

# FACILITATOR INSIGHTS

In Motion & Momentum+ (IM&M+) was created and powered by the [Canadian Career Development Foundation](#). These vignettes are part of the IM&M+: Building the Evidence Case project funded by the Government of Canada's [Future Skills Centre](#).

## ADAM POWER

Adam is a manager for the John Howard Society, a social service agency serving adults involved with the justice system. He has been involved with the IM&M+ program for three years, both as a facilitator and then a coordinator/manager for the program at his agency. His agency offers the standard IM&M+ program both in the community for previously incarcerated individuals and an adapted version of the program that is administered within the prison system itself. Adam explained the agency's motivation to provide IM&M+ within the provincial prison system in the following way:

*We found we were getting lower rates of attendance when we did in community and we kind of just had the idea. Folks, especially people in remand doing shorter sentences, they're gonna get released one day and there's not always a plan in place for those folks and they're going to need money and funds and things pretty quickly. So why don't we give them, you know, pre-employment, pre-pre-employment skills? To equip them when they're gonna be released soon. So we tried it the first time. It was really successful. Of course, attendance was never an issue because they would*

*rather do a program than, you know, nothing, basically.*

Adam noted that, aside from issues stemming from involvement with the justice system, the primary issues his IM&M+ participants are dealing with are, "*motivation, self-esteem, [and] that feeling of hopelessness that's kind of hard to overcome.*" He also highlighted the unique place that the IM&M+ program has within the range of services offered by the agency, "*you know, IM&M+ is a good match because it kind of, you know, gets those things at the root, in a way. We don't really have another program, employment or otherwise, that can do that.*" Adam explained that what distinguished IM&M+ from the various other programs offered by his agency:

*I think the distinctness of IM&M+ comes from, you know, "you feel a certain way and let's focus on that." I think the thing we really get at in IM&M+ that's distinct, it's not so much about a hard concrete goal. I think sometimes [other] programs are really goal-oriented to a fault; IM&M+ is not strict in that way. It doesn't lock them into getting a job right at the end, which is the death*

*sentence of a lot of employment programs or pre-employment programs. It doesn't use employment as the barometer for success of completion, which is the thing that makes it really, really valuable.*

This distinction of not using employment status as the metric success is an important contributor to the long-term success of the participants that he serves:

*IM&M+ has been the thing we've put a lot of long-term clients that have been in and out and back and forth [from prison] and it's probably the program that has the biggest success rate for those people ... we see a lot of people who have spent years and years at John Howard almost every staff knows them. And, they're known to never keep a job, or never get a job, or never move out of a certain situation. And we see big leaps from those people with IM&M+.*

In addition, the IM&M+'s focus on personal development rather than employment outcomes was a vital aspect of why the program was allowed to be offered within the prison system, where job placement is simply not possible:

*It was really hard for us to get any kind of employment-arena program in the prisons because I don't think people saw the value in it, just cause you can't be employed while you're in prison basically. But CCDF has helped so much with shifting that on a provincial level and changing people's minds in that way.*

Adam also highlighted the impact of this distinct personal development approach, with an example of a former client who participated in the IM&M+ program the first time it was offered at his agency:

*A senior employee told me, like, you'll meet with him and you know you might get him*

*a job here, might get him a job there but, you know, he'll always come back like he'll always be on your plate, so you should probably plan for that. And even hearing that was kind of disturbing of why are we, why are we sealing his fate? ... So he was in the first IM&M+ running. And he did have a lot of trouble with maintaining a place to live and maintaining a job and never wanting a job and hating the jobs he had. And he's actually consistently been in the same job since when he's finished IM&M+ ... To the best of our knowledge from our case files, he's never held a job that long. He's also living independently, which he wasn't doing at the time.*

Finally, Adam, with several years experience as a facilitator, explained that being an IM&M+ facilitator has made him a better manager by increasing his empathy and boundary-setting:

*I think I've kind of grown to be able to understand and be more empathetic ... I think it's hard when you're managing a lot and you're in charge of people and programs and things like that, and it's taught me the strength of the softer side, right? I think I would have been a little bit more rigid in a management role if I hadn't [facilitated] IM&M+ first ... I think [Laughs] I'm probably the only one who encourages boundaries, from what I've seen. I like to tell my staff to let me know when they're at capacity instead of overloading them.*

## SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF THE IM&M+ PROGRAM

In addition to the overall approach of focusing on pre-employment needs rather than employment outcomes, Adam described the benefits of several specific

components of the IM&M+ program. He highlighted the benefits of the community project as a way to provide participants with a sense that they have agency to advocate for others:

*A lot of the time it's about the prison itself. How can we make the prison better for the next people who come? Can we make a guide for someone who just started here trying to help just in that prison arena, right?... [once] we had a full Indigenous group. So for their community project they created Indigenous supports for people when they're released from that correctional center.*

Adam also stated that the group-based nature of the program is impactful for the participants to form community in what can be an unsafe prison environment:

*Forming that group in the first 2 weeks is really strange and then immediately after that for the rest of the program it's like the best part, right? So it's just to go through that initial stage of "am I safe here? Am I good?" It usually takes that week and a half before it really locks in, and then they're excited. They're coming early if they have the capacity, or asking the correctional officer, can we go down like, earlier.*

An outcome of the group-based nature of the program is that it seems to foster friendships and community among participants, well after they complete the program. This is true even when the program is offered in prison:

*[community-based participants] often shared emails and I know for a fact that they still email each other, and we still see them. And the prison ones continue on in the prison until people are released, but people reconnect after release.*