

Fostering Inclusion and Environments of Support for Students with Episodic Disabilities (FINESSED)

In 2018, **Realize** received funding from the Government of Ontario to undertake the Fostering INclusion and Environments of Support for Students with Episodic Disabilities (FINESSED) project. Research has shown that post-secondary educators are most often the first point of contact for students living with episodic disabilities*.

The project goal was to develop an online course for post-secondary academic staff to:

- Raise awareness of the challenges faced by students living with episodic disabilities and,
- Provide strategies to support and accommodate students living with episodic disabilities.

The online course is currently being introduced at Ontario colleges and universities.

COURSE OVERVIEW

1. Introduction to Episodic Disabilities
 - An introduction to common episodic disabilities, the impact of unexpected episodes of disability, and the difference between episodic and non-episodic disability.
2. Episodic Disabilities in the Post-Secondary Sector
 - Explores the impacts of episodic disabilities for post-secondary students living in Canada.
3. Regulations and Policies
 - Regulations and policies as they relate to accommodation, accessibility and disclosure.
4. Supporting Students Living with Episodic Disabilities in the Classroom
 - Outlines ways to support students living with episodic disabilities and all students in the classroom. This includes accommodations and universal or inclusive design strategies.
5. Where Do We Go From Here?
 - Additional recommendations for self-learning, engaging others, and advocating for change.

Join the FINESSED Community of Practice

The FINESSED Community of Practice consists of post-secondary faculty and staff, past and current students living with episodic disabilities, clinicians, non-profit organizations, activists/advocates, social scientists, researchers and other national stakeholders. The objective of the Community of Practice is to work together to scale up the FINESSED course for national implementation and to provide materials for other populations (for example, youth living with episodic disabilities, their caregivers and their clinicians). The Community stays in contact through quarterly teleconference calls.

For more information on FINESSED projects please contact

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**Episodic disabilities are characterized by periods of good health interrupted by periods of illness or disability. These periods may vary in severity, length and predictability from one person to another. Many non-evident diseases or illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, mental health conditions, epilepsy, HIV and arthritis are also episodic or unpredictable. Unpredictability has a negative impact on meaningful community participation, employment, income security, social inclusion and access to care. There is an increasing recognition of the unexpected consequences of these conditions for post-secondary students.*

Realize is a national charitable organization dedicated to fostering positive change for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities. Established in 1998 it was formerly known as the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR). CWGHR emerged as an innovator in bridging the traditionally separate worlds of HIV, disability and rehabilitation. Since 2002, **Realize** has undertaken projects to promote cross-disability linkages and action on issues of mutual concern related to policy, practice, education and research.