realizecanada.org/take-action/donate/>) – you can make a one-time gift or become a monthly donor, an easy and affordable way to give that helps **Realize** plan more effectively.
- Help foster positive change for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities with a [charitable gift in your Will](#), while still supporting those you love.



Our Reach

Realize has individual and organizational members across Canada, and strong partnerships internationally. Our Board membership is diverse and includes health care and other professionals, as well as activists from the HIV and disability communities. We convene or play a vital role in many coalitions that focus on issues of critical concern to people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities – including our roles as Secretariat of the National Coordinating Committee on HIV and Aging, Convener of the Episodic Disabilities Forum and founding organization of the National Community Advisory Group on optimal health and wellbeing in the HIV community.

Realize has a national constituency of over 3,400 people we reach annually, through our courses, forums, and think tanks, who apply their learnings working within a wide range of community-based organizations, professional associations, care centres, clinics, and research groups.

Our Thanks

The impact of **Realize's** work transcends the size of our organization because of the expertise and dedication of our Board of Directors, staff, members, volunteers, partners, and donors. **Thank you.**

We particularly thank the Public Health Agency of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, Gilead Canada, ViiV Healthcare Canada, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, and the Ontario HIV Treatment Network for their generous support.

Realize continues to attract first rate, post-secondary education practicum students. In Fiscal Year 2021-2022, Kayla Robertson was an invaluable member of the **Realize** team in her capacity as a Master of Social Work practicum student.

Realize

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YouTube

Instagram

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Established 1998,
Incorporated 2002,
Charitable Registration number 85699 5535 RR0001



Board of Directors



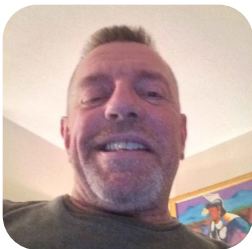
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Realize extends a heartfelt thank you to Gayle Restall for her expertise and dedicated leadership as a member of our Board of Directors. A registered Occupational Therapist and Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba (now retired), Gayle first joined **Realize** as a member of our Research, Education and Program Advisory Committee. She joined the Board of Directors in 2016 and became Board Co-Chair in 2020. Gayle led the development of the [HIV Workplace Disclosure Decision Guide](#). Her Board term comes to an end in September, but we welcome her continued guidance as an active member.

Staff



Puja Ahluwalia
National Lead,
Optimal Health
& Wellbeing



Janet London
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Melissa Popiel
Curriculum
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& Program Officer



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Engagement
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& Program Officer



Cathy Kozuch
Bookkeeper



Elizabeth Racz
National Research
& Program Officer



Join Us

for the TCS Charity Challenge program,
at the Toronto Waterfront Marathon,
October 16th

If you are looking for a challenge this fall,
why not put your running (walking) shoes on
and join **Realize** for the [TCS Charity Challenge](#)
as part of the [Toronto Waterfront Marathon](#)
(marathon, half marathon, 5k).

Realize is an official charity partner.



Message from the Co-Chairs

The year covered in this Annual Report (April 2021 to March 2022) was one of uncertainty. By delivering programs virtually, **Realize** was able to continue, and make breakthroughs, in our important work to foster positive change for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities. The health threats, restrictions, and social isolation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have had a disproportionately negative effect on members, partners, and friends living at the intersections of HIV, aging, disability, and wellness. Many have experienced increased isolation, often going without important social and health supports. As COVID-related public health safety measures are being relaxed, it is important to acknowledge that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic persist and affect vulnerable community members the most. The **Realize** team knows it is even more crucial now to build and maintain real opportunities and sustainable strategies for meaningful community engagement and change-making.

The importance of social connection and lack of practical supports were recurring themes amongst participants in our ground-breaking community-based research study in Ontario, PANACHE (*Preferences and Needs for Aging Care Among HIV-positive Elderly people*) – the [PANACHE report](#) was released in August 2021. The aim of the study was to make sense of the experiences of older adults living with HIV using a rights-based framework and brainstorm solutions to the challenges they face. We are immensely proud of the way we approached this work, its outcomes, and its potential to influence policy discussions and better practices. The PANACHE ON study findings and recommendations are having ripple effects in our own work on HIV and aging, in the programs of our partners, and beyond.

Livelihood and employment concerns were again top of mind for many people this year during the disruption caused by COVID-19. For people living with episodic disabilities, finding, and keeping work is a familiar worry that the pandemic amplified. But some good news has begun to emerge from the uncertainty. Many businesses and other employers were forced to move to new ways of working such as employees working from home. They discovered that the new practices are effective and offer additional benefits and opportunities – including benefits for employees living with disabilities. As one participant (a business leader) in **Realize's** 2nd National Summit on Episodic Disability and Employment (March 2022) explained, “I have seen employees with episodic disability and chronic illness seeing improvement in their symptoms as they have been able to control their environment to a greater degree working from home.” This second edition of the Summit (which featured a one-day special session on long-COVID) was attended by people living with episodic disability, business leaders, human resource professionals and government representatives. *People living with episodic disabilities have valuable skills that businesses and organizations need, especially in a competitive labour market. We are experiencing increased interest in accommodation best practices and ways of recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce.*

Our **Realize** Think Tank this year focused on HIV and Chronic Pain. The facilitated conversations touched on topics ranging from access to pain management support, stigma related to living with HIV and/or drug use, the multi-factorial root causes of pain (physical, emotional, psychological, etc.), measurement of

pain, and strategies for people living with pain. Conversations like these are an important tool in building momentum towards a comprehensive understanding of optimal health and well-being. Pain can reduce people's activities and increase their social isolation. Facilitating conversations about the impacts of pain encourages a broad understanding of wellness that can guide health professionals and researchers to promote living well.

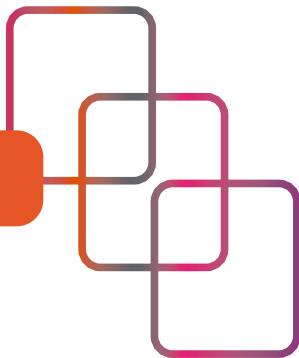
In our efforts to improve well-being for people living at the intersections of HIV, aging, disability, and wellness, **Realize** helps lead ongoing dialogues across the HIV, aging, and disability sectors in Canada. Especially in a time of limited social interactions like the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical to support people where they are most likely to engage. However, appropriate sexual health supports for older adults living with HIV and people living with disabilities are not readily available. Over the course of 2021-2022, **Realize** laid the groundwork for a major project we will undertake over the next five years to [address ageism and ableism in Canada's HIV response](#).

These are just a few examples of the wide-ranging work **Realize** accomplished in 2021-22 and the key issues we champion. You can find out more in the program pages of this Report and on the recently redesigned [Realize website](#).

As the co-chairs of the Board, we have been inspired by the expertise, energy, and creativity of the **Realize** team and that of our valued members, partners, volunteers, and funders. As a Board we have been diligent in ensuring **Realize**'s financial stability. We are committed to 'walking the talk' when it comes to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Leading to Belonging (IDEAL). The IDEAL sub-committee of the Board informs both our internal policies and procedures, but most importantly, our approach to program conceptualization, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. In this, and all our work, we are driven by our goal to foster positive change for all people living with HIV and episodic disabilities in Canada. We hope you find inspiration and food for thought in the pages of this Report and urge you to join us as we prepare to celebrate our 25th **Realize** anniversary in 2023.

Gayle Restall and Paul Curwin,
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors





Realize and COVID-19



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The twelve months covered by this Annual Report (April 2021 to March 2022) marked the second full year of the COVID-19 pandemic which forced everyone (the public, government, business, our partners, funders, members, volunteers, and staff) to reimagine ways of doing things.

While we have adapted and found new ways of working, connecting, and supporting each other, the pandemic (the spread of the virus, social disruptions, and uncertainty) exposed inequities and outright neglect in our social systems.

The degree to which long-standing institutions and policies have failed older adults and others in

long-term care, people living with disabilities, racialized communities, lower income families and those with precarious employment has been brought to the fore. There are many lessons to be learned, some of which the HIV and disability communities know well and have been working to address, and others where we all need to do better.

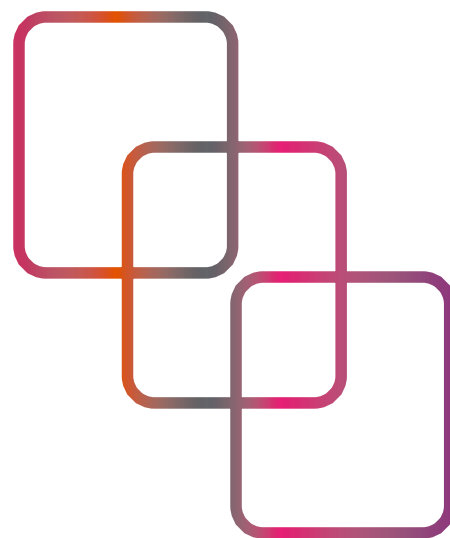
In our convening and knowledge-building role, **Realize** has been able to carry out our work successfully in the virtual world – of course, all community discussions are coloured by people’s personal- and work- life experiences during COVID. We also must acknowledge that pivoting to virtual or ‘distanced’ work was far more difficult for our partners that deliver frontline services. **The practical needs and social support landscape for people living with HIV and with episodic disabilities changed during COVID-19 and is likely to look different moving forward.** Though everyone is eager to get to a post-COVID world, the pandemic’s impacts on mental health and the effects of long-COVID, for instance, are likely to be with us for years to come. Long-COVID is increasingly being recognized as an episodic disability with the potential for long-term ramifications for those affected. **Realize’s** study of these potential impacts on employment and workplace accommodations – [Pandemic Pandora’s Box](#) – is available on our website.

In the **Realize** program reports that follow, you can read about the progress we made on aging well with HIV, optimal access to rehabilitation, optimal health and wellbeing, and meaningful social inclusion in 2021-2022 during the COVID pandemic. **While we usually think of COVID-19 in terms of overcoming challenges, it is important to note that new opportunities also opened-up. Using virtual platforms broadened our ability to engage people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities in all regions of Canada and in more remote communities.** The need to rethink ways of working forced by the pandemic, across employment sectors, has lessened some of the stigma that existed about workplace accommodations, with the potential to benefit many people living and working with HIV and other

episodic disabilities. We see this in the increased numbers of employers and human resource professionals interested in our courses and training on workplace accommodation. In the policy realm, there appears to be new energy to understand how people's intersecting identities and the social determinants of health affect personal and community well-being – key components of our understanding of optimal health.



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Healthy Aging

Realize promotes healthy aging with episodic disabilities including HIV and other chronic conditions by leading coordinated efforts in bridging new and strengthening existing partnerships, across clinical, research, community, and policy domains in chronic disease, aging and rehabilitation.

We would not have had vaccines for COVID-19 so quickly without the foundational research that went before in trying to find a vaccine for HIV. We would not have had that clinical research nor other successful global HIV/AIDS responses without the activism and energy of people living with HIV and their allies throughout the 1980s, 90s and 2000s. While medical advances can occur relatively quickly, social policy and practice change move more slowly, and sometimes not at all, unless pushed. The face of HIV in Canada and elsewhere is aging and still older adults living with HIV (many of whom were the early HIV advocates) are falling through gaps in our HIV, aging and disability support systems today. **Realize** is dedicated to shedding light on these gaps and to working collaboratively to bridge them.

In 2021-2022:

We co-published the PANACHE Ontario (Preferences And Needs for Aging Care Among HIV-positive Elderly people) community report summarizing the findings of a qualitative community-based participatory research (CBPR) study. The project engaged older people living with HIV (age 60+) in community consultations held at nine community-based organizations in Ontario, Canada to ascertain their preferences and needs for aging care. You can find the PANACHE ON report on the [Realize website](#). We also produced [video clips](#) featuring 8 members of the research team which describe CBPR principles that underpin the PANACHE study (video creator: Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco).

In partnership with members of the National Coordinating Committee on HIV and Aging's Research Working Group, we lead the development of the Pan-Canadian Research Agenda on HIV, Aging and Older Adulthood. The Research Agenda builds on **Realize** Think Tank conversations held in March 2021 and an updated Environmental Scan of In-Process Research on Health, HIV and Aging conducted in the summer of 2021 (an update to an earlier scan done in 2013).



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So we have that, that ageism. Then we have the HIV issue. Then we have the LGBTIQ thing... so I mean seriously, you know, you got 5 strikes there already, you know what I mean? By the time you add it all up. So, you know, you're starting from the... what's the word I want? An unvoicable position, so to speak.”

Participant in the PANACHE study

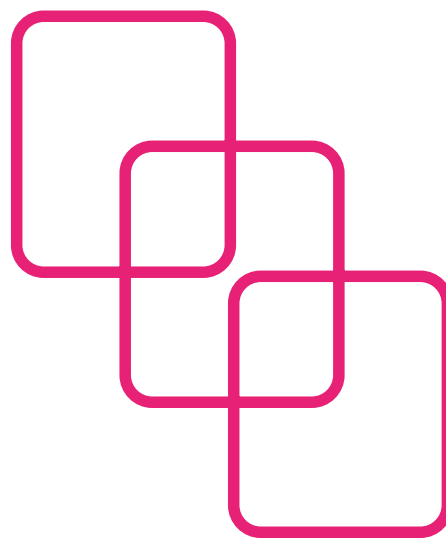
The [Pan-Canadian Research Agenda on HIV, Aging and Older Adulthood](#) represents a clear, community-informed plan to optimize the impact of research focused on HIV, aging and older adults in Canada over the next five years. Uptake of the recommendations will help ensure the efforts of knowledge keepers, mobilizers, and users in the previously siloed fields of HIV and gerontology are synergistic, centre the living expertise of aging and older people living with and affected by HIV, and lead to the development of effective, equitable HIV- and aging-related policies, practices, and programs.

In early October 2021 – working in partnership with the CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network (CTN) – **Realize** organized the 3rd Canadian HIV and Aging Symposium and Virtual Community UnConference titled *HIV and Aging WELL: WE Live & Learn Together*. 142 participants took part across the three-day, virtual event. Aging and older people living with HIV were engaged as members of the Symposium and UnConference Planning Committee (>50% of event hosts, speakers and workshop facilitators were people living and aging with HIV and 80% of people who completed the post-event evaluations identified as having living expertise of HIV). **The four central themes that emerged focused on; social priorities and service access, biomedical and clinical advances, and the need to consider diverse perspectives on aging with HIV including racial, sexual and gender identity.**

Our studies, research scans and ongoing dialogues are a part of an ongoing process to ensure the HIV response is relevant to the complex needs of aging and older people living with HIV in Canada and beyond, but there is much more to be done. In the spring of 2022, along with our Canadian and international partners, we were approved to host the first ever *Silver Zone* at the 24th International AIDS Conference being held in Montreal. That this is the first-time people aging with HIV will have a dedicated space in the Global Village of an international AIDS conference indicates the degree to which the response lags behind the demographics. Also, in early 2022, **Realize** received funding approval for a multi-year project to begin addressing both ageism and ableism in Canada's HIV response. Please watch [our website](#) for new developments in this work.



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Optimal Access to Rehabilitation, Optimal Health, and Wellbeing

Realize plays a significant leadership role in promoting positive changes in policy and practice to enhance timely and appropriate access to rehabilitation for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities by advancing education with clinical, research, community and policy stakeholders on evidence-informed rehabilitation

Promoting optimal health and wellbeing for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities is a major pillar of our work at **Realize**. Until quite recently, the top goals in the global response to HIV were almost exclusively focused on testing, anti-viral treatment, and viral suppression. While these goals are admirable on their own, they do not address the complex health and social experiences of people living long-term with HIV – comorbidities, stigma, frailty and pain, income insecurity, and many other factors. **Realize** was founded in 1998 out of a gathering of health professionals, researchers, community activists and others who believed that rehabilitation supports (physical and social) could play an important role in improving quality of life for people living with HIV. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted people's access to rehabilitative services, we continue to break new ground in exploring optimal health and well-being and look forward to making these services the standard in care and support for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities.

In 2021-2022:

Realize relaunched a new, updated version of our highly regarded [E-Module: An HIV & Rehab Resource](#) in an interactive, online format in both English and French. The free E-Module is our most highly accessed resource – in its previous format as a pdf doc it was downloaded over 100,000 times by people around the world. The new online tool is easier to access and use across different devices and is accessible to a greater number of people. The E-Module was developed for rehabilitation providers, people living with HIV and others interested in the important role of rehabilitation for quality of life and function. Our new, interactive resource is divided into an introduction followed by six sections that cover the role of



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Since Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) was introduced in 1996, HIV treatment has transformed HIV from a condition with a high fatality rate into a manageable chronic condition. Today, early diagnosis and appropriate treatment mean that people with HIV can expect to live almost as long as the general population. This shift from deadly infection to long-term illness requires a corresponding shift in focus from saving lives to improving health and wellbeing.”

From the Executive Summary of [Optimal Health and Wellbeing in HIV: Opinion Paper](#), September 2021, the Optimal Health & Well-being in HIV Steering Committee, co-chaired by **Realize**.

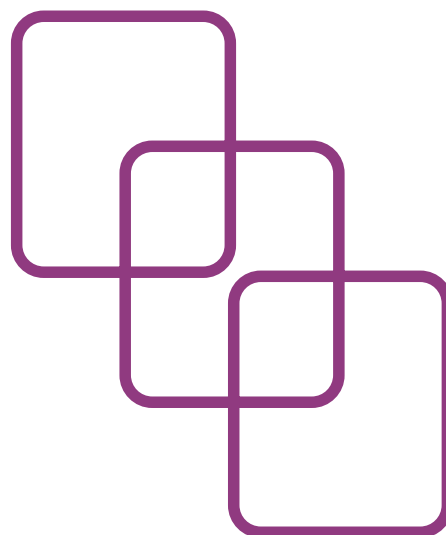
rehabilitation in the context of HIV, current knowledge regarding HIV infection and its treatments, rehabilitation interventions that can help people living with HIV across the disease course, some of the unique needs of specific populations, the importance of using an intersectional lens and life course perspective when planning rehabilitation strategies, concepts and tools for measuring rehabilitation outcomes in HIV and detailed case studies for E-Module users to apply their new knowledge.

Throughout the course of the year, **Realize** continued to raise awareness and create momentum towards an optimal health and well-being approach to HIV care and support in a wide array of fora. In October 2021 we presented the outcomes of our Living Your Best Life Forum at the Workshop on Healthy Living with HIV. As part of our ongoing series of Real Talk with **Realize** virtual town halls, we held three events focused on optimal health and wellbeing in diverse contexts: HIV, Brain Health, and The Role of Physical Activity (April 2021), a Conversation with South Asian Communities on HIV Issues at the National Level (with ASAAP) (May 2021), and Chronic Pain, HIV and Wellness – Clinical and Community Perspectives (Nov 2021). Finally, we worked with the National Community Advisory Group on optimal health and wellbeing in the HIV community to create a five-year action plan.

In February 2022, the **Realize** annual Think Tank focused on HIV and chronic pain. We held two group conversations to explore the strengths, gaps, and opportunities related to treatment, care and support for people living with HIV and chronic pain. Participants included people with lived experience, health care professionals, researchers, policy makers and representatives from community-based HIV and pain organizations. The facilitated conversations touched on topics ranging from access to pain management support, stigma related to living with HIV and/or drug use, the multi-factorial root causes of pain (physical, emotional, psychological, etc.), measurement of pain, and strategies for people living with pain that can also guide health professionals and researchers to move the conversation forward. [The HIV & Chronic Pain Think Tank Final Report](#) provides further insight on the discussion that occurred and recommendations for future steps for **Realize** and those in the broader community.



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Meaningful Social Inclusion

Realize is a national voice in championing and promoting the social inclusion of people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities by leading a network of employers, insurers, rehabilitation providers, representatives from community organizations, and government stakeholders for advancing social inclusion and financial security for people aging with chronic illness.

Our roots at **Realize**, and our path to work on episodic disabilities, are in the response to the HIV pandemic which disproportionately impacts the 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities in Canada. The perspectives of people who experience multiple forms of exclusion living at the intersections of chronic illness, disability, sexual identity, gender, and race inform our work and have led **Realize** to develop an expanded framework for fostering Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. We call it IDEAL: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Leading to Belonging.

In our research at **Realize** we have consistently found that people living with episodic disabilities encounter complex barriers to social inclusion, such as entering the workforce, remaining in the workforce during unpredictable periods of illness, and returning to the workforce once they have had to leave for health reasons. These barriers exist even for individuals who have had to leave work for a relatively short time. More recently we have documented the barriers to work, and income security experienced among those living with long-COVID.

Realize acts as the convening organization for the Episodic Disabilities Forum - a pan-Canadian forum of national disability organizations, federal policymakers, and researchers.

Working with our partners in the disability and employment sectors, **Realize** has been leading the development of a National Action Plan on Episodic Disability and Employment.

In 2021-2022:

Realize hosted the second annual National Summit on Episodic Disabilities and Employment (March 2022). Over 200 individuals registered for the event that highlighted long-COVID and the intersections of identities within the disability community. The Summit brought researchers, employers, and employees living with episodic disabilities together for panel sessions, roundtable



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I think so often there is a stereotype that employers look for what is visible and do not consider deep hurting.”

“Make inclusivity training mandatory.”

“Acknowledge disability and accommodation more with staff when meeting with them.”

“Promote the workplace as a disclosure positive environment.” “Employer education and understanding is key.” “Work with small business to encourage hiring.” “Mandatory training for all HR/ER departments.”

“Do not wait for something like COVID to be flexible.” “Leaders start understanding that they should learn how to manage performance without having the people in the office.” “I have seen employees with ED and chronic illness seeing improvement in their symptoms as they have been able to control their environment to a greater degree working from home.”

These short quotes are from people living with episodic disabilities, HR professionals, company directors, union reps and other participants in the 2nd Annual National Summit on Episodic Disability and Employment. (March 2022)

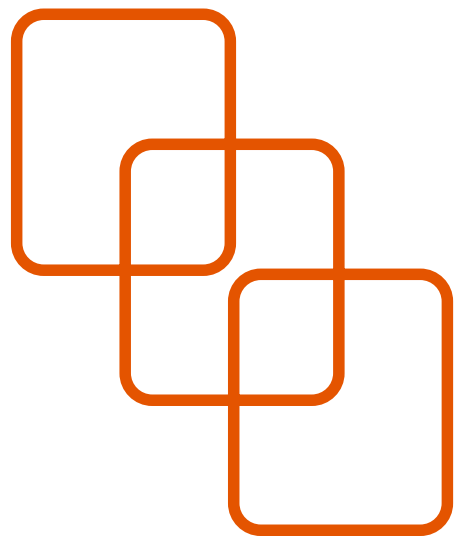
discussions, and the presentation of the *Draft National Action Plan on Episodic Disabilities and Employment*.

The first day of the Summit was a “Spotlight on Long-COVID” and opened with a message from Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada who provided our participants with the message that, “We know that the post-COVID condition is real and what long-haulers are going through is challenging.” The remaining three days of the Summit included sessions on creating a culture of accommodation at work, experiences of living with disability while running a business, and the intersections of identity and disability with Black organizational leaders, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals with living experience, and other disabled peoples with marginalized identities.

Realize launched six new online courses (early 2022) tailored to meet the information needs of human resource professionals, managers, employers, employees living with episodic disability and instructors in post-secondary education. Two of these courses have a specific focus on working with an episodic disability in the context of COVID. *In the many consultations that inform **Realize**'s ground-breaking work on episodic disabilities and employment, we often hear that people feel overwhelmed when trying to navigate issues related to disability in the workplace or at school.* **Realize** has a strong history of developing effective online courses and these new additions are an important resource for employers (+ HR professionals and instructors) and employees/students living with episodic disability alike. The courses are [An Introduction to Episodic Disabilities](#), [Accommodating Workplaces](#), [Understanding and Supporting Employees with Episodic Disabilities](#), [Changing Jobs with an Episodic Disability in the Context of COVID-19](#), [Working with an Episodic Disability in the Context of COVID-19](#), and [Fostering Inclusion and Environments of Support for Students with Episodic Disabilities](#). In addition to these courses, **Realize** has been offering tailored Episodic Disability in the Workplace training (virtual) for larger workplaces, groups of employees and professional associations.

All of our work at **Realize** is evidence-informed and throughout 2021-2022 we continued to conduct and publish research on episodic disabilities and work, including, [A Report on the 2020 Survey of Certified Human Resources Professionals Regarding Episodic Disabilities](#), a *Needs Assessment of Self-Employed People with Episodic Disabilities* and a *Report on Leaders living With Episodic Disability*.

In early 2022, **Realize** (along with Canadian and international partners) was named as the host of the 12th Edition of the Disability Networking Zone at the 24th International AIDS Conference to be held in Montreal.



2021 Recipient

Realize is pleased to announce that the recipient of the 2021 Elisse Zack Award for Excellence in HIV and Rehabilitation was Professor Hellen Myezwa. The Award was presented virtually due to COVID travel restrictions at that time.



Professor Hellen Myezwa

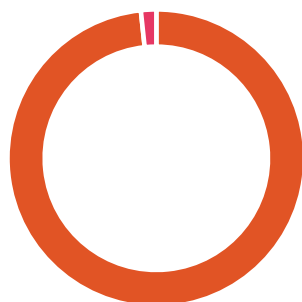
Hellen Myezwa is a qualified physiotherapist with over 35 years of experience in health care delivery. She has worked in many communities at the grassroots level and has been instrumental in setting up rehabilitation services in response to community needs. Currently she is a professor and the Head, School of Therapeutic Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

Hellen is an expert in HIV and disability, and she conducted one of the first studies to define the extent of HIV disability in the African setting. Subsequently, she has been involved in research to understand the scope and impact of disability in people living with HIV and has conducted one of the first population-based studies that has informed and ensured the inclusion of HIV rehabilitation in policy. Additional research projects include understanding the impact of HIV on the risk of ischaemic heart disease and community-based intervention to minimize this risk. In addition to this, Hellen has expertise in the epidemiology of disability. Professor Myezwa has a keen understanding of the interface between the needs of people with HIV and other chronic conditions and service delivery needs augmented by her expertise in rehabilitation service delivery. Before joining the University of the Witwatersrand, she managed and developed rehabilitation services in the public health sector for 15 years. She has been instrumental in providing evidence to inform HIV policy and practice and has contributed to the national AIDS councils in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. Hellen is passionate about the development of young people to maximise their own potential and actively coaches many young academics.

Quoting from Hellen's nominators: "Hellen has had a long, distinguished career in the field of HIV and rehabilitation, as a physiotherapist, teacher, and researcher. Like Elisse Zack, Hellen is deeply committed to social justice. She has a staunch commitment to advocate for improving the lives of all people living with HIV. This is particularly important in Southern Africa, with the highest HIV prevalence in the world and where people living with HIV continue to face huge challenges. Hellen has collaborated with a number of international researchers and is a South African member of the Canada-International HIV & Rehabilitation Research Collaborative. She is an inspiration to countless students, therapists, and researchers across the globe."

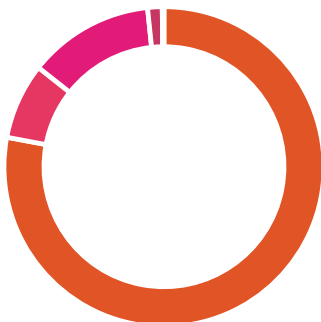
Revenues and Expenses

Revenue



- Grants 98.3%
- Professional fees, donations, memberships, and course registrations 1.7%

Expenses



- Program and Contract Staff 78%
- Occupancy Costs 7.7%
- Financial Administration, printing and material: 12.7%
- Evaluation 1.5%
- Travel 0.2%



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