



## The Power of Certification: CDMP & CRTWC



*Three ACCLAIM Ability employees have been certified with CDMP designations. These new qualifications have strengthened Yanique Graham-Smith (left) and Dawn Yearwood's abilities as quality assurance managers, while Candice Wong (right) was able to expand her role as ability management consultant to include working on special projects.*

Whether it's receiving NIDMAR's Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP™) or the Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC™) professional designation, it all adds up to exponential benefits — for the employees who are certified and their employers, for the many clients with disabilities who will be better served, and for the greater community.

For rehabilitation service providers like Toronto-based ACCLAIM Ability Management Inc., which serves clients nation-wide such as Purolator Courier Ltd., NIDMAR's programs afford a perfect fit with the company's holistic approach to "ability" management. ACCLAIM is a NIDMAR licensee, so the company can add the consensus-based audit to its tool belt.

"As a company, ACCLAIM already believed in the NIDMAR philosophy," says Tony Fasulo, founder and managing partner. "The beauty is that from a business perspective, this program allows us to legitimize our philosophy and say, this is something driven by a much higher force that is internationally recognized and has spent a lot of time doing its research and coming up with standards that say this is the way disability should be managed."

In terms of advantageous outcomes, he describes NIDMAR'S consensus-based audit as "huge."

"It allows us to go into a client's workplace and objectively provide a blueprint regarding what they need to change specific to their site," he says. "So we're not just there to sell our product, we're there to help them."

As well, three ACCLAIM employees have been certified with CDMP designations, bringing the total number of certified employees to five. With 100 employees and more than 1,000 open claims at any one time, Mr. Fasulo says that ACCLAIM is in a growth position. It's their ultimate goal to have all employees NIDMAR-certified because of the advantages the program delivers.

"People like these three women, who have become certified disability management professionals or certified return to work professionals, are really cutting edge. They are serious about the profession they are in. They've made a commitment to an approach that is not only the fairest but is also the most appropriate, and a lot of our competitors are not doing that at all.

"So you have to stand up and salute them because sometimes it is not the easiest way — but it makes the most sense."

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## Enhancing Perspectives – In Canada & Beyond

**In 1997, NIDMAR, in collaboration with representatives from a number of countries, played a leadership role in developing occupational standards in return to work/disability management by incorporating global best practices and research findings.**

**Subsequently, professional designations and certification examinations were developed. These have been formally adopted by a number of jurisdictions, and are now administered through the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC).**

**NIDMAR, as the official Canadian representative of the IDMSC, administers these certifications in Canada.**

Sil Cabral, manager of disability claims, Waterloo, for Sunlife Assurance Company of Canada, also sees first-hand the benefits of professional certification. He recently completed the NIDMAR program offered through Mohawk-McMaster Continuing Education Health Sciences and successfully earned his CDMP designation.

“The more traditional disability management processes have great focus on the medical model, the insurance model, the vocational model, but they’re somewhat void of the organized labour perspective,” he says. “So this helped me gain new insight into that world, to not necessarily make different decisions, but to make more informed decisions. Arguably, it also gives the employee and employer a greater role at the table, and it gives me immediate currency that I understand their world.”

Mr. Cabral, who has 22 years of experience in the field, also appreciates the Canadian perspective NIDMAR’s program offers, “the fact it was developed in Canada, has a lot of Canadian content and Canadian partners were involved to develop the whole foundation. Overall, I’ve been impressed,” he says.

Susan Patterson-Gulka has also been impressed by the knowledge she gained through CRTWC certification. For Ms. Patterson-Gulka, a vocational rehabilitation consultant with The Great West Life Assurance Co. who works primarily with small to mid-sized companies, the biggest take-away was her heightened understanding of an employer’s duty to accommodate.

“This has really helped me guide employers to understand they have a duty to accommodate,” she says. “I have better language skills, better information, better in-depth knowledge. Because I am aware of the policies, if I get into a situation where there may not be an opportunity to accommodate, I can counsel the employer.”

She can also see how CRTWC certification can generate the same improvements in any jurisdiction.

“What I am talking about here is a responsibility. In a different country it could be, perhaps, not a law per se, but it is a moral duty. Employers everywhere need to be educated, and this knowledge helps anyone around the world start that education.

“It is working for the person who is disabled — that’s our goal.”