

# **The New Framework for Service Delivery and its Impact on Working Conditions and Client Services<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4-8</b>
<b>1.0: Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1: Methodology	9
1.2: The New Framework for Service Delivery	11
1.3: The Goals of the New Framework For Service Delivery	13
1.4: Summary of Preliminary Report March 2006	14
<b>2.0: Evaluating The Joint Problem Solving Process</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1: Did the JPSP result in Changes in Local Service Delivery Models?	15
2.1.1: Extent of Change in the Service Delivery Model	15
2.1.2: Did the Changes Reflect Local Conditions?	18
2.1.3: Is the JPSP an Ongoing Process?	19
2.2: Did the JPSP Empower Staff and Provide for Meaningful Input?	21
2.2.1: Views Regarding the JPSP and Staff Empowerment at the Beginning of the Process	21
2.2.2: Views Regarding the JPSP and Staff Empowerment at the End of the Process	22
2.2.3: Levels of Participation in the JPSP	24
2.2.4: Levels of Staff Input into the JPSP	26
2.2.5: Did Staff and Management have the Skills to Participate Effectively in the JPSP?	27
2.2.6: How Seriously Were Participants' Views Considered in the JPSP?	29
2.2.7: The Union, Management and the JPSP	32
2.2.8: Satisfaction with Changes in the Service Delivery Model	34
2.2.9: Changes in the Fairness of Work Distribution	35
2.2.10: Change in Ease of Doing Job	36
<b>3.0: Did the Changes in the Service Delivery Model Improve         Working Conditions?</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1: Current Working Conditions at ODSP	38
3.2: Changes in Workload	40

3.3: Control	44
3.4: Support	46
3.5: Rewards	47
<b>4.0: Service to Clients</b>	<b>48</b>
4.1: Change in Capacity to Serve Clients	48
4.2: Developing Relationships with Clients	50
4.3: Client Access to Decision Makers	52
4.4: Meeting Ministry Program Standards	53
4.5: Focus Group Discussion of Service to Clients	55
4.6: Community Stakeholder Focus Groups and Service to Clients	58
<b>5.0: Health Indicators</b>	<b>61</b>
5.1: Reported Stress at Work	61
5.2: Ministry Data on Absences	63
5.3: Survey Health Indicators	63
5.4: The Job Demand-Control Model and Job Strain	71
5.5: Effort Reward Imbalance	75
5.6: NFSD, Workplace Organization and Health	78
<b>6.0: Discussion</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>7.0: Conclusions</b>	<b>86</b>
Appendix One: Project Methodology	90
Appendix Two: Composition of Office Size Categories	95
Bibliography	96
Glossary	98
Survey One: January 2006	99
Survey Two: December 2006	109

## **Executive Summary**

This report assesses the impact of recent changes in the service delivery model at the offices of the Ontario Disability Support Program. The decision to initiate these changes was made in a Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministry and OPSEU signed in May of 2004. How these changes were to be developed and implemented was set out in April of 2005 in a document titled "ODSP Delivery Framework: A New Framework for Service Delivery." The New Framework for Service Delivery defined a process centred on local ODSP offices.

Interpreting the findings in this report requires recognizing that the initiative to reorganize local offices associated with the NFDS was not the only change facing ODSP staff and management in 2006. A number of other policy changes impacted working conditions, workloads and client services. A number of the changes had the potential to reduce workload demands including the hiring of additional staff, the introduction of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) File Transfer Process which reduced paper requests for files, the Trace System which enhanced ODSP staff access to the status of direct bank deposits, the easing of procedures regarding clients being reinstated, and encouraging local offices to prioritize work and find solutions to suit local needs. Others had the effect of increasing local workloads including changes in the treatment of earnings as of November 1, the streamlining of OW transfer files, the ongoing demand of programs such as Mandatory Special Necessities, and initiatives regarding non-disabled partners. The hiring of more staff in the Disability Adjudication Unit increased the flow of new clients into local offices. While this might be a short-term increase, it had significant workload implications in 2006. While many of these changes represented improvements to the services ODSP clients received, there was an almost unanimous sense from those we spoke with that at the time this study was conducted they had made client cases more complicated and increased the load on staff and local management.

Many of the questions in the survey itself ask participants to report on the conditions they faced in the month prior to the survey being completed. Depending on when individuals completed the survey, the response would reflect conditions during November and the first half of December 2006.

### **General**

- The report uses data collected from two rounds of focus groups conducted in each of the nine ODSP regions of Ontario. The first round took place at the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006 as local offices were in the midst of planning and implementing service delivery model changes. The second took place one year later after most offices had implemented changes.

- Findings from two online employee surveys are reported: the first was conducted in January of 2006 and the second a year later in December of 2006.
- 130 OPSEU employees and 30 local and regional managers participated in the first wave of focus groups. 123 OPSEU employees, 54 local and regional managers and 57 community stakeholders participated in the second wave of focus groups.
- 402 employees and managers completed the first survey and 716 completed the second survey.

### **The New Framework for Service Delivery and the Joint Problem Solving Process**

- Over eighty percent of staff participated in the JPSP.
- Based on evidence from both the surveys and the focus groups, we are confident in concluding that the JPSP did lead to changes in the service delivery model and that the goal of introducing greater flexibility into the service delivery model was achieved in many offices. In the surveys 29% of respondents reported significant changes in workplace organization, 42% modest changes and 29% reported few if any changes.
- While most offices made an initial round of changes as a result of the JPSP, there was limited evidence that the change process, as envisioned in the NFSD, was ongoing. A few offices had made changes that encouraged ongoing joint discussion of problems. However, in most offices there was a lack of clarity regarding what was to happen next.
- As the field work for this project was coming to an end, a new initiative was being launched, the Interest-Based Problem Solving (IBPS) Workshop. It has been suggested that the IBPS workshop was designed to provide training on a new way of communicating, a new way of working through issues, developing a common understanding of the problem and working towards mutually agreed upon resolutions. There was insufficient information gathered from those areas where the IBPS had been implemented to determine if it will be successful in moving ODSP offices towards the goals outlined in the New Framework for Service Delivery.
- While many staff and managers remained supportive of the JPSP, we also heard some reservations in most offices. There were concerns regarding the time it took to resolve issues through the JPSP, the ability of participants to resolve disagreements, and limitations regarding issues that could be dealt with through local JPSP.

- Of all survey respondents, 60.8 percent reported they had at least some input into discussions regarding workplace changes since April of 2005, while 27.2 percent reported having either a lot or a great deal of input.
- Of those who participated in the JPSP, 34.5 percent reported their views were seriously considered while 24.6 percent reported their views were not seriously considered. Non-participants and JPSP participants whose views were not seriously considered represent 43.6 percent of all survey participants.
- In the survey, most reported the union and management were at least somewhat effective in resolving problems.
- Survey respondents were relatively evenly split regarding how satisfied they were with the changes in the service delivery model produced by the JPSP process. 32.7 percent were satisfied with the changes while 26.7 percent were not satisfied.
- 31.7 percent of survey respondents reported the distribution of work was fairer compared to 21.2 percent who felt it was less fair.
- There was less agreement on whether the changes to the service delivery model had made it easier to complete assigned tasks. 23.6 percent reported it had become harder to do their jobs and 19.6 percent reported it had become easier.

## **Working Conditions**

- The findings on changes in working conditions suggest less progress and a reversal of some of the gains reported in the preliminary assessment. - Between the first and the second surveys, there was a decline in the percentage of respondents reporting working conditions were good or excellent. At the beginning of 2006, 44.0 percent of respondents reported conditions were good or excellent. By the end of the year, this had fallen to 33.5 percent of the sample.
- Workloads were reported as being high and in the focus groups there was extensive discussion that during 2006 they had increased.
- The percentage reporting they were able to make decisions at work and decide how to do work has increased from Pre-NFSD levels. The percentage reporting they were able to make decisions at work increased from 62.5% in early 2005 to 73% in early 2007 while the percentage reporting they were able to decide how to do work has increased from 53.4% in early 2005 to 69.7% in early 2007.

## Client Services

- One of the core objectives of the NFSD was to make changes to the service delivery model that would improve services to clients. This is an area where the changes appear to have had a positive impact.
- Compared to the Pre-NFSD period, offices of all sizes report it had become easier to develop relationships with clients. In early 2005 21.3% reported it was easy to develop relationships with clients rising to 36.2% by early 2007.
- There were significant increases in the ability of clients to speak with decision makers across all office sizes. In early 2005 19.2% reported it was easy for clients to speak with decision makers rising to 39.1% by early 2007.
- There was a general sense amongst community stakeholders that things had improved. Some community agencies were very positive about the services staff delivers to clients. Most reported problems remained. They identified staff's lack of training and staff's limited knowledge of a client's actual disability as ongoing issues that lead to inefficiencies and poor client service.

## Health Indicators

- Evidence gathered in the second round of fieldwork indicates there has been a step backward in terms of health indicators.
- During 2006, the number reporting work-related sleep problems or work-related headaches increased from about twenty-five percent of respondents to around thirty-four percent. The number reporting tension at work increased from 44.5 percent to 56.6 percent of respondents. The number reporting stress at work increased from 52.3 percent to 64.9 percent and the number reporting work-related exhaustion increased from just under 63.0 percent to 73.7 percent.
- There was a small reduction in the prevalence of Job Strain in ODSP offices. In early 2005 64.3% were classified as exposed to Job Strain falling to 58.0% by early 2007.
- There was a modest decline in the frequency of Effort Reward Imbalance in early 2006, a decline that was reversed for small offices by early 2007. In early 2005 26.0% were classified as exposed to Effort Reward Imbalance falling to 21.2% by early 2007.
- Between the launch of the NFSD and early 2006 there was a clear relationship between the extent of change in workplace organization and the

degree of reduction in Job Strain and Effort Reward Imbalance. The greater the change in workplace organization, the greater the reduction in Job Strain frequency and the frequency of Effort Reward Imbalance. The prevalence of Job Strain fell 14.1% where change was described as significant, but only 4.6% where few changes were reported. The prevalence of Effort Reward Imbalance fell 22.5% where change was described as significant and did not change at all where few changes were reported.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

- Despite limitations, the JPSP did result in change, change that improved service to clients, and when separated from the other policy changes that took place in 2006, had a positive impact on working conditions and health outcomes.
- While one can only speculate, it is plausible to argue that without the NFSD the other changes implemented in 2006 might have had an even more serious impact on staff.
- There is also overwhelming evidence that by the end of 2006, many staff were disappointed with the NFSD that some of the gains reported in the preliminary assessment with regard to working conditions were reversed, and that levels of stress were as high or higher than they were at the start of the process. A major factor explaining this view was workloads that were perceived as unmanageable by ODSP staff.-
- The NFSD was an ambitious project and its goals were only partially realized. It had a positive impact on client service, but less progress with regard to staff working conditions and health indicators. There is sufficient evidence, however, that it is worth continuing in order to achieve the cultural shift in labour relations in ODSP.
- The report concludes with a series of suggestions including the need to reaffirm commitment to the process, need to reconsider how the process can be supported, other changes in ODSP organization that might facilitate the transition to a new workplace culture, the need for training, the need to address workload issues resulting from a variety of factors with ODSP offices, and a reconsideration of the format by which services are delivered to ODSP clients.

## 1.0: Introduction

In a Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) signed in May of 2004, the parties agreed to introduce a new framework for service delivery for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). How these changes were to be developed and implemented was set out in April of 2005 in a document titled "ODSP Delivery Framework: A New Framework for Service Delivery"(NFSD). The NFSD defined a Joint Problem Solving Process (JPSP) centred on local ODSP offices. Each office was empowered to adapt its service delivery model to local conditions subject to a common framework defined in the document. Between April of 2005 and the end of 2006, the 44 local offices of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) engaged in a range of activities with the objective of improving service delivery and enhancing staff working conditions.

This report assesses both the change process and the impact of those changes on clients, employees and management.

The objectives of the report are to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the JPSP as a mechanism for implementing local changes in the service delivery model.
- Assess the impact of the changes in the service delivery model on client services, staff working conditions, and health indicators.

## 1.1: Methodology

The methodology employed in the project and the characteristics of the sample are examined in more detail in an appendix to the report.

The report uses data collected from two rounds of focus groups conducted in each of the nine ODSP regions of Ontario. The first round took place at the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006 as local offices were in the midst of planning and implementing service delivery model changes.<sup>2</sup> The second round took place one year later after most offices had implemented changes.<sup>3</sup> Survey respondents were also given an opportunity to add comments on both surveys.

Between the material gathered during the focus groups and comments made on the surveys, we had several hundred pages of direct quotes. These were used extensively in the report to validate survey findings and to explore issues not well

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<sup>2</sup> A report titled, "Preliminary Assessment of the New Framework for Service Delivery and its Impact on Working Conditions and Client Services" was issued in March of 2006.

<sup>3</sup> The Ottawa office delayed implementation of the new model until their move to a new location anticipated in the spring of 2007. Survey responses from the Ottawa office are included in the report, but Ottawa focus groups will take place after the move to the new location.

suited to survey methods. We made an effort to draw comments from all classifications and from as many offices as possible. While the representativeness of qualitative interview data is always less than quantitative survey data, we feel that the direct quotes employed are representative of conditions and concerns of the workforce as a whole.

We also report findings from two online surveys, the first administered in January of 2006 and the second in December of 2006. The surveys track changes in working conditions, quality of client services and health indicators from early 2005 through to early 2007. The surveys provide three benchmarks: conditions in early 2005 prior to the launch of the NFSD, conditions early in 2006 after the NFSD had been launched, and conditions in early 2007 by which time most locations had completed the first phase of the NFSD.

The two survey samples differ in composition. Only 250 individuals completed both surveys. An additional 150 completed only survey one and 466 completed only survey two. This raises questions regarding the validity of comparing findings from survey one and from survey two. To test this we compared the responses to a number of key questions for those who completed both surveys with the full sample of respondents. We discuss this in more detail in the methodological appendix. We concluded that the response pattern on survey one of the 250 who completed both surveys and the full sample of 400 were almost identical. On survey two, the responses from the 250 who had also completed survey one were marginally different from the full sample of 716. The full sample was marginally less likely to report poor working conditions and marginally less likely to report being stressed at work. Had we limited the analysis to the 250 who completed both surveys the deterioration in working conditions and health outcomes would have been more dramatic than what is reported below. Limiting the sample would have required removing over half of the survey data collected and would have led to less precise estimates of underlying trends. By using the entire sample in the report we are confident that the reported deterioration in working conditions and health outcomes is not a result of sample bias.

We also draw on data from an ongoing study of health outcomes amongst working Torontonians by the authors. This study was funded by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. It is a population based study and includes all types of non-student workers living in a number of Toronto neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup> The data was gathered in the winter of 2006. It provides a benchmark against which the findings from the ODSP survey can be compared. Given the size of the Toronto study (over 3,000 participants) and the broad range of sectors and employment relations

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<sup>4</sup> The non-student Toronto sample had the following characteristics. Women made up 52% of the sample. The average age of the sample was 37. About 70% were employed full-time, 20 % were employed part-time or on short term contracts and 10% were self-employed. The sample represented a cross section of the economy. About 25% performed administrative or financial functions, 15% described themselves as employed in the science and technology sectors and about 10 % percent came from each of the health, public sector, retail and manufacturing sectors.

represented in the survey, one can interpret the Toronto data as representing the average health outcomes of employed individuals in Toronto. Comparing these findings with the findings from the ODSP survey provides one way of interpreting the relative health status of workers in ODSP offices.

Interpreting the findings in this report requires recognizing that the initiative to reorganize local offices associated with the NFDS was not the only change facing ODSP staff and management in 2006. A number of other policy changes impacted working conditions, workloads and client services. The hiring of more staff in the Disability Adjudication Unit increased the flow of new clients into local offices. While this might be a short-term increase, it had significant workload implications in 2006. Changes in the treatment of earnings as of November 1, the streamlining of OW transfer files, the ongoing demand of programs such as Mandatory Special Necessities, and initiatives regarding non-disabled partners were just some of the changes that affected workload and client services. While a number of these initiatives improved staff capacity to service clients, there was an almost unanimous sense from those we spoke with that they had made client cases more complicated and increased the load on staff and local management.

Many of the questions in the survey itself ask participants to report on the conditions they faced in the month prior to the survey being completed. Depending on when individuals completed the survey, the response would reflect conditions during November and the first half of December 2006. This was a period following significant policy changes.

## 1.2: The New Framework for Service Delivery

The background to the changes in service delivery evaluated in this report is the service delivery model adopted by ODSP offices starting in 1999 when legislative authority for delivering benefits to disabled Ontarians was transferred from the Family Benefits Act to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act. As part of this transition, an external consultant was contracted to review business processes at ODSP offices. This resulted in a model of service delivery generally referred to as the Business Process Review model (BPR). The BPR model defined standard work procedures for ODSP offices. It was accompanied by a new computer system known as the Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT). Between 2000 and 2002, most offices followed this model of service delivery and work organization quite closely. Beginning in 2002, a number of offices, particularly smaller offices, began introducing changes to the service delivery model. However, the BPR model continued to shape the organization of work at the launch of the NFSD with 62.3 percent of survey respondents reporting they were still closely following the BPR model as of December of 2004. Another 25.2 percent were following it somewhat and only 12.6 percent reported not following it. The case pooling model associated with BPR was still the dominant model of service delivery. Only 16.5 percent reported their work was organized on a caseload basis.

Between 1998 and 2001, following the introduction of ODSP, numerous union, individual and group grievances were filed regarding health and safety issues such as workload, organization of work and assignment of work within ODSP. An ODSP employee recalled:

*BPR took away our client service, it made the clients a number...they didn't like that and we didn't like that...so it made it very stressful for us to work under the BPR. (CSR)*

In the spring 2003, hearings at the Grievance Settlement Board with respect to these disputes were adjourned and the Ministry and OPSEU agreed to enter into a joint undertaking called the Joint Problem Solving Process (JPSP).

In May 2004, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Ministry and OPSEU was finalized and set out the results of the Joint Problem Solving Process, including agreed principles, actions and implementation. One of the commitments made under the MOA is the development of a new framework for service delivery in ODSP. The MOA resolved the union grievance on workload and other grievances may be resolved with the introduction of a new service delivery model. The MOA provided a foundation for achieving the common goals of the Ministry and Union of building a positive working relationship at all levels of the ODSP organization and creating safer, healthier, more effective and innovative work environments for OPSEU members in support of program delivery and service excellence.

The New Framework for Service Delivery was informed by the twin goals of promoting a “healthy and safe work environment” and ensuring “excellence in client service and program delivery.” The NFSD was designed to address two broad concerns with the BPR model.

- The BPR model had reduced the capacity of employees to influence how they worked.
- As originally implemented, the BPR model was overly rigid and unable to accommodate the unique needs of local offices.

The BPR model implemented a standard model of service delivery that all offices were expected to follow. Under the NFSD, this was replaced by a decentralized approach to service delivery and work organization. The NFSD offered local employees at each office a voice in designing the service delivery model and local work practices. It created an opportunity for each office to develop models of service delivery and work organization that reflected the unique character of each location.

### **1.3: The Goals of the New Framework for Service Delivery**

The NFSD employed a local Joint Problem Solving Process (JPSP) to achieve its goals. Local JPSPs were to provide ODSF employees with “early and meaningful” input into discussions associated with restructuring the service delivery model and regular reviews.

The goals of the NFSD included:

- Increase workers’ sense of ownership and control of work; and
- Improve customer service by allowing more personalized contact between staff and clients.

The principles that were to guide the development of the new model included:

- Emphasize regional and local office flexibility;
- Early and meaningful employee input;
- Regular review.

Other areas to be addressed as part of the JPSP agreement included:

- Development and implementation of a comprehensive staff training plan;

- Improved communication protocols;
- Improvements to office design and technology; and
- Ongoing review of policy.

The NFSD mandated that local changes be consistent with a number of principles including:

- Excellence in customer service was to remain the core of ODSP service delivery;
- The reorganization of local delivery structures was to be accomplished within existing employee allocations and job descriptions; and
- Local delivery structures must meet standards consistent with those of the OPS Quality Service Standards (including hours of service).<sup>5</sup>

#### **1.4: Summary of Preliminary Report March 2006**

The first wave of focus group interviews and surveys at the beginning of 2006 provided a baseline to assess the nature of work organization at the launch of the NFSD and a preliminary assessment of the operation of the JPSP as a mechanism for achieving the stated goals of the NFSD.

In January of 2006, 44.0 percent of survey respondents reported good or excellent working conditions and 15.7 percent reported conditions were poor. In small offices, respondents were marginally more likely to report good working conditions compared to large offices. Respondents reported heavy workloads, and modest control and support at work. Reported levels of tension and exhaustion were high relative compared to levels found at various non-ODSP workplaces. In the first survey, 51.8 percent were classified as exposed to Job Strain, a work organization measure developed to alert employers and employees of potential long-term work-related health risks.

Findings in the preliminary report also suggested that the JPSP was underway at most offices and that it was welcomed by most staff and management. Despite employee concerns over finding time to participate in the process and whether the JPSP truly represented a shift in workplace culture, there was wide participation in most locations. We reported that changes had been made at a number of offices. Over twenty percent of respondents to the first survey reported there had been significant changes in workplace organization since the launch of the NFSD.

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<sup>5</sup> ODSP Delivery Framework: A New Framework for Service Delivery, April 1, 2005, p. 4-9

There was also evidence that these changes were having a positive impact on client services, the quality of life at work and health indicators.

## **2.0: Evaluating the Joint Problem Solving Process**

The core of the NFSD was a Joint Problem Solving Process (JPSP) that gave local offices the authority to reorganize the service delivery model subject to a number of limitations. During focus group sessions, participants indicated that the JPSP took a number of different forms across the forty-four ODSP offices. Smaller offices were more likely to use a less formal mechanism such as adding JPSP activity to staff meetings, or discussing changes to the service delivery model during “staff huddles.” Nearly ninety percent of staff at offices with less than fifteen employees participated in the process. At larger offices, the processes tended to be more formal. Committees were formed, staff were surveyed, sub-committees were given specific tasks, competing plans developed, and decisions were often made through office votes. Participation rates were lower in large offices, however nearly eighty percent of survey respondents from offices with forty or more employees still reported participating in the process.

This section sheds light on two key questions associated with the JPSP.

- Did the JPSP result in changes to local service delivery models?
- Did the JPSP empower staff and provide for meaningful input?

The following sections will explore:

- Did these changes improve the quality of service to ODSP clients?
- Did these changes improve working conditions and health outcomes of ODSP employees?

### **2.1: Did the JPSP result in Changes in Local Service Delivery Models?**

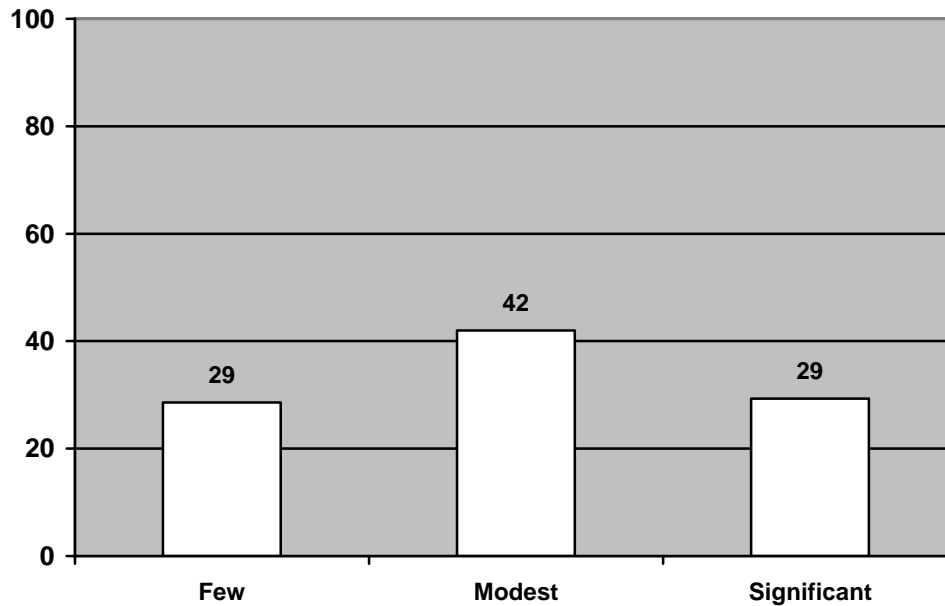
#### **2.1.1: Extent of Change in the Service Delivery Model**

Based on evidence from both the surveys and the focus groups, we are confident in concluding that the JPSP did lead to changes in the service delivery model and that the goal of introducing greater flexibility into the service delivery model was achieved in many offices.

Most survey respondents reported that the JPSP resulted in at least modest changes to the local service delivery model. Just under thirty percent felt there were few if any changes, while about the same number felt the changes were

significant. In interpreting the charts below, it is important to keep in mind that some offices had already made changes to the service delivery models and saw no reason to make further changes. Others were satisfied with the existing service delivery model.

**Chart 2.1: Extent of Changes in Workplace Organization Since April 2005 (% of Respondents)**

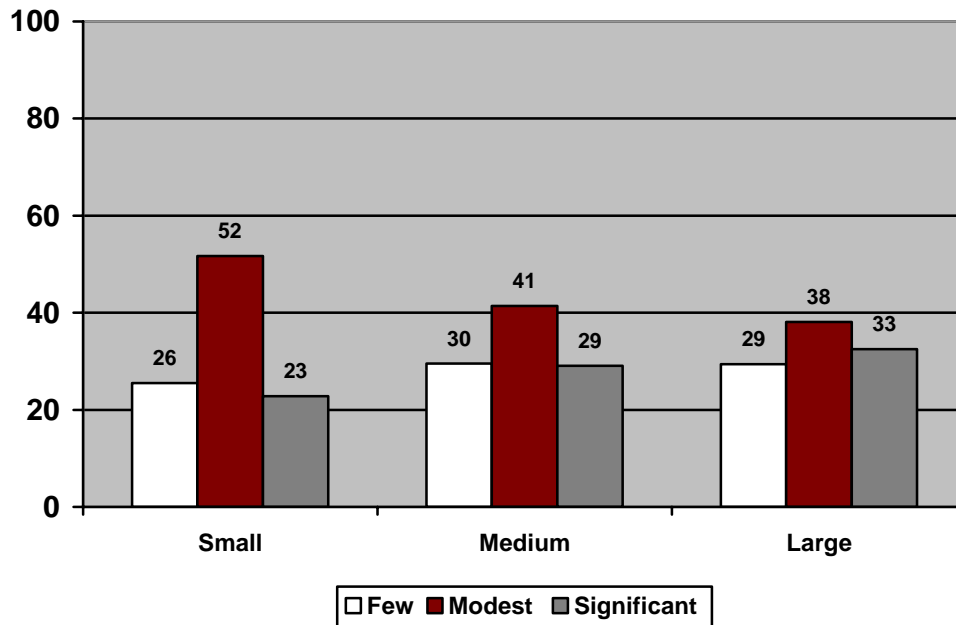


Of the forty-four offices included in the study, there were only five offices where at least half the survey respondents reported few if any changes. In ten offices, at least half the survey respondents reported significant changes. At the remaining twenty-nine offices, the distribution was evenly distributed across the three levels of change.

Unlike the preliminary assessment in March of 2006, different size offices did not report a significantly different extent of change since April of 2005. We suspect this reflects differences in how quickly small versus large offices were able to respond to the initial call for change in April of 2005. A number of larger offices were still implementing changes in the fall of 2006.

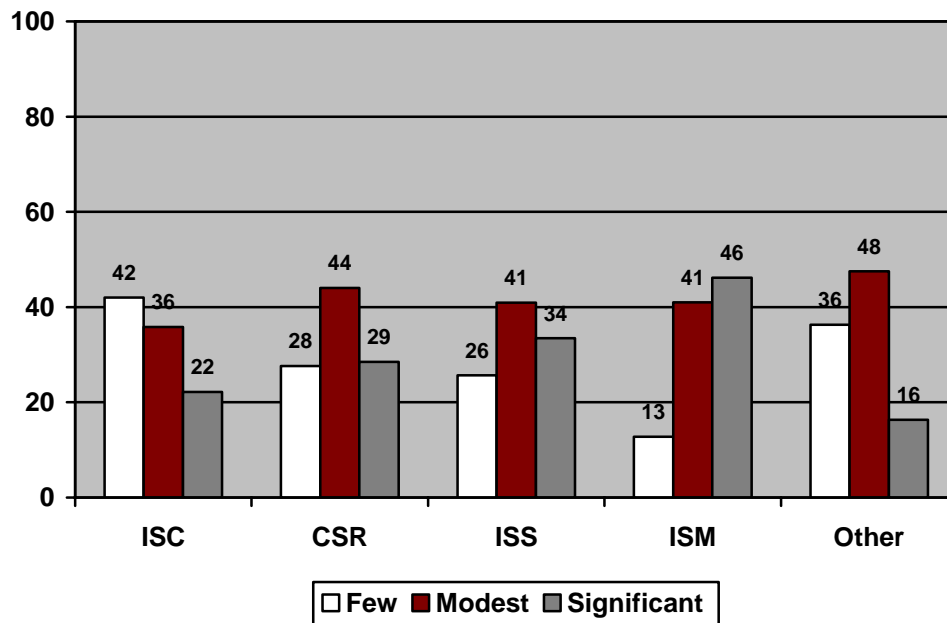
Medium size and large offices were more likely to report significant changes, but less likely to report modest changes since April of 2005. This is likely a result of many of the smaller offices having made significant changes to the BPR model prior to 2005, hence the changes they made under NFSD were more modest.

**Chart 2.2: Extent of Change in Workplace Organization by Office Size Since April 2005 (% of Respondents)**



There was more variation in reported changes by classification. The ISM classification was more likely to report significant changes in workplace organization than the other four classifications. Amongst the three main employee classifications (ISC, CSR and ISS), the ISS reported significantly more change than the ISC classification.

**Chart 2.3: Extent of Change in Workplace Organization by Job Classification Since April 2005 (% of Respondents)**



Focus group participants largely confirmed that there had been significant changes in the service delivery model as a result of JPSP. We were told:

I think it's better than what it was when we started, but I think it's a work in progress and has the possibility of getting better. (CSR)

*What the JPSP did was sanction moving away from the more impersonal approach and moving back to a more caseload structure. (ISM)*

*The Service Delivery Model which replaced the Business Procedure Manual has allowed each office more flexibility in how to deliver our program. (CSR)*

### 2.1.2: Did the Changes Reflect Local Conditions?

Discussions during the focus group pointed to a surprising variety of service delivery models across the province. Some offices retained much of the BPR

model including specialized teams for intake, case management and CVP, a case pooling model with limited individual case file ownership, leads for functions such as MSNs, ETIRs etc., and phone cues for clients calling in. However, most offices opted to move away from this model. Most adopted a variant of the caseload approach with greater individual staff responsibility for clients and less specialized assignments for both the CSR and the ISS classification. Many moved to what was called the “generic model” where CSRs and ISSs performed a broad range of tasks for an assigned group of clients, an updated version of the caseload model of service delivery employed under the Family Benefits Act.

A number of offices are experimenting with different models of pod organization. In some cases, the pods are highly individualized, with one CSR and one ISS working together with responsibility for a range of functions. Others had collective pods where a group of CSRs and ISSs collectively had responsibility for a range of tasks. Some of these collective pods were on individual alpha splits for assigning clients while at other offices the entire pod shared responsibility for a group of clients. Some pods had individual phone cues giving clients direct access to staff. In other cases, office wide phone cues continued to be employed. Most offices went to some model of an alpha split to handle mail. Most offices created processes that made it possible for clients to directly contact a “case worker.” How walk-ins were handled varied significantly, although most offices tried to limit client walk-in access to staff either by assigning a CSR or ISS to deal with these on a rotating basis, or by designating specific times when staff would be available to meet with clients for whom they had responsibility.

Covering for absences remains a significant challenge. Some offices introduced floaters to perform this function. Others kept more of a BPR team approach. Others rely on the goodwill of employees to cover for each other.

### **2.1.3: Is the JPSP an Ongoing Process?**

Most offices made an initial round of changes under the JPSP, however there was limited evidence that the change process was ongoing. A number of offices were planning reviews of the first round of changes, but there was a lack of clarity in most offices regarding what was to happen next. In a few offices, the JPSP did result in permanent changes in how decision were made and issues resolved. We were told:

*We changed the way our staff meetings run. Who chairs the meetings. Our staff meetings used to be chaired just by the managers. It isn't like that anymore. Everybody takes a turn preparing. Any classification could chair a meeting. We gave out information how to chair a meeting. Other members can take control. It is a very good change.(ISS)*

*My understanding is that this is supposed to be ongoing. I think it does have a lasting process. There is still a lot of learning, but I think we are on the right*

*track. . . . Whenever we have something that we suspect there will be some kind of reaction to. . . we do always give the union folks a heads up. (ISM)*

*We've been working together a lot more. There is a general sense among the managers here that the JPSP facilitated an increased dialogue between staff and managers and that in itself is a positive outcome. (ISM)*

*It feels like we have more of a voice. (CSR)*

However, the more common refrain was that the process had stalled and people were unsure of the next steps.

*Since the implementation of the Joint Problem Solving Process and the New Service Delivery Model, management has reverted to the old way of doing business. They no longer communicate with their staff as a whole be it by team or the office as a whole. (ERO)*

*I do think things have improved, but the problem is that there is so far to go and it looks as if this is as far as were going to go, we're really discouraged. (ISS)*

*I am not pleased at how the JPSP was implemented. The agreement was that this would be revisited and that employees would have an opportunity to discuss what is working and what is not. Staff are now being told that the JPSP no longer exists. (ISS)*

*Our office had a brief discussion in a staff meeting and it has never been raised again. Most staff would not know what you were referring to when you mention a framework for delivery. (OTHER)*

*I continue to feel that management only "puts up" with JPSP because they have been instructed to do so. I see no real commitment to listen to staff or recognize the problems and issues that exist. Changes to the delivery model did ease the burden when they were first implemented however within a very short period of time, management introduced new initiatives and legislation which created even more work. No additional staff was provided so we are basically back to "square one" too much work-too little workers. (ISS)*

*While I was most pleased about the "New Framework for Service Delivery" and the apparent opportunity to participate in changes that affected me, it appears to have been a "must do" exercise and I do not feel that as an organization we have embraced the spirit of the JPSP and a shift in working culture. (ISS)*

*We were just called in to do this JPSP. We were given two weeks. It has to be in by this date. Here is another job on top of what we have to do. We were all brought in to a meeting and said okay we got to get it done and over. That's it,*

*it's over now lets get back to our desks, answer the phones and everything.*  
(ISS)

As the field work for this project was coming to an end, a new initiative was being launched, the Interest-Based Problem Solving (IBPS) Workshop. It has been suggested that the IBPS workshop was designed to provide training on a new way of communicating, a new way of working through issues, developing a common understanding of the problem and working towards mutually agreed upon resolutions. There was insufficient information gathered from those areas where the IBPS had been implemented to determine if it will be successful in moving ODSP offices towards the goals outlined in the New Framework for Service Delivery.

## **2.2: Did the JPSP Empower Staff and Provide for Meaningful Input?**

### **2.2.1: Views Regarding the JPSP and Staff Empowerment at the Beginning of the Process**

During the first round of focus groups, the general sense was that ODSP employees and managers welcomed the opportunity to revise how work was organized. In almost all regions there was a sense that the consultation process was a positive experience even when the outcomes were less than initially expected. A number of participants expressed reservations about the JPSP based on their experiences with the BPR model, but were still willing to engage in the process with the hope of making positive changes. There was a sense that the JPSP signaled a potential change in workplace culture at ODSP and this was welcomed even though most were unsure what the longer term implications were of this change. During the first round of focus groups, it was suggested:

*I'm hearing a lot of people feeling like they have invested a lot of time in this process and they don't want it to fail.* (ISS)

*It's refreshing that staff have an ability to have input.* (ISS)

*I'm here because I have hope.* (ISM)

A number of participants in the first round of focus groups expressed concerns regarding the limits of the JPSP and the constraints placed on it. While the NFSD had shifted some authority to make work organization decisions to the local level, authority over many decisions affecting working conditions continued to be made at the regional and corporate level, or even by non-ODSP groups where ODSP shared space with other ministries. It was suggested that, on some issues, not all levels of the Ministry or OPSEU were equally committed to JPSP. This issue will be discussed in more detail below as it was an important theme that emerged in the second round of focus groups.

During the first round, a number of participants also voiced concerns that the JPSP was unable to deal with workload issues. Employees and management were nearly unanimous that workload was heavy and many thought the problem was getting worse. This was attributed to stagnant staffing models, the growing complexity of ODSP policies and benefits, new emphasis on functions such as CVP, the ongoing demands of programs such as MSNs, and the changing demographics of regions. The workload issue was further affected by the limitations of the staffing model to allow for absenteeism, vacation allowances, delayed filling of open postings, modified work accommodations and other losses of employee time. At some offices, the frustration over workload concerns had virtually paralyzed the Joint Problem Solving Process. Few expected the changes under NFSD to resolve workload concerns. One CSR referred to the NFSD as, “shifting deckchairs on the Titanic.” An ISS suggested, “Bottom line is we don’t have enough people...including enough managers to manage this program.”

A number were concerned that they were not really given the tools to resolve the perceived workload issues, but by participating in a process to re-organize work they would end up being held accountable for a workload problem that already existed. The following are examples of the concerns expressed:

*My impression is that it is not addressing the actual problems that the office is having...now people own the problem because they have had an opportunity to input...by having staff input into how they are going to do their work, how they are going to organize their work,...it becomes their fault if they can’t keep up. (ISS)*

*We come up with our solution within existing resources and it falls apart we own it...that’s the piece of this that I struggle with. (CSR)*

For others, the legacy of the BPR model, which some still viewed as having been insensitive to client needs and having disenfranchised local employees, made them reluctant to participate in JPSP. The legacy of the BPR model for some was a lack of trust and low morale. While this lack of trust could be found across many offices, it was most prevalent in large offices. A number of participants in the focus groups expressed a desire that the NFSD might reverse this legacy and lead to a new more trusting workplace culture.

### **2.2.2: Views Regarding the JPSP and Staff Empowerment at the End of the Process**

During the second round of focus groups, we were able to explore in more detail the extent of staff participation in the process and optimism regarding its potential to improve working conditions.

Many employees and managers remained supportive of the process. We were told:

*JPSP has made things better because it allows us to talk about things. (CSR)*

*It is working for us. . . . We were on the cue before. We had no ownership. I like it. . . . JPSP has made it better. (CSR)*

*People were all very excited. People could voice their opinions without asking permission. . . . People were excited. They didn't have to wait for a meeting to say whatever they wanted. They could go to managers and say what they think. They had permission. They didn't have to wait for a meeting. (ISS)*

*Each category had its own meeting. At that point changes were made that we had some input. There was still some resentment, but others said if they are going to ask us it makes sense. It has been good . . . There has been a shift in management style. I am hopeful we can get back to an environment where we can mutually respect each other's interests. . . . It isn't easy to turn a system around overnight. (CSR)*

*It was nice to see the JPSP come. We can be heard again. Why don't you listen to us? We are the front line workers and know best what would help. . . . We got to talk again. . . . We got to be heard again. It was good, very good. (ISS)*

*It wasn't bad because it was about time we were asked how to do things. (ISS)*

We also heard reservations about the process.

*Initially there was a lot of enthusiasm for the process. It sounded good on paper. It failed drastically. . . . It was a gross failure. . . . On the shop floor the feeling is that its existence raised expectations and that makes the crash even harder. (ISS)*

*Even though we have been asked to meet and put forward our ideas, the end result is management is going to decide and if it doesn't fit with their agenda it will not happen. . . . Management sat in on our meetings as a participant not as an observer. . . . I think there is some intimidation factor. (ISS)*

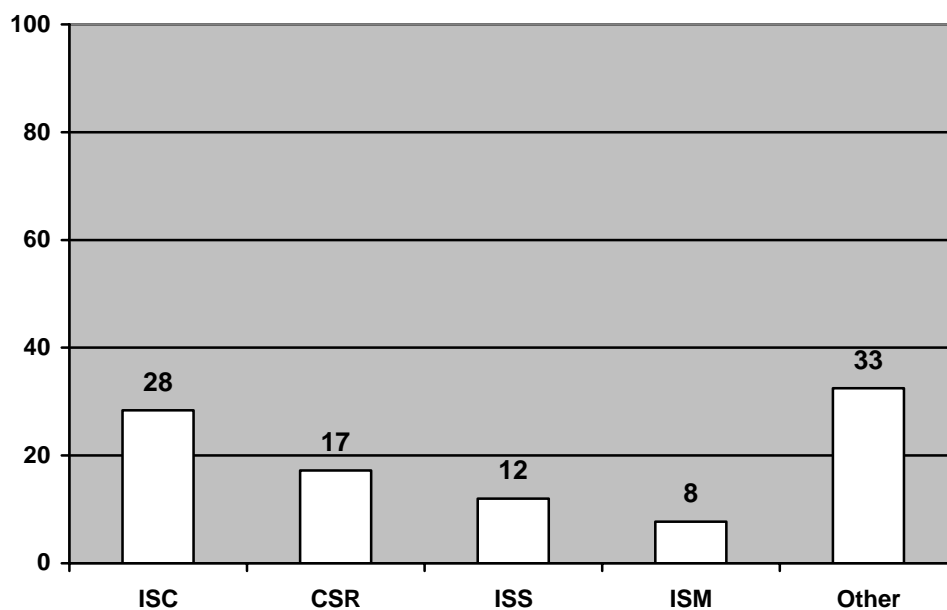
*It was an abysmal failure from my perspective...it was a very negative experience. (ISS)*

*You are asked for your input and you spend a lot of time giving input and then it is thanks very much but we are going to do it this way. . . . They implement our views if it fits their agenda. We feel a little bit like we got kicked in the back side. (ISS)*

### 2.2.3: Levels of Participation in the JPSP

An important measure of the extent to which JPSP empowered staff is the degree of participation in the process. Most staff and managers participated. Just under twenty percent of all respondents to the survey reported they did not participate in the JPSP process. Non-participation was more prevalent in large offices where 22.6 percent did not participate compared to 14.8 percent in medium size offices and 11.4 percent in small offices. Non-participation was also higher in the ISC and Other classifications. Most CSR, ISS and ISM participated in the process.

**Chart 2.4: Non-Participants in the JPSP by Classification (% of Respondents)**



While most participated in the process, there was also evidence during the focus groups that getting staff to participate was a problem, raising doubts about how engaged staff really were. In most cases, a combination of mistrust of the process and a sense of excessive workload limited participation. A number of ISCs reported they were either excluded from the process because local management felt their jobs were unlikely to be affected or, it was difficult to find someone to cover their position during JPSP meetings.

*When we did enter into the JPSP there was a good deal of distrust. What on earth is this about? . . . It has been a real struggle getting people on board especially when there hasn't been a consistent approach how we have explained it or how we helped people understand exactly what was happening.*  
(ISS)

*In the current environment we are just struggling to survive in our job. JPSP takes a lot of energy. We have clients constantly. We have changes constantly. On top of this I don't need these meetings. I have to focus on my job or I will have a break-down. (ISS)*

*I am very interested in the whole process, but damned if you are going to take me away from my work for a whole day because I know what I have to do when I get back. I cannot handle it. (ISS)*

*It has been like pulling teeth to get participation. (ISM)*

*It was hard getting people here today. Who was going to do my work? (ISM)*

*We tried to schedule meetings for people to discuss some of the process changes that were on the table. We just couldn't find time or they didn't care. It was like pulling teeth to get people to attend these meetings. They would say I don't have time. You tried to lighten up the workload or ensure that the work was done by someone else but still they couldn't come to meetings. (ISM)*

*I want to echo the issue of workload. When we go to people and ask if you would like to be part of this committee, if you are looking for people to sit down and think about better ways to do things, they have to have the time to do this. They just don't have the time. (ISM)*

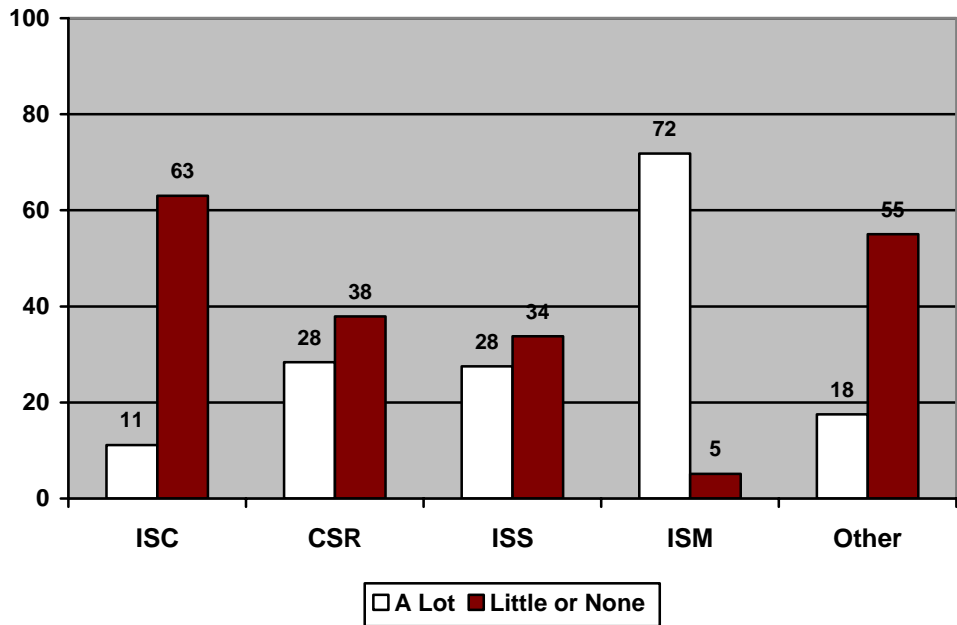
*I didn't pay much attention to it because my priority was to my clients. (ISS)*

*It was a real struggle to get people to participate and we really had to convince staff to get involved (ISM)*

### 2.2.4: Levels of Staff Input into the JPSP

It was reported above that most survey participants reported participating in the JPSP. However, for a number of staff, participation did not always translate into a feeling that they had input into the process. Just over sixty percent of respondents reported they had at least some input into discussions regarding workplace changes since April of 2005, while 27.2 percent reported having either a lot or a great deal of input. The remaining 39.3 percent reported little or no input. There was no significant difference in the level of input into the JPSP by office size. As reported in the chart below, the ISC classification was the least likely and the ISM classification the most likely to report having a lot of input into the process. As reported above, the ISC were the least likely to participate in the JPSP (28.4 percent did not participate). The ISC who did participate were also the least likely to report having a lot of input.

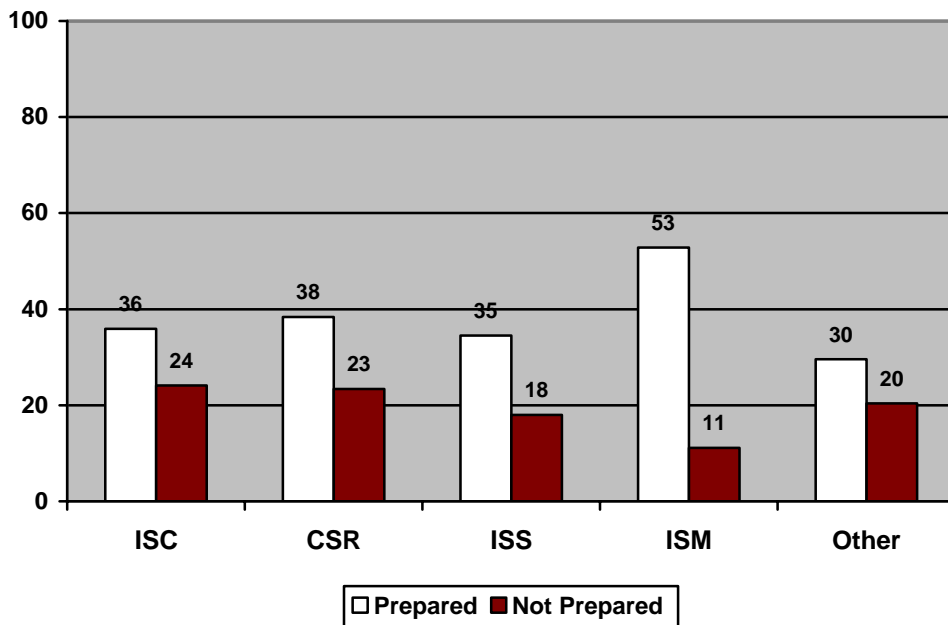
**Chart 2.5: Input into Discussions of Change in Work Organization Since April of 2005 (% of Respondents)**



### 2.2.5: Did Staff and Management have the Skills to Participate Effectively in the JPSP?

Respondents were asked how well prepared they were to participate effectively in the JPSP. Just over thirty percent thought they had the skills and training to participate effectively in the process while about seventeen percent felt they did not have the needed skills. There were only small differences in reported effectiveness by office size. While around thirty percent of the non-management classifications felt they were able to participate effectively in the JPSP, fifty percent of the ISM classification reported being prepared to participate effectively.

**Chart 2.6: Had Adequate Training and Skills to Participate Effectively in JPSP (% of Respondents)**



During the focus groups, we heard concerns regarding how prepared staff and local management were to participate effectively in the JPSP. A number felt the initial training was too limited.

*As a manager. . . we are not provided with supports to initiate this process. (ISM)*

*It fell apart because I think as a JPSP committee none of us had enough training to really understand the concept of everything that would come up. . . .We ended up in a tug of war. . . . They (staff) didn't understand the whole JPSP concept and we didn't know how to put it in place. (ISM)*

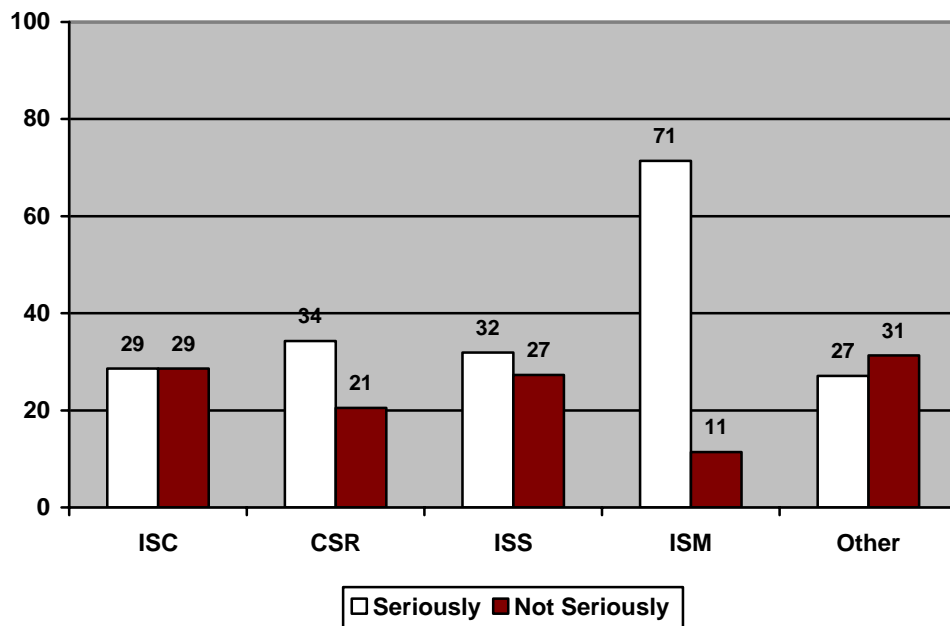
*The whole idea of engaging staff into a process that they are not trained to understand how it works has been difficult. . . . Some staff are just at a place, "tell me how to do the job". I think we have maxed out on the process. (ISM)*

*There were some high level discussions between high senior management and senior union officials. They shook their hands and then they developed a document of understanding and then they shipped it down to the lowest levels to implement. I don't think we did a sufficient job in marketing and endorsing and empowering the attitudes and shifts in attitudes that needs to happen as it was coming down. (ISM)*

### 2.2.6: How Seriously Were Participants' Views Considered in the JPSP?

The percentage of staff participating in the JPSP and their ability to have input are important indicators of the success of JPSP in empowering participants. Equally important is the degree to which changes reflect that input and the degree of satisfaction with the changes made. Survey participants were asked how seriously their views were considered during the JPSP. Of those who participated in the JPSP, 34.5 percent reported their views were seriously considered while 24.6 percent reported their views were not seriously considered. Non-participants and JPSP participants whose views were not seriously considered represent 43.6 percent of all survey participants. Respondents from large offices were marginally more likely to report their views were not seriously considered (29.7 percent) than respondents from small offices (17.1 percent). The staff classifications were relatively similar in the frequency of reporting their views were seriously considered. The respondents in the ISM classification were significantly more likely to report their views were seriously considered.

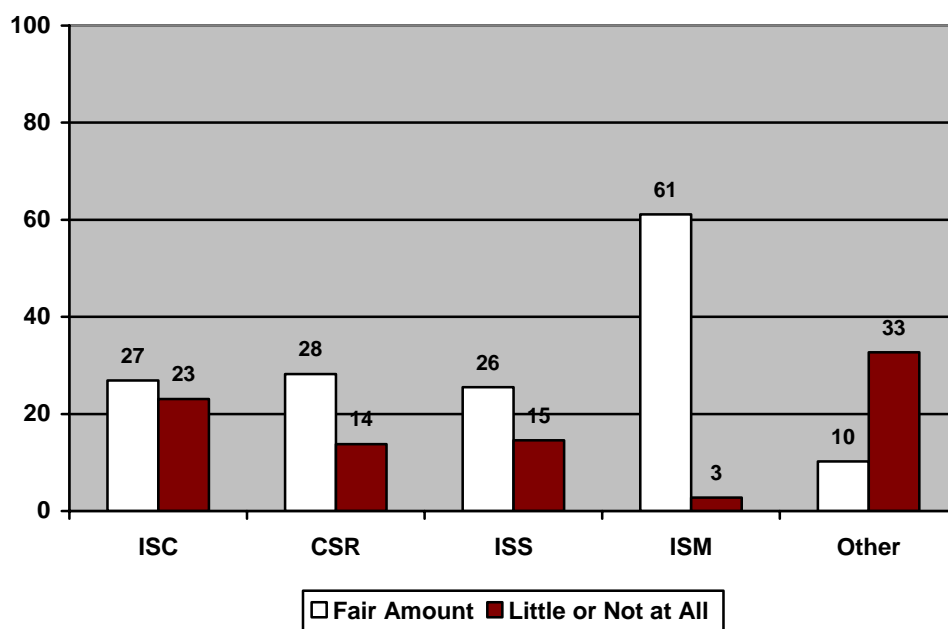
**Chart 2.7: How Seriously Were Views Considered in the JPSP (% of Respondents Who Participated)**



Over eighty percent of those who participated in the JPSP also reported the changes made reflected at least some of their input. Over twenty percent reported the changes reflected their input a fair amount, but only five percent felt they reflected their input a great deal. There were some differences by office size, particularly those reporting the changes did not reflect their input. In large offices, over twenty percent of those who participated, reported the changes did not reflect their input at all. In small offices less than ten percent reported the changes did not

reflect their input at all. The ISM classification was more likely to report their input was reflected in work organization changes compared to the other classifications.

**Chart 2.8: Extent to Which Changes in Work Organization Reflect Input Into JPSP (% of Respondents Who Participated in JPSP)**



During the focus groups, discussion on this topic centred on two issues: management reluctance to implement certain types of changes and disagreements between different groups of staff with different views regarding the kinds of changes that should be made.

For managers, implementing changes in the service delivery model presented a dilemma. On the one hand, they had been instructed to empower their staff and facilitate the changes agreed to in the JPSP. On the other hand, they were still accountable to senior management for meeting performance benchmarks. In some cases, management went along with changes even though they were not convinced they were workable. One local manager reported:

*It comes down to what staff want to do. This is what the staff came up with. My choice would not have been this. However if this is what they want let's give it a chance. (ISM)*

However, it appears in the majority of cases, management steered the process in a direction they felt was consistent with achieving performance targets. Their ability to influence the process is evident in the findings reported above. Compared to staff, they were much more likely to report having input into the process, having

their views seriously considered, and seeing the changes as reflecting their input. In some offices this resulted in serious tensions between staff and local management.

*What I found was that management controlled the process and whatever we had to say was brushed off. . . . There were changes, but the CSRs have ended up with the worst position in the whole process. (CSR)*

*I wanted to be part of the change process...I wanted to drive where I wanted to go, but I found out I didn't have the steering wheel. . . . Management was very subtle about directing us about where they wanted the process to go. . . It was frustrating and in all honesty, it really jaded me because I was frustrated because there was such a lack of regard for the people in the field who know what they are doing. (ISS)*

A second problem with the process was disagreements between staff regarding the direction of change. In many offices, there were differences of opinion between staff in different classifications and between less and more experienced staff. The JPSP had some difficulty resolving these disagreements. It was heavily reliant on having the right personalities in place to manage dissent, rather than formally recognized procedures. In some offices, this led to a breakdown of the process, or an outcome which no one seems to support. The following were typical statements from those who felt their views were not seriously considered in the process or that changes did not reflect their input.

*We ended up with something that nobody wants. . . .We did not put aside the time to deal with all the issues this office faces. . . They didn't have someone to mediate so they could get to an agreement. (ISS)*

*I initially did participate in the JPSP process, but soon dropped out . . . It got to the point that emotions were ruling and it got to the point where nothing substantive was being accomplished. People were crying, throwing tantrums and airing their personal agendas. (ISS)*

*Anything the ISS brought up just went around and around; nothing ever seemed to come of it. It caused a lot of frustration and a lot of anger with people, sometimes even conflicts between individuals in the office. (ISS)*

*It places the focus on the personalities of the individuals involved. Whether they perceive it as an important issue or not, whether they are workers or managers. There needs to be a process that takes the individual out of the process. . . . The process needs to be made impersonal. (ISS)*

### 2.2.7: The Union, Management and the JPSP

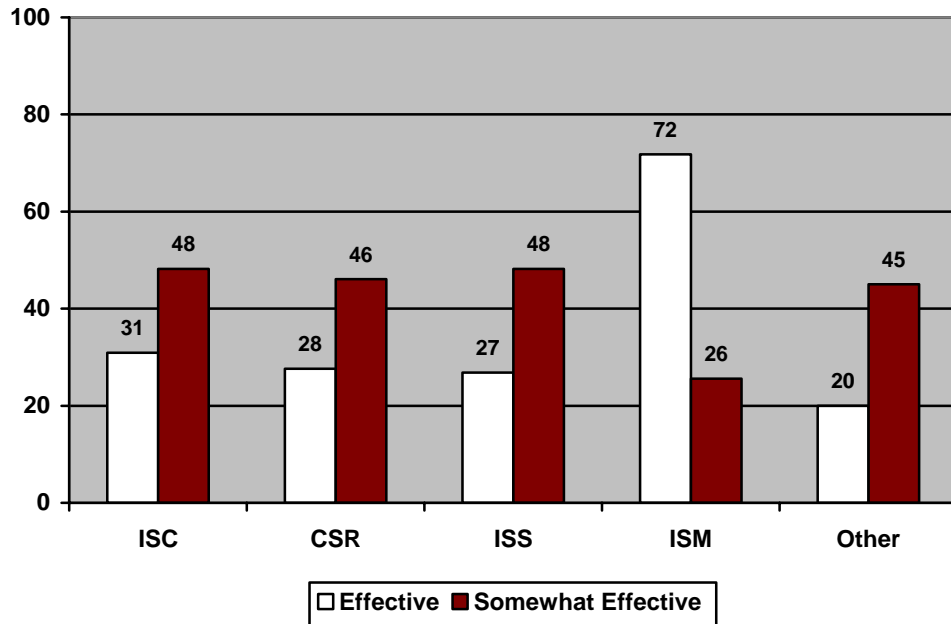
The NFSD established the LERC as the lead in ensuring the work moved forward and remained on track. We found that the role of the union and management in the JPSP process varied from office to office. At some offices, the JPSP discussion was between local management and local staff with only minimal participation from local union officials. This was particularly the case at smaller offices where the union function was often relatively underdeveloped. At other offices, the union was a key player in the process. At some of these offices it was recognized by both management and staff that without the union prodding, the process would have stalled.

*In our office, the union played big role in getting the process kick started. (CSR)*

At a small number of offices, it appears the local union representatives were not enthusiastic about JPSP and their lack of support for the process made it difficult to move forward. In some offices, the willingness of the union to participate in this process was tempered by concerns that union officials could come to be viewed as too closely aligned with management and might be rejected by the membership in a future round of elections.

In the survey, most reported the union and management were at least somewhat effective in resolving problems. Almost forty-five percent felt the union and management were somewhat effective in resolving problems, and an additional thirty percent felt they were effective or very effective. This was least likely to be the case in large offices where only 22.6 percent felt the union and management were effective in resolving problems compared to 28.9 percent in small offices and 38.1 percent in medium size offices. The ISM classification was significantly more likely to report the union and management were effective than the staff classifications. In the early stages in most locations, the JPSP was jointly promoted and supported by management and the union. This gave the process credibility among both staff and managers to engage in the process in the first place. Many in the first round suggested that the JPSP represented a “new” less adversarial approach to addressing workplace issues. This however, was not as evident in the second round of focus groups.

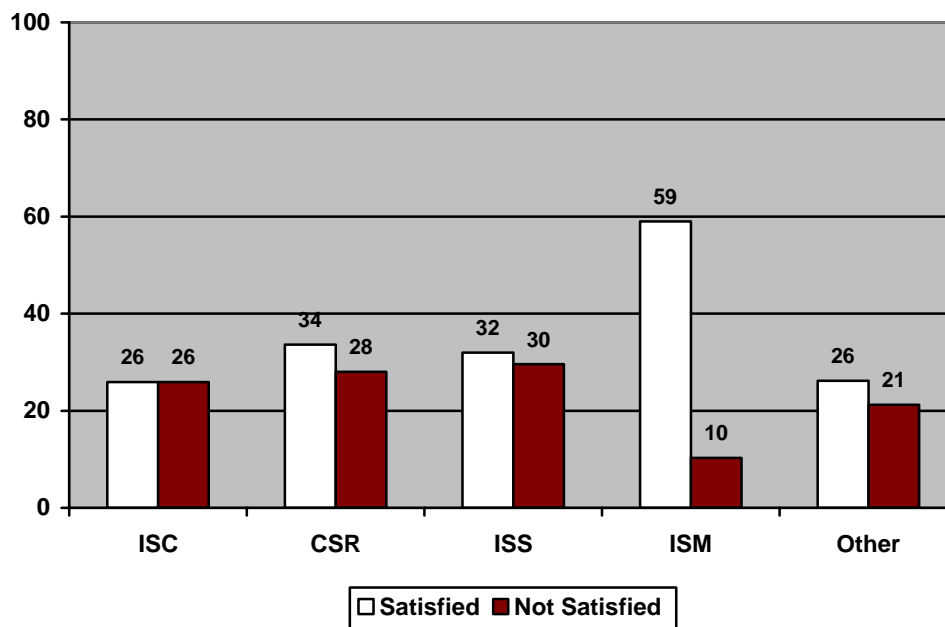
**Chart 2.9: Effectiveness of Union and Management in Solving Problems During Implementation of the NFSD (% of Respondents)**



### 2.2.8: Satisfaction with Changes in the Service Delivery Model

Survey respondents were relatively evenly split regarding how satisfied they were with the changes in the service delivery model produced by the JPSP process. Overall, 32.7 percent were satisfied with the changes while 26.7 percent were not satisfied. The remainder reported the JPSP did not result in any work organization changes. There were no significant differences in the level of satisfaction by office size. The ISM were generally satisfied with the changes, while the other classifications were more evenly split.

**Chart 2.10: Satisfaction With Changes in Work Organization Made as a Result of the JPSP (% of Respondents)**



During focus groups, we heard statements indicating satisfaction with the process as well as critiques. We were told:

*The nice thing now is we are allowed to tweak things to our clients' needs and our needs. We are more proactive. They really put the "t" in team. Before things came from up and filtered down. Now it is sort of the reverse. (CSR)*

*The stress is there because you are so busy, but the stress of organization has been taken away. . . . It is better than it was last year. (CSR)*

*The JPSP helped, it really made an improvement, the staff felt better. But the impact was then but it hasn't continued. Staff feel overloaded. (ISS)*

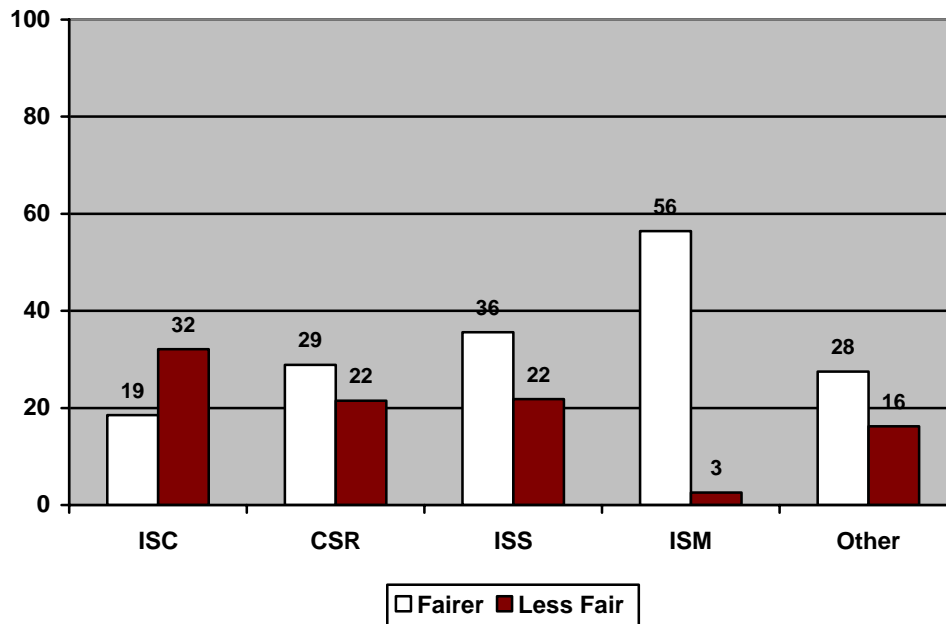
*There is clearly the feeling that no matter how good we get or how creative, there is still the problem of not enough staff for the work. (ISM)*

In ten of the forty-four offices represented in the surveys, at least half of all respondents reported being satisfied with the work organization changes generated by the JPSP. Only at four offices were at least half not satisfied. At the remaining offices, satisfaction was more evenly distributed between those who were satisfied, those who were not, and those who reported no change.

### 2.2.9: Changes in the Fairness of Work Distribution

One of the positive outcomes of the JPSP from the perspective of the ISS and to lesser degree the CSRs, was a fairer distribution of work. Just over thirty percent of survey respondents reported the distribution of work was fairer compared to just over twenty percent who felt it was less fair. There were no significant differences in changes in the fairness of work distribution by office size. The ISC was the only classification where the number reporting work distribution had become less fair exceeds those who thought it had become more fair, perhaps a reflection of their limited participation in the JPSP.

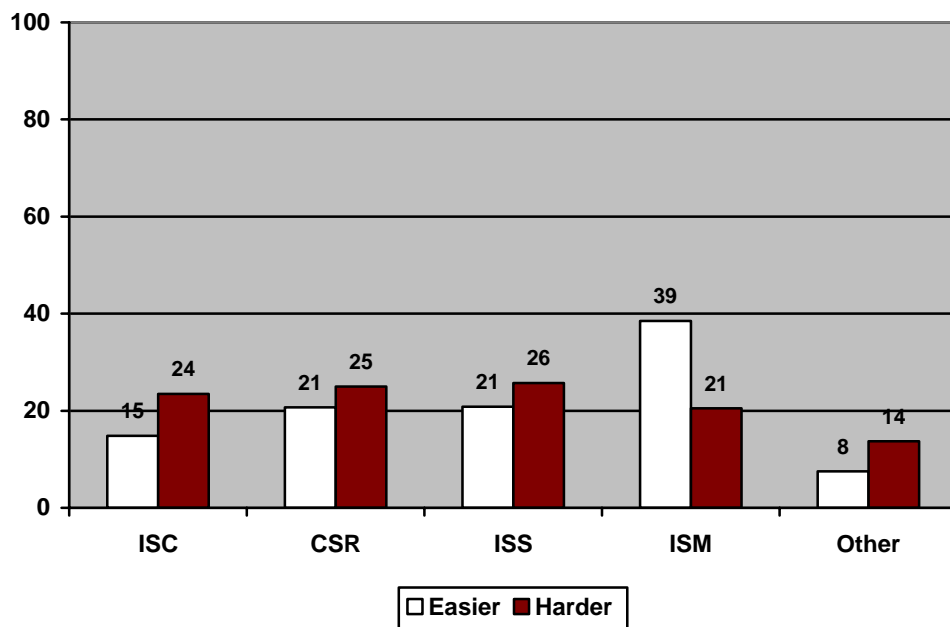
**Chart 2.11: Change in Distribution of Work as a Result of Changes in Work Organization Since April 2005 (% of Respondents)**



### 2.2.10: Change in Ease of Doing Job

There was less agreement on whether the changes to the service delivery model had made it easier to complete assigned tasks. 23.6 percent reported it had become harder to do their jobs while 19.6 percent reported it had become easier. There were no significant differences in changes in ease of doing job by office size. Only in the case of the ISM classification did more respondents report work had become easier relative to those who reported it had become harder.

**Chart 2.12: Change in Ease of Doing Job as a Result of Changes in Work Organization Since April 2005 (% of Respondents)**



### **3.0: Did the Changes in the Service Delivery Model Improve Working Conditions?**

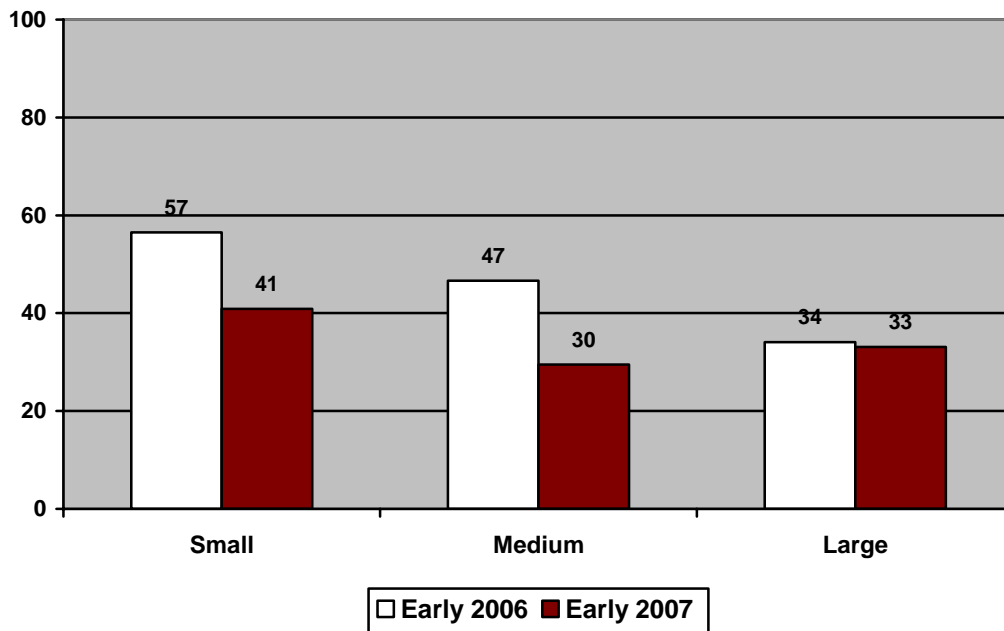
The previous section indicated that the JPSP was a qualified success in terms of empowering staff and facilitating changes to the service delivery model that reflected local conditions. It was not a perfect process and the transition to a new workplace culture is at best partial, an issue that will be taken up in more detail in the conclusions. For many staff and managers, the JPSP was a step in the right direction.

The findings on changes in working conditions suggest less progress. On almost every measure included in the survey and in almost every focus group, the evidence pointed to a reversal of some of the gains reported in the preliminary assessment.

### 3.1: Current Working Conditions at ODSP

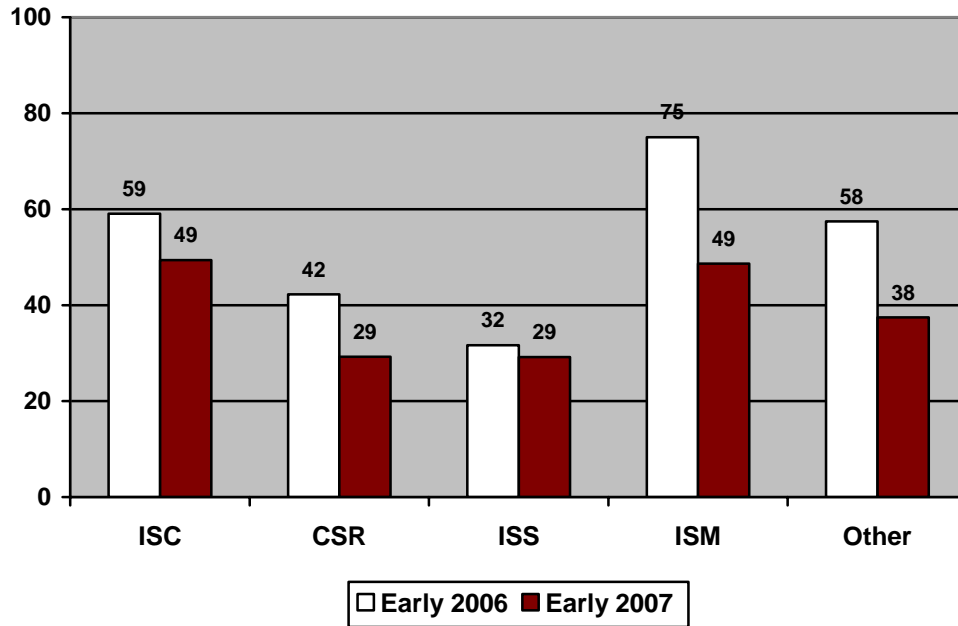
Between the first and the second surveys, there was a decline in the percentage of respondents reporting working conditions were good or excellent. At the beginning of 2006, 44.0 percent of respondents reported conditions were good or excellent. By the end of the year, this had fallen to 33.5 percent of the sample. It is also noticeable that the most significant decline in the proportion of respondents reporting good or excellent working conditions was at the small and medium size offices.

**Chart 3.1: Good or Excellent Current Working Conditions by Office Size (% of respondents)**



While all classifications exhibited a declining frequency of reporting good or excellent working conditions, the decline was most pronounced for the CSR and the ISM classifications.

**Chart 3.2: Good or Excellent Current Working Conditions (% of Respondents)**



### 3.2: Changes in Workload

Survey participants reported relatively heavy workloads both before and after the changes associated with the JPSP. Comparing the Early 2005 column and the Early 2007 column indicated virtually no change in workload over this period. Of significance, the modest decline in workload levels on a number of indicators evident at the beginning of 2006 were reversed by the end of 2006. Over the twelve months between surveys, the percentage of respondents indicating they were assigned an excessive amount of work increased from 63.3 percent to 73.9 percent of respondents and those reporting they did not have enough time to do their work increased from 65.5 percent to 72.8 percent of respondents.

<b>Table 3.1: Workload</b>			
<b>Respondents that Agree (%)</b>			
	<b>Early 2005</b>	<b>Early 2006</b>	<b>Early 2007</b>
Work Fast	86.7	88.25	88.5
Work Hard	93.2	94.2	94.0
Excessive Amount of Work	70.2	62.3	73.9
Not Enough Time to Perform Job	73.2	65.5	72.8
Conflicting Demands at Work	77.3	73.5	76.5
Time Pressure Due to Workload	85.5	85.5	84.4
Constant Interruptions at Work	85.0	86.5	91.6
Job More Demanding Last Few Years	85.5	82.2	83.7
A Lot of Responsibility in Job	90.9	92.7	94.5

One staff participant in the focus group provided the following description of how she coped with the workload.

*The only way you can do all of this work as it is piling up is you are answering the phone and trying to do work on other cases at the same time. So you answer the phone. 'Could I put you on hold while I call up your case?' Meanwhile you put in a couple of earnings real fast and then you get back to this guy to deal with him. That is how you do your work. You are fitting it in between. (CSR)*

For others they cope by coming in early, working Saturdays and skipping lunch.

*We come in Saturday, we take work home, I wake up at night. (ISM)*

*Most days I'm here at seven, I never take breaks, and most of the time I don't take my lunch. . . and even with all that I'm still not caught up (ISS)*

Interpreting the findings in this report requires recognizing that the initiative to reorganize local offices associated with the NFDS was not the only change facing ODSP staff and management in 2006. A number of other policy changes impacted working conditions, workloads and client services. A number of the changes had the potential to reduce workload demands including the hiring of additional staff, the introduction of the CRA File Transfer Process which reduced paper requests for files, the Trace System which enhanced ODSP staff access to the status of direct bank deposits, the easing of procedures regarding clients being reinstated, and encouraging local offices to prioritize work and find solutions to suit local needs. Others had the effect of increasing local workloads including changes in the treatment of earnings as of November 1, the streamlining of OW transfer files, the ongoing demand of programs such as Mandatory Special Necessities, and initiatives regarding non-disabled partners. The hiring of more staff in the Disability Adjudication Unit increased the flow of new clients into local offices. While this might be a short-term increase, it had significant workload implications in 2006. Responding to these challenges was not done through the JPSP, which led to disappointment and a degree of cynicism amongst both staff and local management. While many of these changes represented improvements to the services ODSP clients received, there was an almost unanimous sense that they had made client cases more complicated and increased the load on staff and local management. The survey and the focus groups took place shortly after many of these changes were implemented.

During the focus groups we were told:

*This has been the worst year ever with all the initiatives they have dumped on us. . . . With the overload of information and changes you do not feel like you are doing a good job. I do not feel any job satisfaction at all because I do not feel competent. I just don't feel competent. (ISS)*

*Staff as a whole are stressed almost to the breaking point. I hear the frustration from my fellow workers voiced daily. These changes in service delivery would have worked well if we were only coping with previous workload issues. However our workload has just increased significantly with the recent changes to the ODSP program. (ISC)*

*The other part of this whole thing is that they went into this thinking it would relieve some of the workload pressure. In ODSP this past year has been horrendous. New incentives, ad hocs it really has been horrendous. If they were thinking that JPSP was going to help solve this. With all the work that has come down on them I know they are frustrated. Even as managers we have never been so busy. So all those pressures . . . have increased. (ISM)*

*The real issue is the fact that over the last year, perhaps two years the workload has dramatically increased. This is putting pressure on the system. It doesn't matter if you are CSR, ISS or ISC, the expectation has escalated. They*

*are struggling to do their best. But human beings are human beings and frustrations are going to start. (ISM)*

*Since last year we have introduced once again more programs, more work. We are still resourced in the same way we were a year ago. . . What we have now is people who are expected to do more with the same number of hours. You can only create so many efficiencies. You can only create so many structures. I think we are the stage, I am at the stage. I don't care what service delivery model you have. We have not found the solution to the problem. . . . The core problem is we don't have enough people to carry out the programs that are expected of them. Everybody is pushed to the limit. We are tired. The JPSP is just another extra activity. I think the apathy when you take people away the work accumulates. Nobody looks after it. So when we take people away for half a day here and a day there and the follow up session they come back and the work has piled up. . . . The very core problem that started all of this is still there. (ISM)*

*We did change our model and most people are happier, however in the last year there has been so much change in policy and the workload has increased. (ISS)*

*It (JPSP) has the potential to deal with change...but we have had no change in staffing levels and huge amounts of work have been added on and people don't feel good about what they're doing if they don't feel they are getting the work done. (ISM)*

*The issues around the workload pressures are still there. The elephant is still there. The work is still there, the volume of work is still there, the lack of resources is still there.(ISM)*

*Overall, we are exactly where we were last year. (CSR)*

A number of those we spoke to during the focus groups suggested the system was at a breaking point.

*I have been managing in this program for a number of years and it is getting to the point, especially the last year where I can hardly keep up. It is almost to the breaking point. There are days I don't even want to come to work. (ISM)*

*I have seen people who would never act up in the office. Good solid staff. You see them in tears. I cannot do my job. . . I don't know how the staff do it. (ISM)*

*I'm so far behind that I've been coming into work a half hour early every day, and I was going back to work once a week at night to catch up. (ISC)*

*They haven't just cut jobs, but they have added more work to the remaining few. . . I don't like coming to work anymore, I dread going on holidays because I have no back-up...it makes it dreadful. (ISS)*

At least part of the explanation of why ODSP staff perceive workloads as heavy has to do with the nature of the work. In the words of a senior manager:

*This is really difficult work. The nature of the work is hard. People are tired, they are exhausted, it is mostly draining. . . . The nature of the work lends itself to feelings of exhaustion. How do you express that? It is often expressed as I've got too much work. The problem is that the work that I have got is really hard work. It is the nature of the work.*

### 3.3: Control

Reported levels of control at work were relatively high and there is some evidence that this may have increased as a result of JPSP. The percentage reporting they were able to make decisions at work and decide how to do work has increased from Early 2005 levels. However, the incidence of those reporting they had a lot of say at work had returned to the early 2005 levels by early 2007.

<b>Respondents that Agree (%)</b>			
	<b>Early 2005</b>	<b>Early 2006</b>	<b>Early 2007</b>
Job Requires Learning New Things	90.9	92.2	92.9
Make Decisions at Work	62.5	76.2	73.0
Decide How to Do Work	53.4	68.0	69.7
A Lot of Say at Work	34.5	40.7	34.7

Where staff feel JPSP has not increased their control is over decisions made at other levels of the organization, decisions that often impact on local service delivery models. There was agreement that over the past year, policy changes had not been implemented through a local JPSP. The contrast between the NFSD which directed local staff and management to discuss and adapt the service delivery model to local needs and the series of policy directives imposed on offices during 2006 has created dissatisfaction in most offices. The following are a sample of what we heard during the focus groups.

*We thought what we were doing was working. But what has happened is the workload has increased. Our earnings have changed with the changes effective November 1. So the changes are made without giving thought who down the line this is going to affect. (CSR)*

*When you continuously have an agenda that unfolds with an issue that doesn't always make sense by those of us who do the frontline work and you haven't really been asked for any input if this is going to be a good thing. We understand that policy is made at Corporate. But how can we have an impact on how we implement that policy in the best way possible? But we don't seem to be doing that. (ISS)*

*Somebody needs to come into every individual office and see how things work. See what we are talking about. Somebody . . . who is making the decisions, writing the changes doing the drafting. Somebody from up there needs to see what we do with the changes they make. (CSR)*

*There's a general acceptance in those of us on the front lines that it doesn't matter what we want to do, they're going to do what they want to do. . . I don't think that anyone up there knows what we do on a day to day basis (ISS)*

*The only way this is going to happen is if the folks that were making decisions were really listening to the people on the front lines. (ISM)*

Even at some senior management levels, there was frustration with the contradiction between an empowering NFSD at the local level and the implementation of new policies without local consultation. It is recognized by most that policy initiatives are the prerogative of elected political officials and that it is the task of local staff and management to implement these policies. Having recognized this political reality, there was a sense that the staff costs of delivering policy are not sufficiently evaluated and that there were potential advantages to involving local staff in decisions about how to convert policy from the political level into action. It was suggested by a senior manager:

*Corporate needs to get on with the culture shift. There has to be an understanding at the corporate level, at the policy development process to introduce patience and feedback consultation so that we are in the business of implementing policy that already have thoughtful input from the field. . . . We need to engage staff so that they feel they have meaningful and not tokenistic input over the design of the product given the political world we are in . . . We need to continue to promote and encourage staff's meaningful input at the ground level into how programs are implemented. We are talking about implementation planning, not what we deliver. It has to be at all levels of the organization.*

### 3.4: Support

Levels of support at work initially showed an upward trend in the early phases of the JPSP exercise, but by the end of 2006 they were similar to that reported in early 2005.

<b>Respondents that Agree (%)</b>			
	<b>Early 2005</b>	<b>Early 2006</b>	<b>Early 2007</b>
Support Adequate in Difficult Situations	55.5	65.2	56.4

There was a sense in a number of offices that the JPSP had improved working relations between staff members and that staff and management had found new ways to work together. However, training remained a major problem in the view of numerous staff and managers. During the focus groups we were told:

*New staff get no training whatsoever and they rely on the other staff that are already bombarded with a workload they can't manage to begin with to train a new person with no ODSP experience at all. . . . This puts stress on everybody. (CSR)*

*Even some of the most senior staff are struggling to keep up with the changes because of lack of training. (ISS)*

*When I first became a CSR, I was just thrown in without any training. . . . There was no training and there is no time for training and you are forced to learn from your mistakes. (CSR)*

*The stressors I find in my job are the constant change in policy and legislation and the resulting workload issues created by it. In the majority of cases, the training necessary to implement and understand the changes comes AFTER the fact. This puts us at a disadvantage with our clients to provide them with timely and CORRECT information.. (CSR)*

A number of focus group participants linked their lack of training and knowledge of ODSP policy with high levels of anxiety and stress.

*It would alleviate stress and anxiety if a person knew the answer to a question, but when you don't know. . . it makes it very difficult to do your job and creates a lot of stress. (ISC)*

*It's very frustrating when dealing with clients and you have to tell them that you can't help them because I have no idea what the answer is. (ISC)*

### 3.5: Rewards

Changes in reward levels were relatively small. There was some increase in the percentage of survey participants reporting they received respect from their superiors in the early phase of the JPSP but by the end of 2006 the percentage of respondents who reported positively to this question were similar to that reported in early 2005.

<b>Table 3.4: Reward</b>			
<b>Respondents that Agree (%)</b>			
	<b>Early 2005</b>	<b>Early 2006</b>	<b>Early 2007</b>
Respected by Superiors	61.4	69.2	63.0
Respected by Colleagues	73.7	77.0	75.3
Respected at Work	51.0	53.0	48.2
Income is Adequate	51.9	50.5	43.3
Treated Fairly	72.9	79.7	73.6
Adequate Job Security	69.6	65.5	69.7
Job Requires Creativity	56.3	58.2	60.9
Opportunity to Develop Abilities	46.6	51.5	48.3
Occupation Reflects Education	61.9	62.2	63.5
Work Prospects Adequate	55.2	55.5	54.5
Promotion Prospects Good	44.4	45.2	43.4

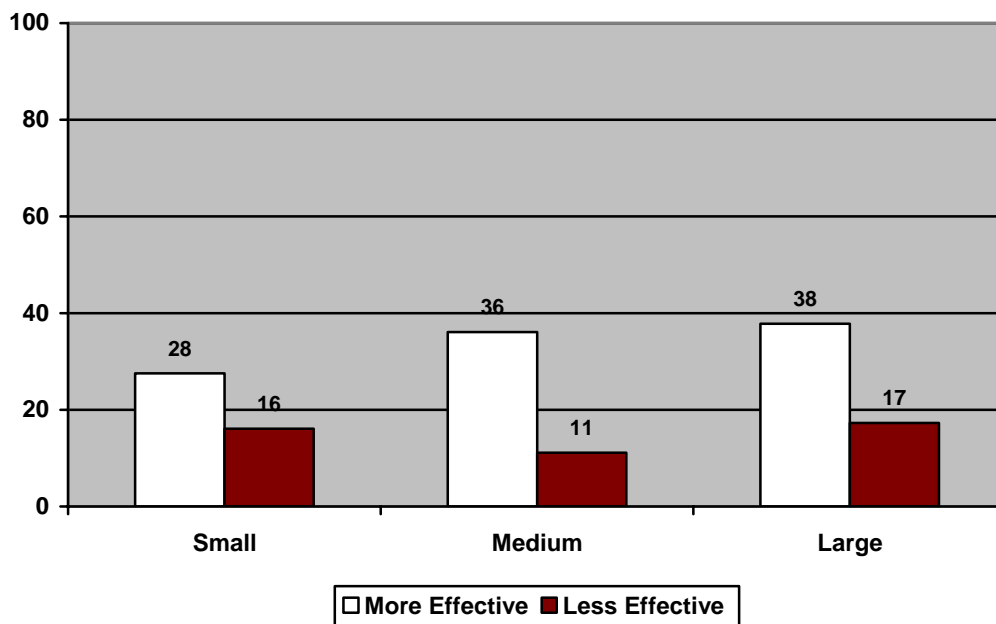
#### 4.0: Service to Clients

One of the core objectives of the NFSD was to make changes to the service delivery model that would improve services to clients. This is an area where the changes appear to have had a positive impact.

#### 4.1: Change in Capacity to Serve Clients

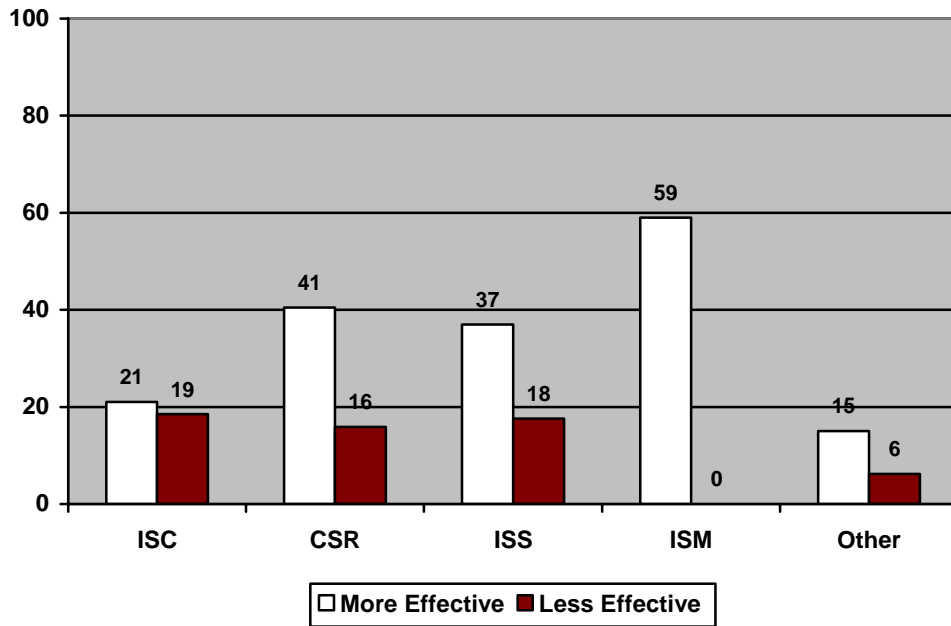
Over thirty-five percent of survey respondents reported services had become more effective by the end of 2006 and less than fifteen percent felt it was less effective. Half reported no changes in the effectiveness of services to clients.

**Chart 4.1: Change in Capacity to Service Clients as a Result of Changes in Service Delivery Model by Office Size (% of Respondents)**



The improvement in services to clients was particularly pronounced for the CSR and the ISS classifications. No ISM reported services had become less effective over the period.

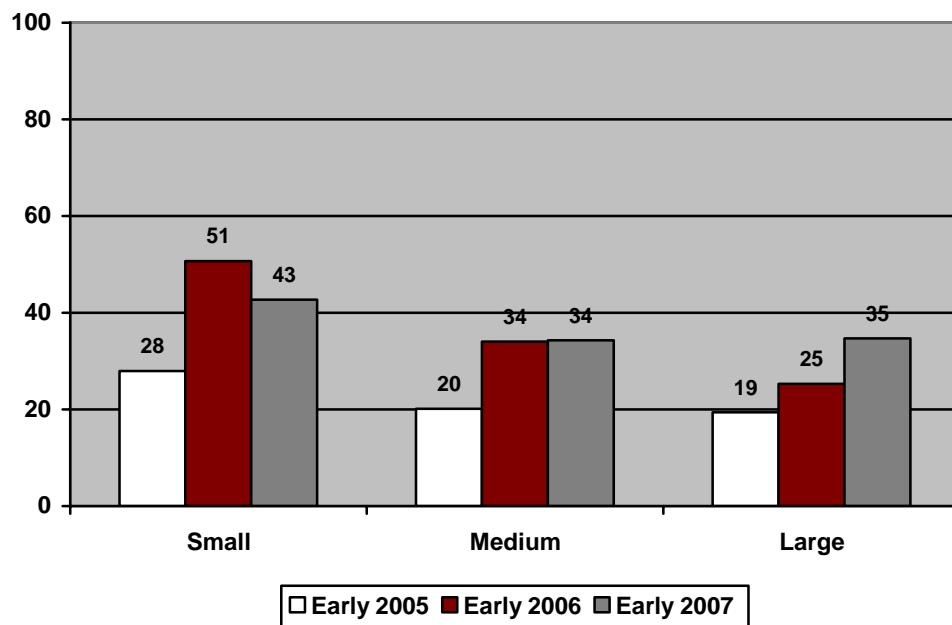
**Chart 4.2: Change in Capacity to Service Clients as a Result of Changes in Work Organization (% of Respondents)**



## 4.2: Developing Relationships with Clients

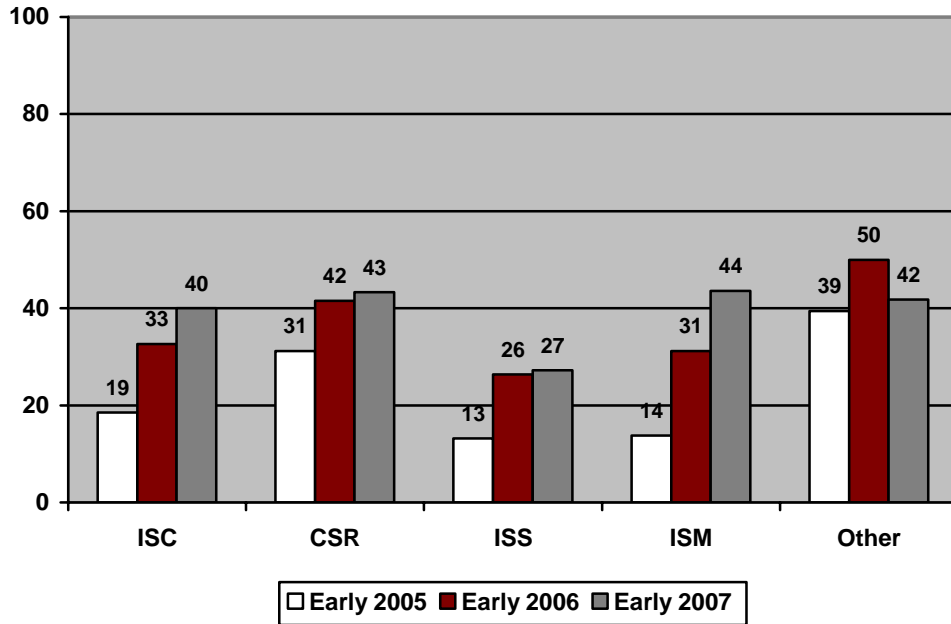
The Charts below indicate that compared to the Early 2005 period, offices of all sizes report it had become easier to develop relationships with clients. The change during 2006 was most noticeable at large offices, many of which had yet to implement changes to the service delivery model at the time of the first survey in early 2006.

**Chart 4.3: Easy to Develop Relationships with Clients by Office Size (% of Respondents)**



Examining the same data by job classification indicates that for each classification, there was a significant improvement in the ease of developing relationships with clients. This was especially the case for the ISC and the ISS classifications. During the focus groups, much of this improvement was attributed to the general shift back to variants of the case-load model of service delivery.

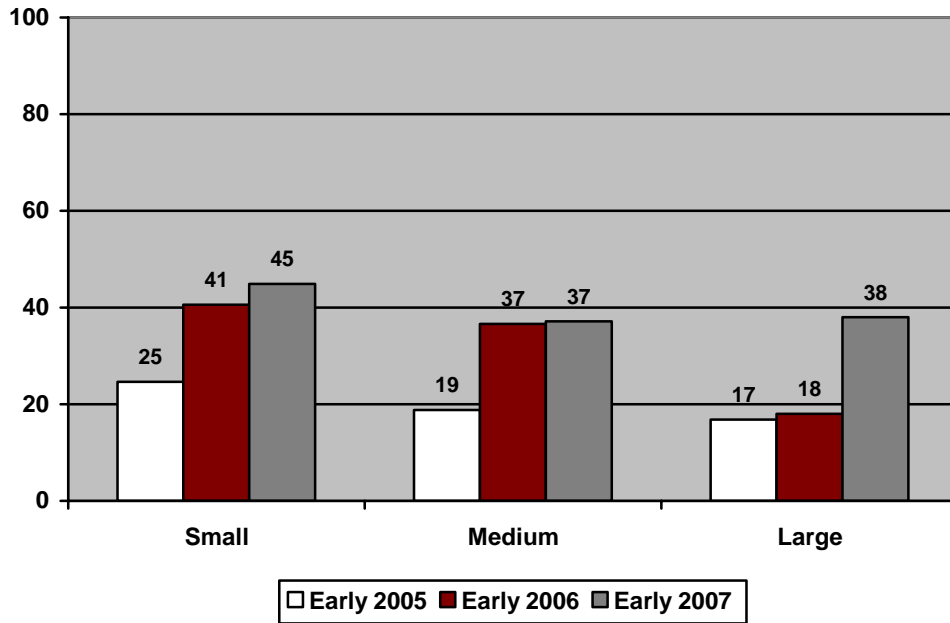
**Chart 4.4: Easy to Develop Relationships with Clients by Job Classification (% of Respondents)**



### 4.3: Client Access to Decision Makers

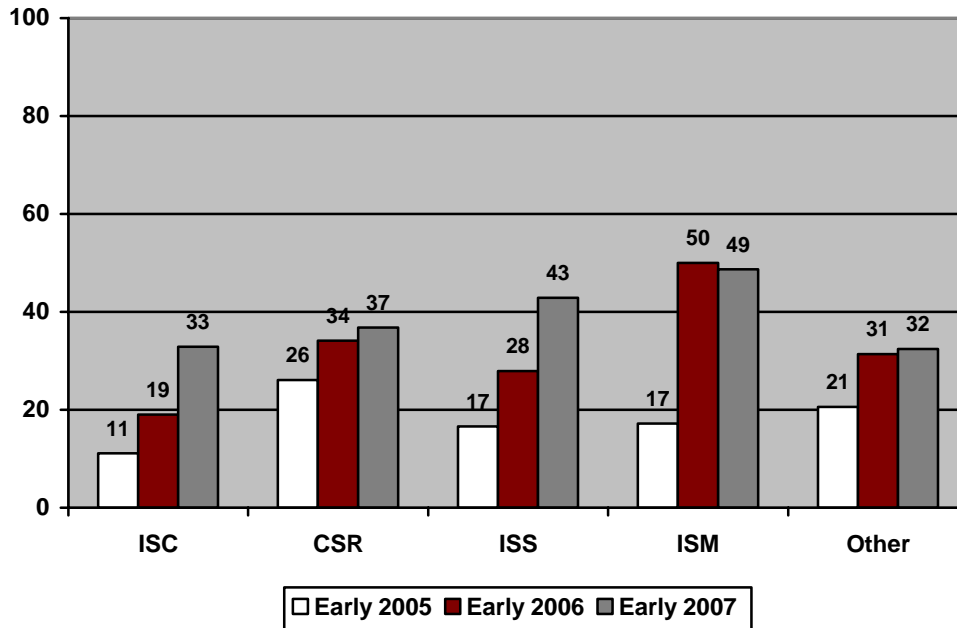
There were significant increases in the ability of clients to speak with decision makers across all office sizes. This was most pronounced at large offices during 2006.

**Chart 4.5: Easy for Clients to Access Decision Makers by Office Size (% of Respondents)**



The ISC and the ISS classifications reported the most significant increases in reporting clients found it easy to access decision makers.

**Chart 4.6: Easy for Clients to Access Decision Makers by Job Classification (% of Respondents)**



#### 4.4: Meeting Ministry Program Standards

Data provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Program Management Division provides a number of measures of client services. There were significant improvements in service standards on the intake side in 2006. At least part of this improvement is a result of changes to how Ontario Works applications are handled and the increase in staff at the Disability Adjudication Unit. On a province-wide basis, the average time between receiving a full application and making a decision on eligibility fell from 20.8 days to 17.5 days, and the average time from making an eligibility decision to issuing a first payment fell from 17.6 days to 15.0 days. Both of these are within the ODSP Program Standard of twenty-one days.

There remained significant variation between regions and from month to month. In two regions in 2006, the average time between receiving a full application and making a decision on eligibility was greater than twenty-one days. This was down from four regions in 2005. In five of the nine regions, there were still months in 2006 when the twenty-one day standard was exceeded. In 2005, seven of the nine exceeded the twenty-one day standard in at least one month during the year. In 2006, only two regions reported months when the average time from making an eligibility decision to issuing a first payment exceeded twenty-one days. In 2005,

six of the nine regions exceeded the twenty-one day standard in at least one month.

**Table 4.1: Intake Benchmarks**

	Days from Screening to Verification (Monthly Provincial Average)	Average Months per Region Where Number of Days from Screening to Verification Exceeded 21	Days to Reconfirm Financial Eligibility (Monthly Provincial Average)	Average Months per Region Where Number of Days to Reconfirm Financial Eligibility Exceeded 21
2005	20.8	5.1	17.6	3.0
2006	17.5	3.1	15.0	0.9

Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Program Management Division.

During 2006, the activity associated with the Consolidated Verification Process (CVP), and Verification of Debt forms fell. On a province-wide basis in 2006, two regions did not meet the target of three percent of its files under the (CVP). No region failed to make this standard in 2005. Eight of the nine regions fell below the three percent target at least one month in 2006, up from six regions in 2005. In 2006, fewer cases were forwarded to the Overpayment Recovery Unit (ORU) for recovery of an overpayment compared to 2005.

**Table 4.2: CVP and Debt Forms Benchmarks**

	CVP Performance Provincial Average (%)	Average Number of Months per Region Below CVP Target	Verification of Debt Forms Referred to ORU (#)	Verification of Debt Forms Referred to ORU (2005) (% of total cases)
2005	3.4	1.7	4,814	2.3
2006	3.1	3.0	3,427	1.6

Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Program Management Division.

#### 4.5: Focus Group Discussion of Service to Clients

During the focus groups, there was extensive discussion of how the changes in the service delivery model had affected client services. There was a general consensus that the shift away from the BPR model, and in particular the shift to a variant of the case-load model associated with the pre-BPR era, had a positive impact on client services. Staff and management felt clients appreciated the more personal contacts the new service model facilitated.

*Stakeholders are happy. Clients are happy because they know who to call. They have a worker again. (ISS)*

*Shift away from a “call centre” approach was very well received. (ISM)*

*The availability of a client being able to get a person on the other end has improved 100 percent. (CSR)*

*Clients really like this because they know who to call. (CSR)*

*The client has better access to the ISS which means the client has better access to the decision maker. (CSR)*

*The return to caseloads was long overdue!!! This will, over much time build better working situation between staff/client/agencies. (ISS)*

Community stakeholders also were generally positive about the changes in the service delivery model.

*There is a great sense of relief . . . The clients like it and the workers like it.*

*We (community workers) get to know the case workers now in a way that allows for some trust to be built and confidence to be built. . . . They understand from the get go that I have some understanding of the situations.*

*I was amazed. A few participants called down to the office and actually were able to talk to someone. Previously you get a call system and you had to leave a number.*

*The most recent changes in going to teams versus the dial in, for people who are able to do that they find it better than the previous arrangement . . . . It is better than call and get whoever. At least they are getting one of a small group.*

While service had improved, there were still serious problems in the delivery of service to clients. At the heart of these concerns were two issues: understaffing in ODSP offices and lack of training of ODSP staff. Many of the staff and managers participating in the focus groups recognized that the workload issues discussed in

the previous section had a direct impact on client services. Many staff felt caught between the knowledge they are understaffed and their concern for the clients they serve. For many this means going the extra mile, even when it has potential health risks. We were told:

*It is the dedication of the staff that makes the wheels roll in ODSP. If it weren't the heart felt sympathy for a lot of our clients . . . We go the extra length because we do feel bad for these people. (CSR)*

*Our clients are under the poverty line, and we're their last resort and we are just trying to get them what they need to survive and we feel responsible for them. (CSR)*

*When your client needs that cheque now, or their medication now. . . are you going to go for lunch and feel good about going for lunch, or are you going to do what it takes to get them what they need. . . . Personally, I'll work through my lunch. (ISS)*

*It's not uncommon for staff to come in early, work through breaks and lunch to make sure clients are being served. Our staff have a really strong commitment to the clients we serve. . . . There were four of us in the office an hour after the office closed yesterday. (ISS)*

*It's amazing the dedication some of our staff have. Even though they feel all this stress, they still do what they can to get the clients what they need knowing that there are all kinds of other responsibilities that need to be completed. (ISM)*

For others, the staff shortage and ODSP focus on performance standards results in limited service to clients, despite the desire to serve as discussed above.

*You get not only staff who are overworked, short with each other, but they are not giving customer service. The clients are the ones who are suffering in the end. (CSR)*

*We are losing the connection with our clients because of the size of our caseloads. (ISS)*

*It all comes down to staffing, you can change our duties but the bottom line is if you don't have the time to get the job done, something is going to suffer and that's the client. (ISS)*

*At the end of the day, we have to meet expectations, the manager has to meet expectations, their managers have to meet expectations...this is all about numbers, it's not about people anymore. (ISS)*

*I have a growing feeling daily that, despite my best efforts, there is never enough time to properly do my job. I go home and worry about the work I have not completed and the calls not yet returned. I worry about how I will return the 32 calls from yesterday and still take calls today as well as get the paperwork done to assist other clients. (CSR)*

*I work very hard and I can't catch up. That makes me feel very bad since I've always been a client-oriented person and I no longer feel that the service we give is good. Our clients can feel the stress of our workload and lots of time are apologizing for disturbing us. (CSR)*

Lack of training regarding new policy was another area which impacted service to clients. Many participants in the focus groups spoke of their lack of understanding of policy changes and difficulty interpreting directives. The following are typical of what we were told.

*Outside groups seem to know about changes in ODSP before we know. Legal clinics were giving sessions to clients on the November 1 changes and we hadn't even heard what the changes were yet. (CSR)*

*The November 1 changes were horribly, horribly handled. Nobody knows what they are doing. . . . The work with the new changes is just unbelievable. It is frustrating. I bet if you asked the majority of staff about streamlining, referral of dependent adults, how you treat that person with a \$2 pay stub (they wouldn't know). (ISS)*

*When the November 1 changes came up, nobody could see the merit in getting staff together and saying these are the changes. Clients are asking questions and staff are not up on the changes. We did not get information on the changes until after they came into effect. (ISM)*

*I used to think I was supposed to know everything about everything and I know that I don't know that now. There are times when staff ask me about something I don't even have a clue. Things have changed so much so rapidly so often. (ISM)*

#### 4.6: Community Stakeholder Focus Groups and Service to Clients

Many of the same themes were discussed in the community stakeholder focus groups. As indicated above, there was a sense amongst community stakeholders that things had improved. While some community agencies were very positive about the services staff deliver to clients, most reported problems remained. Most offices reported in their "Implementation Planning Checklist" that they had a communication plan for both clients and community stakeholders. During the focus groups, community stakeholders in general expressed disappointment that clients and community workers were not informed about the JPSP while it was underway or notified of the changes once implemented. Some offices did send out notices to clients, but many relied on informing clients as they contacted the ODSP office. Many of the stakeholders reported finding out about the changes as a result of calling in for a client and appreciating that the system had changed. Decisions not to inform individual clients all at once by mail of the changes often simply increased the burden on staff having to sort out confusion amongst clients as imperfect information circulated between clients.

Community stakeholders also recognized the lack of staff and how this was limiting service to clients.

*The success of this restructure ultimately depends on access to individuals, but if they are still swamped, it's unlikely to improve.*

*How can we expect staff with caseloads of approaching 500 to 600 cases to provide a reasonable service to the different levels of problems that each disabled individual faces. . . . This is where the problem lies.*

*Even in cases in which clients know their case worker, this doesn't necessarily ensure access as (staff) turnover within the offices is so high.*

They also identified training as an ongoing issue leading to inefficiencies and poor service to clients.

*This (lack of training) leads to people's interpretation of what is on paper. We see this all the time. Their interpretation is totally different from my interpretation.*

*This last year has been a year of change. Before the changes actually happened, staff were so stressed because they didn't know what the changes were going to be until the last minute. That has to change at the top. I felt very very bad for the people I was working with, as they didn't know anything more than I did. I felt very bad for them. Staff doing the job really felt inadequate because they could not tell us what the changes meant.*

Community stakeholders reported that ODSP staff were not always informing clients of their entitlements.

*You don't have the relationship that is developed. There is no sense we are here to help you access every benefit you are eligible for.*

*What can I do to best serve this client? Does she know there is a benefit to help her move? Nobody offers that kind of thing. The most heartbreaking is it is too late to access that benefit and they have used their basic personal needs, their food budget to help them move, to travel to their doctor. There is never that relationship.*

*The caseworkers sound like they are in a hurry so they have no time to say what else is available.*

The limited knowledge staff have of a client's actual disability may also limit their ability to advise clients. Most community stakeholders recognized the need to balance privacy issues with ODSP staff need to know, however, most felt the balance had tilted too far towards privacy and as a result staff were unable to perform their tasks. We heard:

*I had just assumed they knew about the client's disability. . . . This office is supposed to serve you because you have a disability. If we don't know what they (disabilities) are we can't serve you.*

Community stakeholders were critical of the basic design of the ODSP and what ODSP clients must do to get benefits and what a significant portion of the clients are able to do. At a number of sessions, it was pointed out that the system is not sufficiently designed with the disabled in mind. One example was some of the correspondence between ODSP and clients such as letters informing clients that their benefits are being cut-off. It was suggested that it was not unusual to find that the reason these letters were issued could be traced back to relatively minor and easily resolved problems such as a form not being submitted, or a document not having been processed at a local office, or third parties failing to submit required documentation. However, for disabled clients dependent on ODSP benefits to survive the letters could result in serious anxiety and necessitate significant remedial effort by stakeholder agencies or ODSP staff to stabilize the situation. We were told.

*People have disabilities and ODSP has to recognize this.*

*I had someone who got the package (streamlined intake) and they threw it out. They opened it up and they could not read it. . . . They got ODSP to send another package. It took two hours of my day to go through the package.*

*By terminating that benefit you put people into a crisis. All it does is get that person off of the caseload. That is not a good use of taxpayers' money because those people who are off their meds end up in the judicial system and in our emergency rooms. . . Nobody is looking at that big overall picture. It is good use of taxpayers' money to keep people on their benefits and give them all the benefits they are entitled to because then they are not using all of the other ministries.*

*(Getting a letter indicating their benefits are being cut off) . . . causes a huge amount of stress to someone who has a major mental illness and is very very fragile. You wonder if this is really necessary?*

As a result of the complexity of ODSP procedures and the detailed information requested, community workers sometimes find themselves doing tasks that in their view should be the responsibility of ODSP staff.

*Even in cases in which clients know their worker, they can't get through. . . . This often sends clients back to agencies to contact on their behalf and this is increasing...it's becoming more and more of a workload issue for agencies.*

*More clients are needing emotional support because they are getting frustrated with dealing with the local offices.*

*A lot of my job is becoming interpreter of correspondence coming from ODSP....I'm not ODSP staff.*

*Clients get letters that they don't understand and they can't get a hold of anyone within the office.*

## 5.0: Health Indicators

### 5.1: Reported Stress at Work

One of the principles specified in the 2004 Memorandum of Agreement was the creation of a “safe and healthy” work environment. In the preliminary report we suggested that, while the prevalence of reported health concerns was relatively high at ODSP offices, things seemed to be improving in the early stages of the JPSP. Evidence gathered in the second round of fieldwork indicates there has been a step backward in terms of health indicators.

Discussions during the focus groups indicate that stress levels at work remain high. The changes in the service delivery model do appear to have increased staff control in some areas (See section 3.3) and a number of staff reported feeling better about their jobs as a result; however this has been negated by the series of policy changes introduced during 2006 (See Section 1.1). As a result stress levels remain high, and are likely on the rise. Staffing levels remain a major concern of both the staff and the local managers we spoke with. The following are representative of what we heard from staff.

*Personally the situation is the lack of staff. . . It is just too much. Some days I could scream. (CSR)*

*The downfall is, it's good on paper, but don't be sick. . . We have a backup plan. We (are supposed to) have 5 CSRs in the last year and a half. If we have 3 CSRs trying to do the work of 5 that is a good day, so we are a month, month and a half behind. That creates phone calls, walk-ins, stress. . . . The tasks are not being done. It's not done properly. It's stressful, very stressful. (CSR)*

*If we had a little bit more staff, we wouldn't have as much work and stress. We would still be doing what we need to do but we wouldn't be robbing Peter to pay Paul. I am not a happy person. Just thinking about it makes me upset. (CSR)*

*At the end of the day when I go home I am toast. I should not have to go home at 5:00 and be brain-dead and have to sit on my couch because I have no more umph to be able to do my job the next day. (ISS)*

*All the ISS's in our office are 20 years plus. Some of them are in tears on a regular basis because they are overloaded, they are frustrated, they don't know where to find the information they need to make a decision. The decision has to be made yesterday, the client is on the phone, the manager is at their desk, and they are having a nervous breakdown in front of you. It is scary. (ISS)*

*Nothing has gotten better, and I think the stress is even higher and I feel so offended by their [management] actions. . . The stress is unbearable. (ISS)*

*My personality has changed because I'm so stressed trying to do my job. . . . It's always negative and that affects you. (CSR)*

*Staff as a whole are stressed almost to the breaking point. I hear the frustration from my fellow workers voiced daily. These changes in Service Delivery would have worked well if we were only coping with previous workload issues. However our workload has just increased significantly with the recent changes to the ODSP program. (ISC)*

*I am astonished at the workload and the expectations and the amount of information that is constantly coming at us from all directions. This is a multi-layered job with many facets that is more complex than any other job I think I have ever done. It is a challenge mentally emotionally and physically on a daily basis. Some days I walk out of the office totally drained dreading the pile of mail on my desk and in my mailbox. The phone calls that I receive daily can be between 40-80 calls not to mention the 20 messages that are left for the next day. (CSR)*

*In the past 7 months I have suffered from sleepless nights, headaches, stress, crying, eye problems and I don't feel like myself. I feel like my job has taken over my life. It's all-consuming even when I go home, my job is still with me. (CSR)*

Managers also reported high levels of stress at work.

*I'm stressed because I don't feel I'm doing a good job as a manager supporting them. (ISM)*

## 5.2: Ministry Data on Absences

Data on paid and unpaid short-term sick leave suggests that the year 2006 was one of relatively high absences. The average number of days absent for the nine regions was 10.6 days in 2004. This fell moderately to 10.2 days in 2005 before increasing almost twenty percent to 12.1 in 2006. Of the nine regions, six reported more average days of paid and unpaid sick leave in 2006 than they did in 2004.<sup>6</sup>

These data may underestimate the seriousness of the problem as we were told on a number of occasions that staff are reluctant to take time off as it results in accumulated work upon their return or it leaves their co-workers in a difficult position.

*People are afraid to take time off because they are afraid of what their coworkers are going to be left with. (ISS)*

## 5.3: Survey Health Indicators

The data on health outcomes was collected at two points in time. The first set of data refers to a period near the beginning of 2006 when a number of offices were in the middle of making changes to the service delivery models associated with the NFSD. The second set of data were collected at the end of 2006 and refer to conditions in November and early December following major policy changes on November 1. The findings confirm that stress is an issue at ODSP offices and that it has become more prevalent by the end of 2006. Between the two surveys, the number reporting work-related sleep problems increased from 26.3 percent to 34.6 percent of respondents and the number reporting work-related headaches increased from 25.8 percent to 35.3 percent of survey respondents. The number reporting tension at work increased from 44.5 percent to over 56.6 percent of respondents. The number reporting stress at work increased from 52.3 percent to 64.9 percent of respondents. The number reporting work-related exhaustion increased from 63.0 percent of respondents to 73.7 percent. While there was an increase in the prevalence of every health indicator in all three size categories, some of the most dramatic increases were in smaller offices. At the beginning of 2006 smaller offices reported marginally better health outcomes than large offices. By the end of 2006, this relationship had reversed itself.

Compared with data from Toronto using the same questions and gathered as part of an ongoing study the authors conducted in 2006<sup>7</sup>, ODSP staff and management reported poorer health indicators. The prevalence of health problems amongst

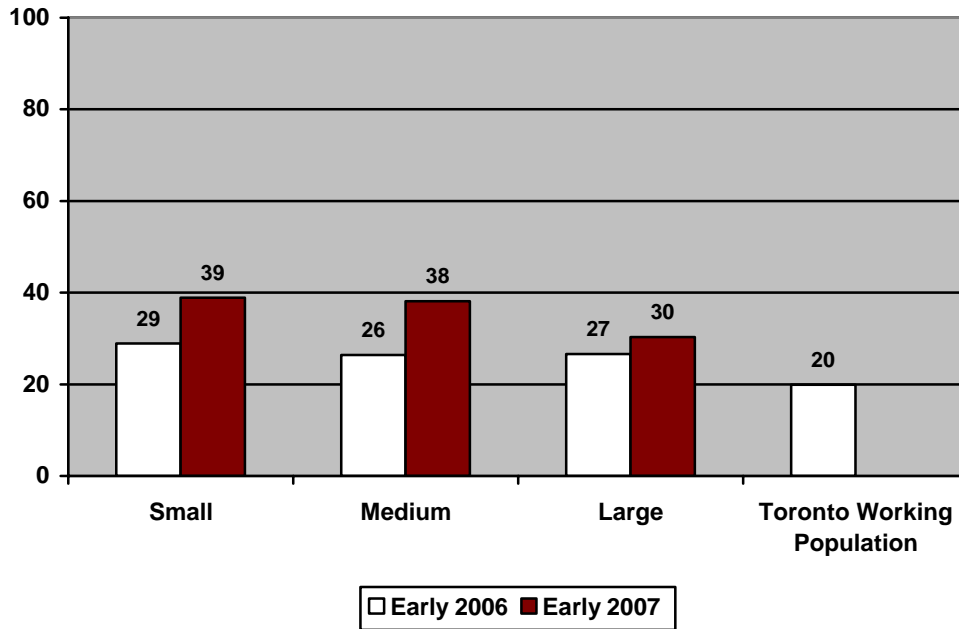
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<sup>6</sup> Data provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Feb 13, 2007.

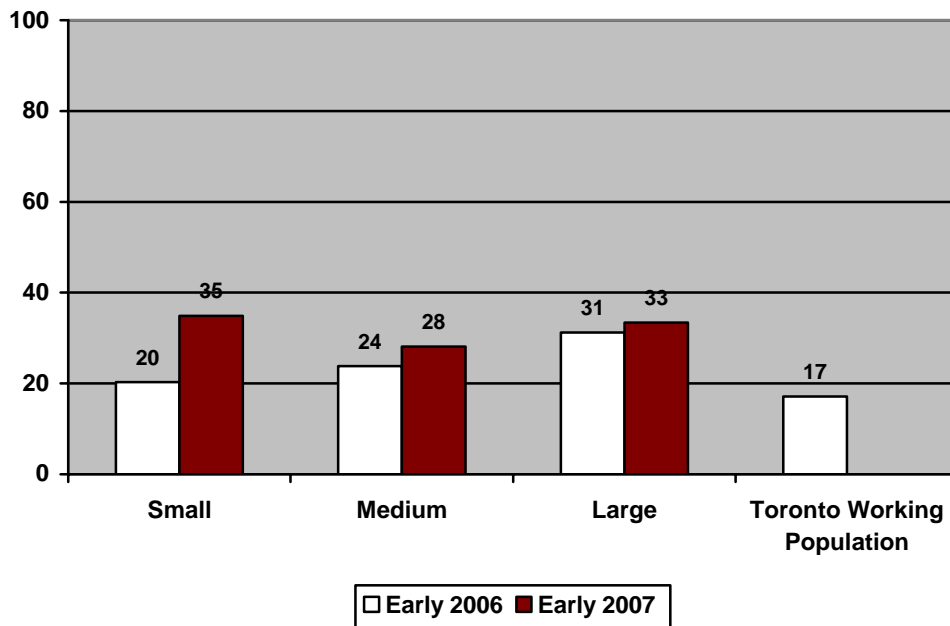
<sup>7</sup> The study involved over 3,000 working Torontonians 18 years of age or over. The sample represents a cross-section of all sectors of the economy and workers employed full-time, part-time and on temporary contracts. It provides a benchmark to interpret the data reported from ODSP staff and managers. (See Section 1.1) Further details are available from the author.

ODSP staff is rarely less than fifty percent higher than those reported in Toronto and on a number of indicators it is more than double that reported in Toronto.

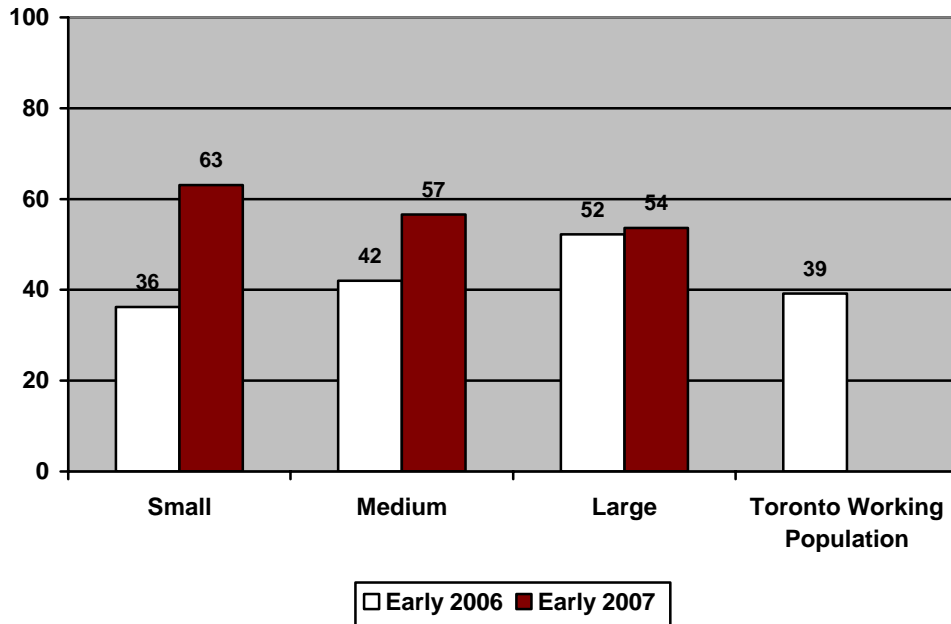
**Chart 5.1: Work-related Problems Sleeping at Least Half the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**



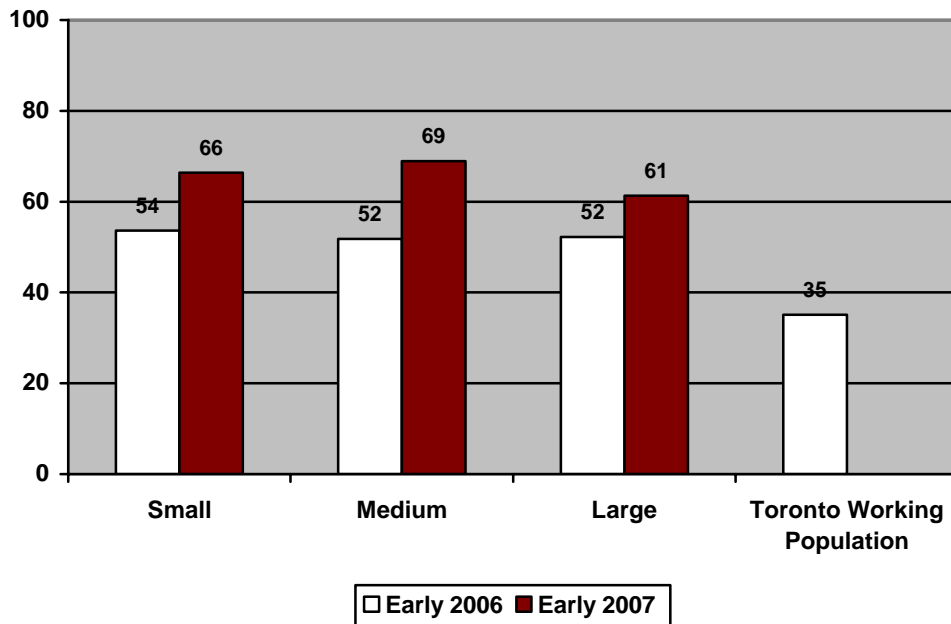
**Chart 5.2: Work-related Headaches at Least Half the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**



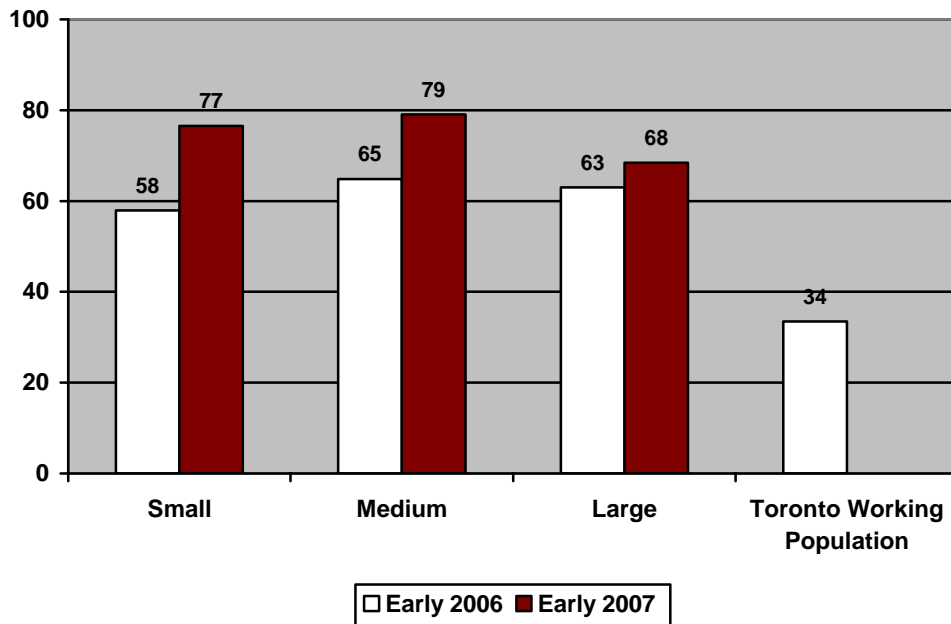
**Chart 5.3: Tense at Work at Least Half the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**



**Chart 5.4: Work Stressful at Least Half the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**

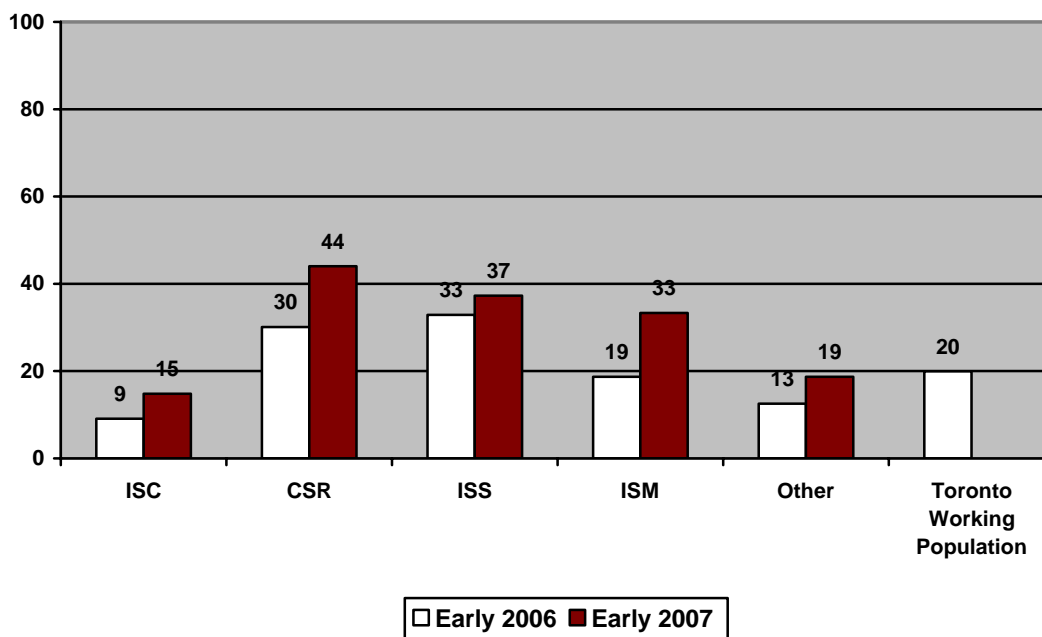


**Chart 5.5: Exhausted after Work at Least Half the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**

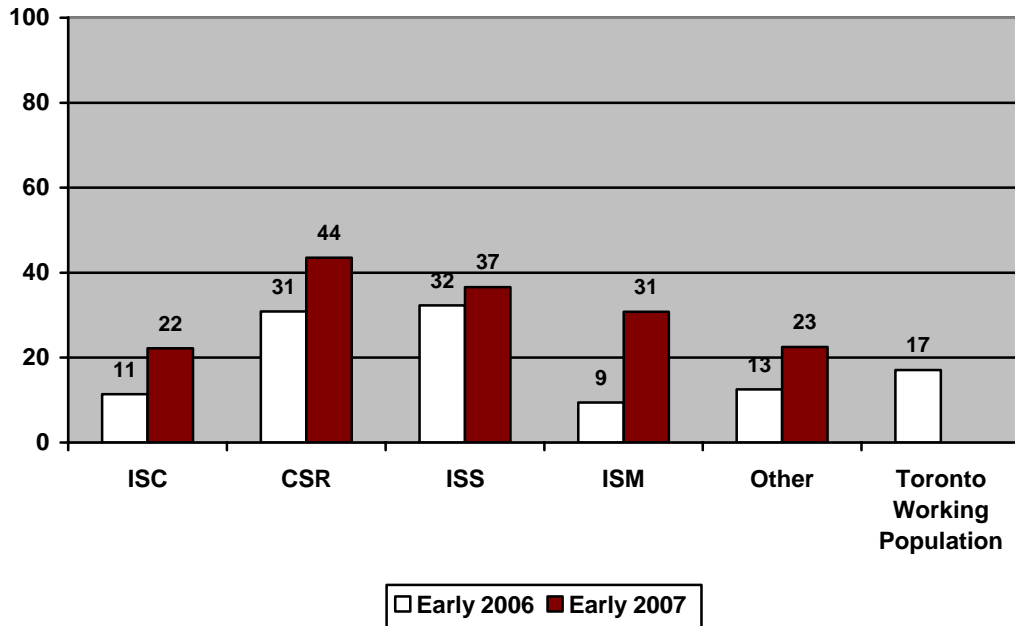


As was the case in the previous charts, trends in health indicators by classification also reveal significant increases during 2006. In a number of cases, the prevalence increased by fifty percent or more over the course of the year.

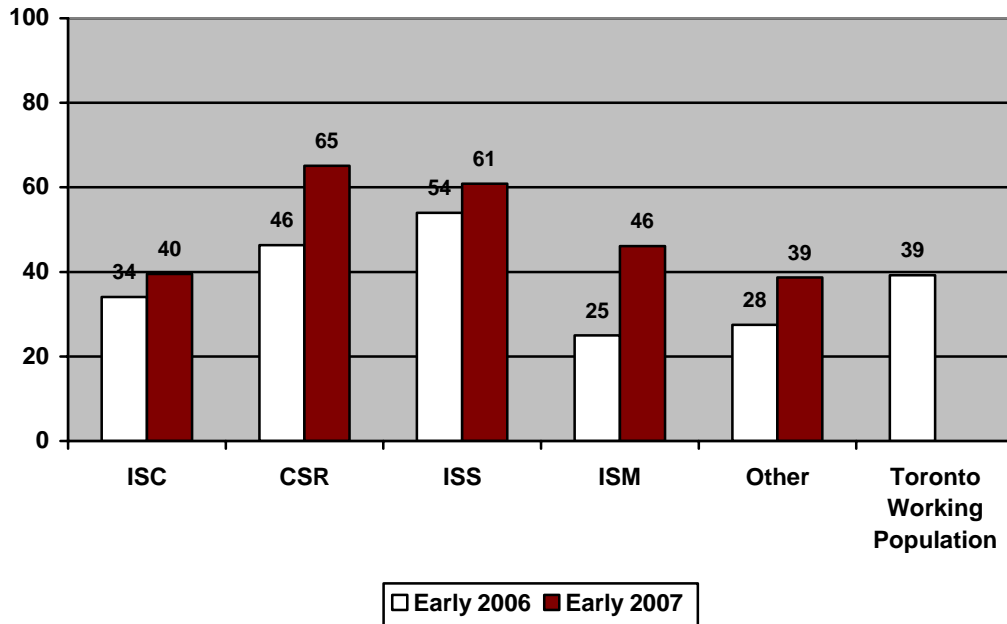
**Chart 5.6: Work-related Problems Sleeping at Least Half the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**



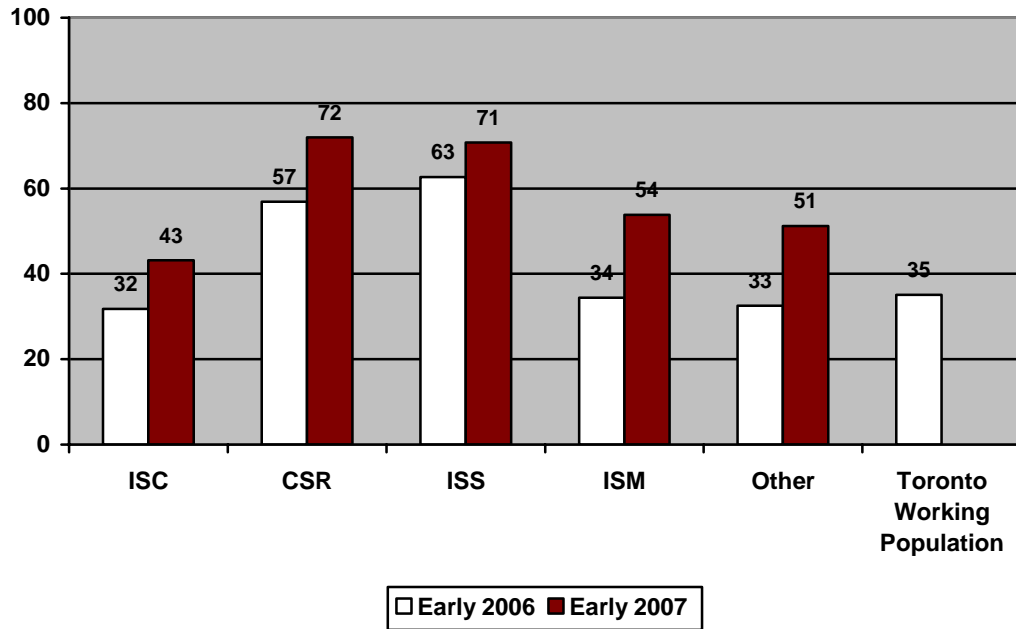
**Chart 5.7: Work-related Headaches at Least Half of the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**



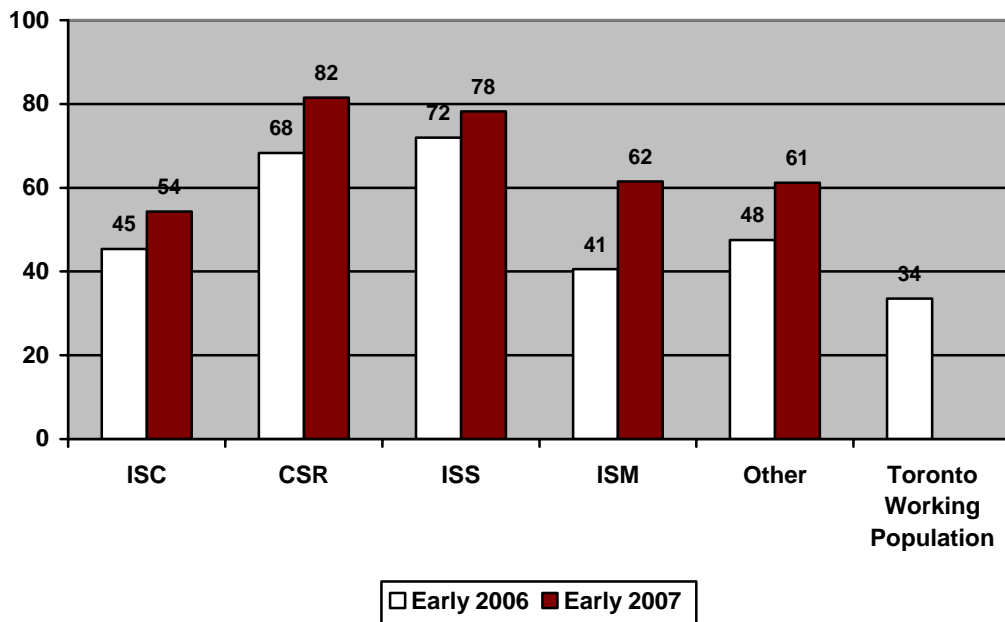
**Chart 5.8: Tense at Work at Least Half of the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**



**Chart 5.9: Work is Stressful at Least Half of the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**

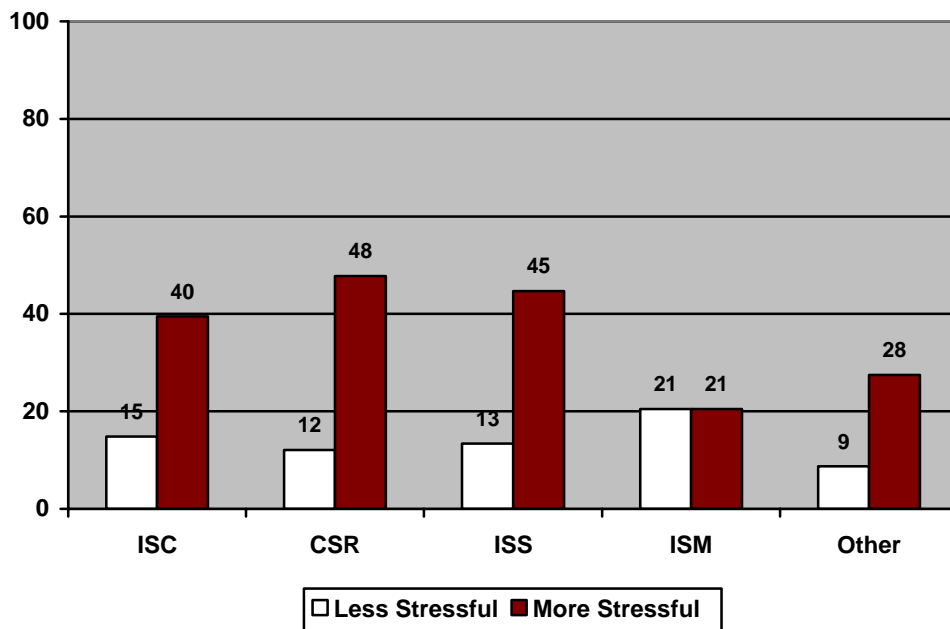


**Chart 5.10: Exhausted at Work at Least Half of the Days Last Month (% of Respondents)**



There was also evidence that work had become more stressful since the launch of the NFSD with 41.9 percent of all respondents reporting work had become more stressful while 13.0 percent thought it had become less stressful. About the same percentage of respondents in the three different categories of office size reported work had become more stressful, 16.7 percent of those in large offices reported work had become less stressful compared to 6.7 percent in small offices. The Chart below indicates that for the ISC, CSR and ISS classifications those reporting work had become more stressful outnumbered those who felt it had become less stressful by a three to one margin.

**Chart 5.11: Change in Stress as a Result of Changes in Work Organization Since April 2005 (% of Respondents)**



## 5.4: The Job Demand-Control Model and Job Strain

An important instrument for measuring the characteristics of work organization and how they may affect health outcomes comes from the work of Karasek and Theorell (Karasek 1979; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). They developed what is known as the Job Demand-Control (JD-C) model. They pointed to Job Strain, defined as the combination of high psychological workload demands and low decision latitude or control, as a key health risk.

Psychological demands are measured by questions asking: Is work excessive? Are there conflicting demands? Is there enough time for work? Is it too fast or too hard? Decision latitude is measured by questions asking: Can employees make their own decisions? Can they choose how to do their job? Do they have a say on the job? Do they take part in decisions? The model predicts that as workload increases and decision latitude decreases health outcomes will deteriorate.

Researchers using the JD-C model have shown that a variety of health problems, including high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, are more common where employees are exposed to Job Strain. For instance, heart disease is more common amongst overworked cashiers and line workers than amongst overworked executives.

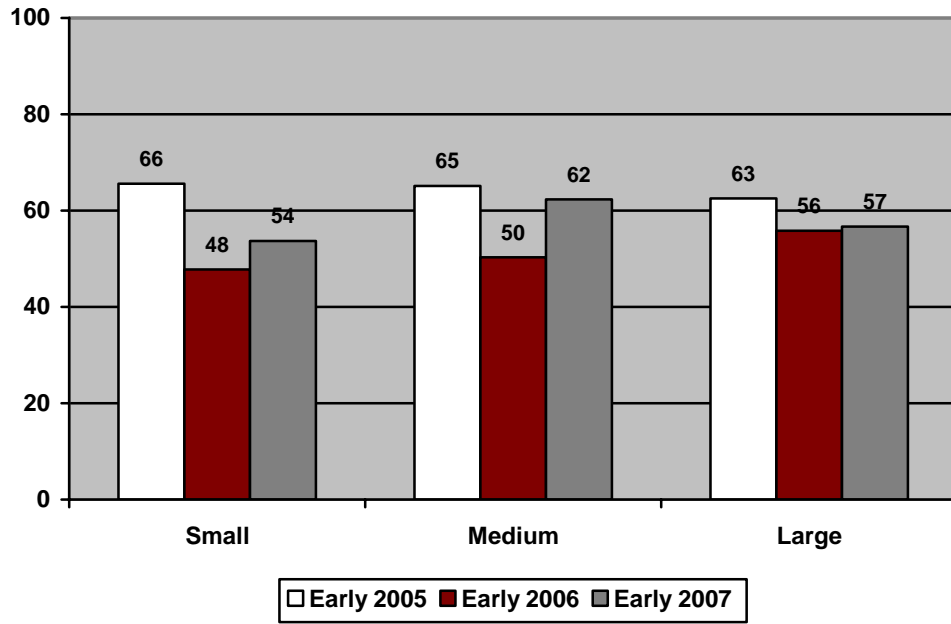
The etiology linking Job Strain and health continues to be explored. Recent work has focused on how increasing control permits workers to minimize the effects of workload-related stressors by allowing them to adjust their work pattern so they complete their job assignments when they are best able to do so and in ways they find the least stressful. According to Wall, et al., (1996) "Control provides the opportunity for individuals to adjust to demands according to their needs and circumstances." (p. 155) In the short run, Job Strain is hypothesized to lead to lower job satisfaction, exhaustion and depression, and in the long run to stress-related illness, including cardiovascular disease. (See Schnall, et al. 2002; de Jonge 2000a; Stansfield et.al. 2000).

There is no single standard for deciding at what point a combination of psychological demands and decision latitude leads to Job Strain. This report uses the median levels of psychological demands and decision latitude scores in the Cornell Hypertension studies begun by Peter Schnall and Paul Landsbergis in the mid-1980s. (See Landsbergis et.al., 1994). These scores are based on responses to five workload questions and nine decision latitude questions. **Converting these numbers to a scale from 0-100 defines Job Strain as a job where decision latitude is less than sixty-nine and psychological demands are greater than fifty-six.**

In looking at the chart below, two items are worth noting. The first is that there has been a small reduction in the prevalence of Job Strain in ODSP offices over the period. In the Pre-NFSD period, 64.3 percent were classified as being exposed to Job Strain, falling to 51.8 percent in early 2006 before rising again to 58.0 percent in the Post-JPSP period. The improvement is most significant at small offices where the prevalence has fallen almost twenty percent and in large offices where it has fallen almost ten percent. The second item to note is the reversal of the downward trend during 2006. This was especially noticeable at small and large offices.

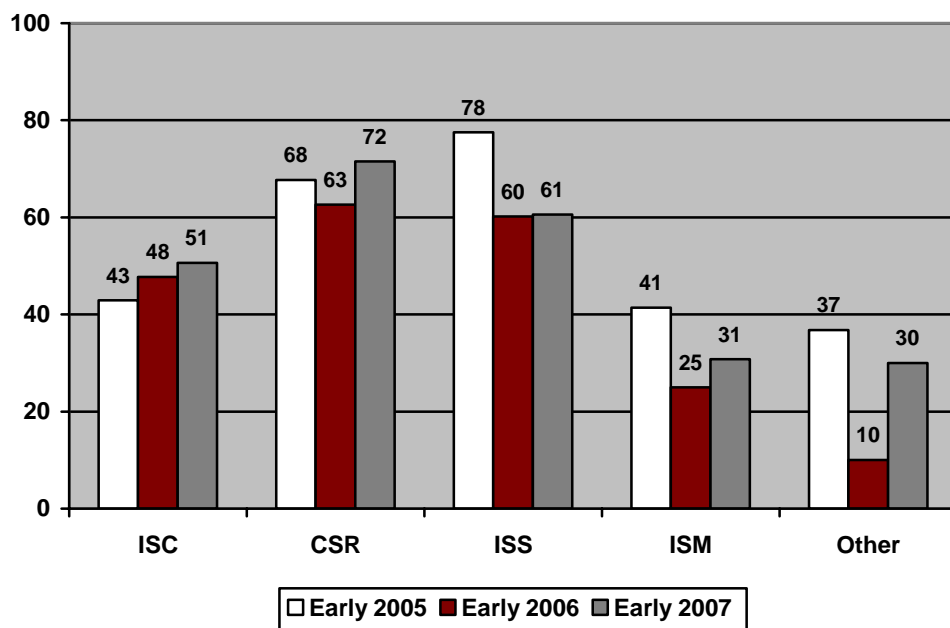
These trends reflect changes in the two elements that make up Job Strain, control at work and workload. We gathered data on control and workload at three points in time: January 2005, January 2006 and December 2006. Between the first and the last point in time, which roughly corresponds to the launch of the NFSD, levels of control rose in all three office size categories. The largest increase was in the small office category where measured control increased by nearly seventeen percent. Much of this increase took place in the early NFSD period in the twelve months between January 2005 and January 2006, although there were small increases in small and large offices in 2006. While control was increasing, so was workload, but following a different pattern. Between January of 2005 and January 2006, reported levels of workload fell at small and medium size offices and stayed about the same at large offices. However, 2006 witnessed a significant increase in workload across the board. These trends in control and workload over the period explain the trends in the prevalence of job strain. Initially Job Strain fell as control rose and workload fell. This was particularly true for small and medium size offices. The pattern was reversed during 2006 as workload rose, with small offices reporting the most significant increases in workload. Had workload not increased during 2006, reported levels of Job Strain would have continued their downward trend.

**Chart 5.12: Job Strain by Office Size (% of respondents)**



Looking at the same data by job classification sheds further light on the impact of the JPSP and the new policy initiatives launched during 2006. During this period the prevalence of Job Strain amongst the ISC classification has been increasing. The initial decline reported by the CSR classification was reversed during 2006, while the ISS and ISM classifications were able to maintain most of the gains they reported in early 2006. Over the same period, the ISC experienced a small decline in control and a small increase in workload. The CSR experienced a small increase in control but a more substantial increase in workload. The ISS experienced a twenty-five percent increase in control and a modest increase in workload. The lower prevalence of Job Strain amongst the ISS reflects the substantial increase in control they experienced.

**Chart 5.13: Job Strain by Classification (% of Respondents)**



## 5.5: Effort Reward Imbalance

Another approach to understanding how work organization affects health is the Effort Reward Imbalance Model (ERI) (Siegrist 1996; Siegrist & Peters 2000). Siegrist argues that an imbalance between costs and gains at work (i.e. high effort/low reward condition) results in a state of emotional distress with a special propensity to autonomic arousal and associated strain reactions. The ERI model does not abandon the earlier focus on control at work or workload. Rather it places control and workload in the context of a broader and deeper set of social forces and introduces rewards as a key factor determining levels of stress. In the ERI model, effort at work is viewed as part of a socially organized exchange with workers receiving rewards from society. Those rewards include money, esteem and status control. When effort and rewards are imbalanced, the individual is stressed and in the long run is more likely to experience negative health outcomes.

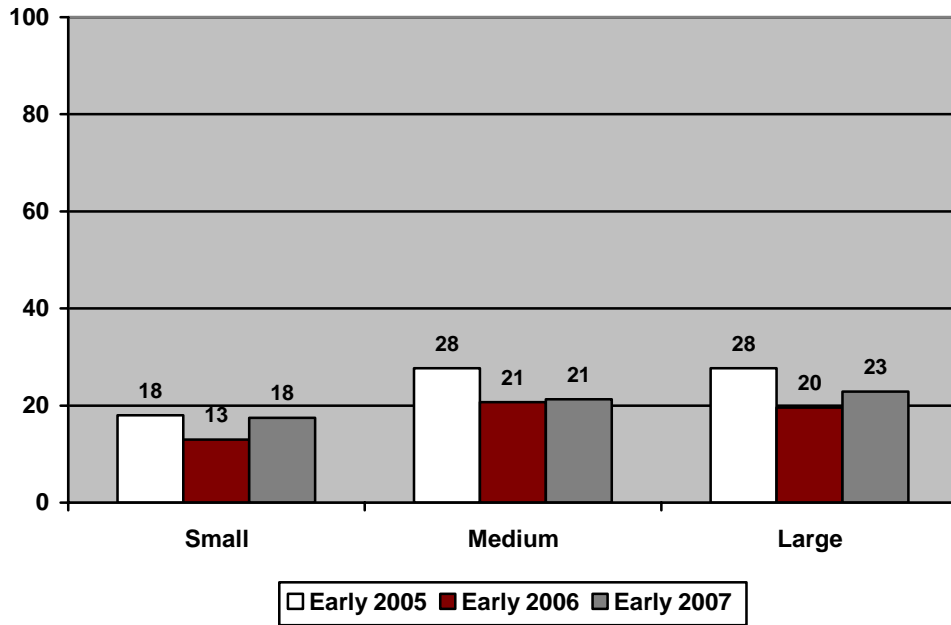
In the ERI model, effort is measured using a series of questions including: Do you have constant time pressure? Are there many interruptions at work? Do you have a lot of responsibility? Is the job physically demanding? Rewards are measured using a series of questions including: Do you receive respect from superiors, colleagues? Are you supported at work? Does your salary reflect your effort and achievements? Are you treated fairly at work? What are your promotion prospects?

Evidence supporting the role of effort-reward imbalance in determining health outcomes at work is becoming increasingly compelling. In the original study using this model, Siegrist (1996) showed that the risk of acute myocardial infarction, sudden cardiac death, and coronary heart disease was most elevated in those with at least one indicator of high effort and at least one indicator of low reward (p. 34). More recently, the Whitehall II study has uncovered a significant relationship between effort-reward imbalance and increased risk of alcohol dependence, psychiatric disorders, long spells of sickness, absence and poor health functioning (Stansfeld, Head & Marmot, 2000, p. 1).

The effort and reward indices are calculated by summing the scores from the relevant survey questions. **Effort Reward Imbalance is defined as a job where the ratio of the effort score divided by the rewards score is greater than one.**

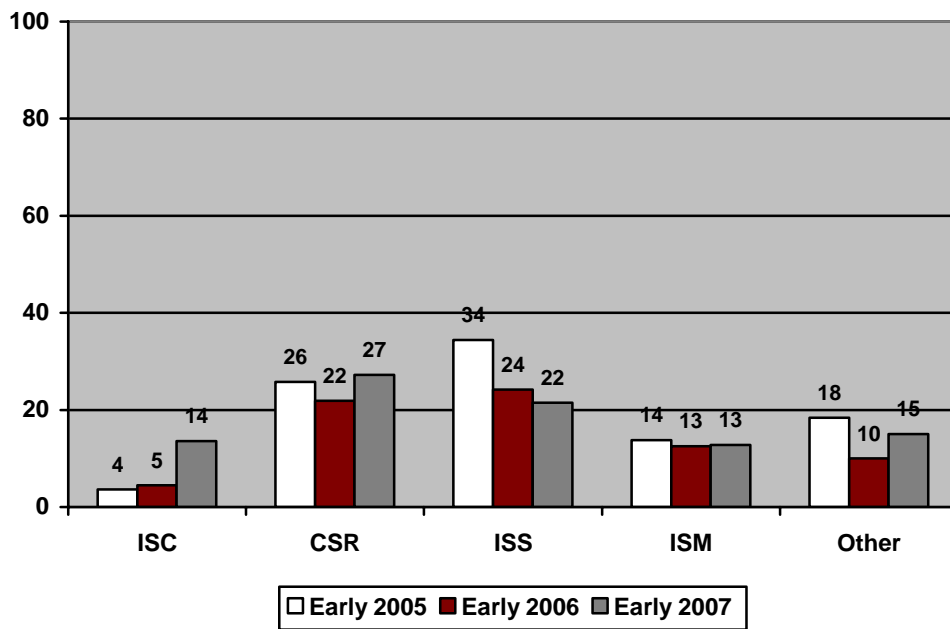
The shifts in prevalence of Effort Reward Imbalance were less pronounced than was the case for Job Strain. All offices reported a modest decline in the frequency of Effort Reward Imbalance in early 2006, a decline that was reversed for small offices by the end of 2006.

**Chart 5.14: Effort Reward Imbalance by Office Size (% of Respondents)**



The different classifications had different experiences in the prevalence of Effort Reward Imbalance. By the end of 2006, the prevalence of ERI had increased significantly for the ISC classification. Initial gains made by the CSR classification were reversed, while the ISS classification showed a downward trend. Over the period of the study, the frequency of Effort Reward Imbalance amongst the ISS classification fell by over one-third. For the ISC, the changes reflect a substantial increase in effort over the period. For the CSR, the increase in effort was counterbalanced by an increase in rewards and for the ISS, effort was relatively constant but rewards increased substantially resulting in a lower prevalence of Effort Reward imbalance.

**Chart 5.15: Effort Reward Imbalance by Job Classification (% of Respondents)**

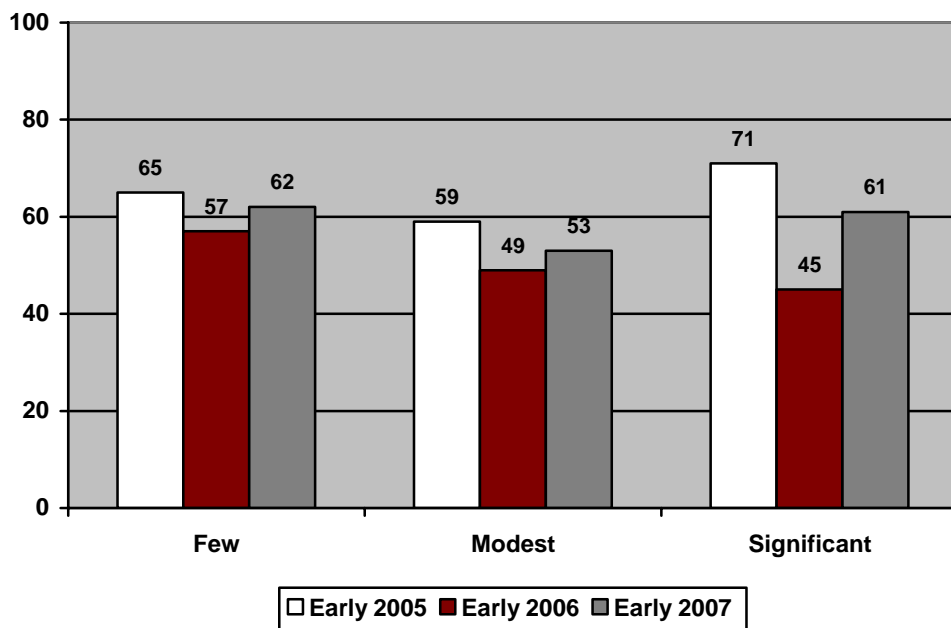


## 5.6: NFSD, Workplace Organization and Health

Two of the instruments included in the survey, Job Strain and Effort Reward Imbalance have been linked to health outcomes. Research suggests that reductions in the prevalence of either of these measures will be associated with improved health outcomes. The first chart below examines the relationship between the prevalence of Job Strain and the extent of changes in workplace organization since the implementation of the NFSD. The second chart examines the relationship between Effort Reward Imbalance and the extent of change in workplace organization since the implementation of the NFSD.

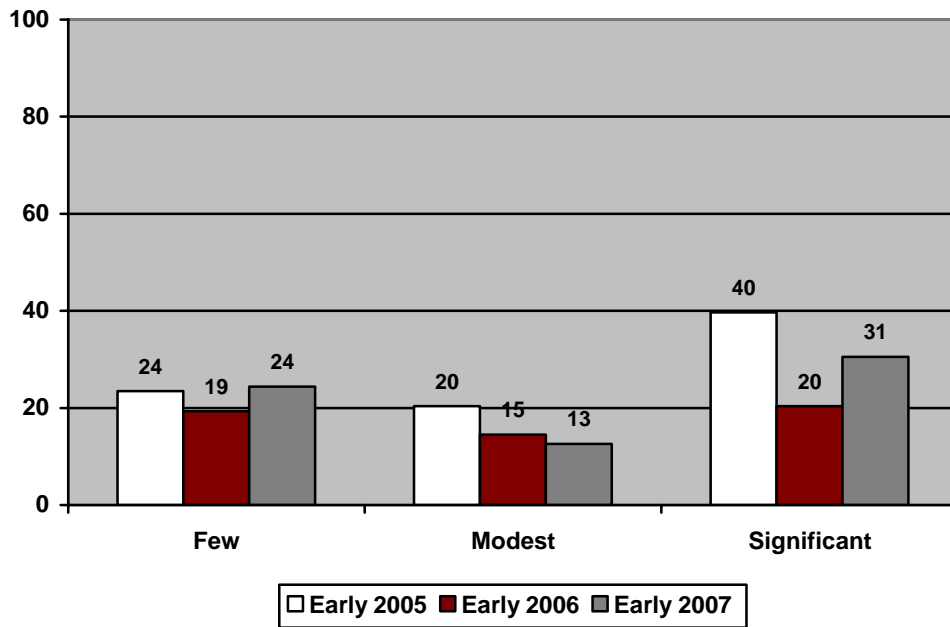
Between the launch of the NFSD and early 2006 there was a clear relationship between the extent of change in workplace organization and the degree of reduction in Job Strain. **The greater the change in workplace organization, the greater the reduction in Job Strain frequency.** During 2006 there was an across the board increase in the prevalence of Job Strain which we argued above was the result of an increase in workload during 2006. Individuals who reported significant changes in workplace organization still reported the largest percentage drop in the frequency of Job Strain. Where the extent of change was significant, Job Strain fell 14.1 percent, where it was modest 10.2 percent and where there were few changes only 4.6 percent. **These findings support an argument that the changes to the service delivery model did reduce the prevalence of Job Strain. However other changes during 2006 reversed most of those gains.**

**Chart 5.16: Job Strain by Degree of Change in Workplace Organization Since NFSD (% of Respondents)**



A similar pattern was found between the degree of change in workplace organization and Effort Reward Imbalance. The gains in lower prevalence of Effort Reward Imbalance were partially reversed during 2006, but individuals who reported Modest or Significant changes in workplace organization had a lower prevalence of Effort Reward Imbalance at the end of the study compared to the beginning. Those who reported few changes had the same prevalence of Effort Reward Imbalance at the beginning and the end of the study.

**Chart 5.17: Effort Reward Imbalance by Degree of Change in Work Organization Since NFSD (% of Respondents)**



## 6.0: Discussion

The preceding sections assessed the JPSP as a mechanism for implementing local changes to the service delivery model and the impact of these changes on client services, working conditions and health outcomes. They indicate that the JPSP did result in changes in local service delivery models, that service to clients improved, and that on a number of indicators staff reported increased levels of control over local decisions. However, they also indicated that by the end of 2006, many staff were disappointed with the NFSD, that working conditions had deteriorated, and that levels of stress were as high or higher than they were at the start of 2006. In the words of one focus group participant:

*The JPSP at least gave people a sense of empowerment. But people are now disillusioned. (CSR)*

Does this mean the NFSD was a failure? We think not.

To understand why this is the case and to put forward recommendations for further action, this section will look at the broader context in which JPSP was implemented and how this may have affected outcomes. This includes a discussion of the unique nature of work carried out in ODSP offices, the potential effect this might have in an era of tight government budgets, and the extent of change in workplace culture implicit in the NFSD .

Staff at ODSP offices are engaged in service work. The unique feature that distinguishes service work from other types of work is the role of the customer (in this case ODSP clients). In non-service work, in agriculture, mining, factory work, workers interact with management and the goods they are producing, but rarely with customers. In service work, workers interact with customers who are participants in the production process. ODSP clients interact with ODSP staff to qualify for and maintain benefits. When things go wrong, they are resolved through contact between staff and clients. Service work at ODSP has a second set of characteristics: it is both caring labour and emotional labour. It is caring in the sense that ODSP staff feel a direct responsibility for providing financial support to a clientele who are unable to support themselves. It is emotional labour in the sense that for many clients, how ODSP staff interact with them shapes their emotional state, a factor of importance to many disabled clients. This interaction plays an important role in the quality of life of clients and in extreme cases ODSP staff can influence life and death crisis. Most ODSP staff are aware of this aspect of their jobs; it is what drew many of them to this work in the first place.

*We do this for our clients. This is the last option before the street, and they're disabled, they're not in a good spot, they're not the pretty people in the world,*

*we're their lifeline...and the organization is not the one that has to look them in the eye and tell them that they don't have any money. (ISS)*

*As bad as it is, I still want to help somebody, and I want to be fair and I want to make sure that everybody gets the same shot. (ISS)*

The concept of staff interest in providing excellent services was embodied in the May 2004 Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministry and OPSEU. "The Ministry and OPSEU share a common interest in achieving the Ministry's goal of excellence in providing services to ODSP clients and applicants."<sup>8</sup> Employees performing caring and emotional labour are vulnerable to working to serve clients' needs at a cost to their own quality of life at work. We were told time and time again that workloads are excessive, yet the work gets done, people get cheques, benefits are delivered and reviews are done.

*We keep getting more work and we keep saying we can't do it, yet we keep doing it no matter how hard and no matter how impossible it is to take on more work we keep doing it. (ISM)*

*I believe that they know the work will get done, and we will find a way to do it...management knows this and they take advantage. (CSR)*

While many of the staff we spoke with reported not being fully satisfied with the level of service they were able to deliver to clients, at the same time they regularly met the ODSP Program Standards developed to monitor local office effectiveness. In speaking with a number of managers at different levels of the organization, it is apparent that there is an appreciation that a lot is expected of ODSP staff and that workloads are heavy, however the ability of staff to meet most Program Standards has led at least some managers to discount the staff concerns regarding workloads and to interpret them as little more than the normal complaints about work you might find in any workplace. Where the work being performed is caring and emotional labour, the ability to meet standards is not necessarily a good indicator that staffing levels are appropriate or healthy.

Secondly, in the context of tight government budgets over the last decade, the caring and emotional nature of work in ODSP offices makes staff even more vulnerable to increasing workloads. Others have discussed the increasing porosity of the social safety net, growing levels of disability in our society, and taxpayer reluctance to fund programs to support those unable to support themselves (Baines 2004a & 2004b; McElligott 2001). In this context, it becomes almost a necessity for policy makers to rely on staff willingness to go the extra mile to achieve policy objectives relatively inexpensively. It is important to point out that these forces are not unique to ODSP and are being felt in a range of public sector organizations from hospitals to schools. They are also largely beyond the control of staff or management within ODSP yet critical to understanding the experience of

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<sup>8</sup> Memorandum of Agreement, May 2004, MCSS and OPSEU, page 1, section 3.1.

staff and management with JPSP and the events of 2006. Many staff willingly exerted added effort to limit what they see as declines in service to clients over the last decade.

A third critical factor in evaluating the NFSD is to understand how radical a change in workplace culture the NFSD represented. The May 2004 Memorandum of Agreement speaks to “building positive working relationships” and “creating safe, healthy, effective, innovative work environments” and helping to “build a sense of pride and community.”<sup>9</sup> There are very few workplaces where staff are empowered to the extent they were under NFSD, even though many ODSP staff found the exercise wanting. While much has been made recently of alleged shifts in factories towards teamwork and empowerment, progress has been limited and few have ventured as far down the road of worker empowerment as implied in the NFSD, particularly in the area of job redesign. Making this transition will take time and a commitment to change from all parties involved.

The interaction of staff performing caring and emotional labour, in the context of tight government budgets, and during a period of ambitious change in workplace culture, help explain how the NFSD can be viewed as a success and a failure at the same time. The NFSD is a failure in that it did not protect staff from the pressures associated with performing caring and emotional labour in the context of new policy initiatives with workload implications but no new resources and inadequate training. It would appear that many staff simply intensified their activities at work to serve the needs of clients and to compensate for imperfect support for the new programs. This came at a cost: while clients got more service, it was not always high quality. Staff took on a heavier workload and this manifested itself in dissatisfaction with work, deteriorating health outcomes and disappointment with the NFSD by the end of 2006.

At the same time, and not surprisingly, the attempt to transform workplace culture met with challenges. By most accounts, staff initially embraced the idea of participating in the reorganization of their workplaces. As they got involved in the process they came to appreciate both the magnitude of the task and the barriers to change. The JPSP was launched with limited training of staff or management. Few outside resources were provided to assist local offices in navigating the disagreements between staff, and between staff and management that were bound to emerge during the process. The overall institutional structure of work remained unchanged including the role of the union at work, how staff are evaluated for promotions, and how local management was evaluated by senior management. The “staffing model” remained fixed; the core structure of the BPR allocation of tasks to three classifications of staff (the ISC, CSR and ISS) remained unchanged and the benefits delivered to clients were not open for discussion.

The expectation was that, given local staff and management had the deepest understanding of local needs, they were best placed to make decisions about local

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<sup>9</sup> Memorandum of Agreement, May 2004, MCSS and OPSEU. pages 1-2.

service delivery models. While this is likely true, it does not mean there is a short straight line from understanding local needs to implementing a new model that works for all. The JPSP was heavily reliant on having the right people with the right skills already in place. Local management needed to be comfortable sharing authority with staff. Staff had to be able to agree on a preferred model of work organization. All had to find the time to negotiate what in many offices was both a complex and contentious set of rule changes. At some offices, the “stars” aligned up and changes were implemented. At some offices the process was less successful. Most offices were somewhere in between, finding the process took a lot more resources than expected, a lot more compromise than most were comfortable with, and a willingness to leave behind significant elements of an earlier workplace culture. That this process has only been partially successful should come as no surprise. That it was successful at all is a testament to all involved.

At least some senior managers are aware of the radical nature of these changes and the challenge. We were told:

*There is not an organizational desire to stay where they are. They know there is a better way of doing it. There is a nervousness and a reluctance to go too far until there is some comfort the organization is going to stay with you all the way. . . It has gone from a place where it was an us/them to more and more we are all in this together. The transition has occurred over the last 18 months. It is still changing. If anything we are heading in the right direction, but we are not totally there yet. . . . Unless there is an ongoing long term commitment to support this culture shift, the culture shift will not happen. . . . This is clearly an organizational culture shift.*

For some staff, the exercise was a disappointment because it did not empower them to the degree they expected and desired. More common amongst staff was the sense that many local managers asserted their ‘rights to manage’ even when thoughtful proposals were put forth by staff that were inconsistent with views of local managers.

*I feel it was more management driven than staff driven...I always had the sense that there was a management agenda of what the changes were going to be.  
(ISS)*

But other staff felt that the NFSD had gone too far in relieving management of the duty to manage and had resulted in the downloading of management functions on to staff.

*Management needs to manage. . . Management sits in their offices and tells us to work it out. (ISS)*

*Under BPR people complained that they were not being consulted. Now that they are being consulted they complain management is not managing. (ISM)*

From the perspective of local managers, there were also frustrations with the process. Some felt staff and the union had gone too far in challenging management rights.

*I am not sure that staff at the grassroots really understood what it (JPSP) meant. Some staff think that every issue has to go through JPSP and management doesn't have the right to manage without going through the process. I am finding that a bit of an obstacle. (ISM)*

At the same time, a number of local managers were critical of staff being unwilling to engage more fully in making workplace decisions.

*Wouldn't say the concept of the JPSP is ingrained in the office mentality. We review it and it is still my feeling if there is a problem they look to the manager to solve it. They are not ready to solve the problems themselves. (ISM)*

It would be easy to interpret the concerns documented above as evidence of a failed process, as criticisms. A different view, one we ascribe to having listened to hundreds of ODSP staff and read their comments on the surveys, is that these are evidence of a changing organization working to leave its past behind and searching for a new set of workplace norms in a difficult environment. For some change has been too slow, for others too rapid, and for most it has not provided a solution to the issue of insufficient staff resources to satisfy the growing demands of policy makers and clients.

## 7.0: Conclusions

This report examined the impact of changes in the service delivery model at forty-four ODSP offices between April of 2005 and December of 2006. This initiative was launched as a result of criticisms of the existing workplace culture which limited staff influence over working conditions and imposed a one size fits all model of service delivery on local offices.

The report findings suggest that the NFSD did, at least for a period of time, empower staff in most offices to participate with management in decisions about how work should be organized. The process had its limitations. Many staff and managers were initially suspicious of the process. Most found the JPSP an extra burden on top of an already heavy workload. Resources provided to local offices by way of training and outside support were limited. **Despite these limitations, the process did result in change, change that improved service to clients, and when separated from the other policy changes that took place in 2006, had a positive impact on working conditions and health outcomes.** Control over making decisions at work and deciding how to do work increased over the period. This led to improvements in a number of measure of work related health. Staff reporting substantial changes in workplace organization were less likely to be exposed to Job Strain and Effort Reward Imbalance. There was also evidence that by the end of 2006, many staff were disappointed with the NFSD, that working conditions had deteriorated compared to early 2006, and that levels of stress were as high or higher than they were at the start of the process.

ODSP offices are at a crossroads. The shift in workplace culture has been partial, and in many offices, appears to have stalled. Initiatives to further the culture shift such as the Interest Based Problem Solving initiative had been launched in only some of the regions at the time this report was prepared. It is unclear if it will kick-start the local JPSP process which was designed to involve a large percentage of staff and management in discussions about the service delivery model.<sup>10</sup> ODSP management, staff and their union need to assess if it is worth continuing with the cultural shift begun with the launch of the NFSD and the JPSP. **We believe there is sufficient evidence that it is worth continuing.**

The recommendations below are made with the goal of continuing the cultural shift whose objective is to “building positive working relationships”, a “sense of pride and community” and increasing “workers’ sense of ownership and control of the work being performed.” They will move the organization forward in terms of realizing a service delivery model that “promotes a healthy and safe work

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<sup>10</sup> THE IBPS initiative was launched in only some of the regions at the time of our visits. It was too early to assess if it would have a major impact. Much of what we learned about this initiative came from communication with MERC ODSP subcommittee members and the pamphlet they issued title “Building a Better Working Environment at ODSP”, MERC ODSP Subcommittee, nd.

environment and ensures excellence in client service and program delivery.”<sup>11</sup> The suggestions are broken down into three categories: those that can be acted upon in the short-run, those that will take more time to implement, and those that require action from groups outside of immediate ODSP management and staff.

Implementing any of the recommendations will have a positive effect but it also needs to be appreciated that action in all areas is necessary to take full advantage of the proposed shift in workplace culture.

#### Short-run recommendations:

- Senior ODSP management and OPSEU leadership need to communicate their commitment to the Joint Problem Solving Process in a visible and public way. It needs to be recognized that a major shift in workplace culture is underway. This needs to be communicated to staff and local management who are the building blocks of any workplace culture.
- It needs to be clearly expressed that the JPSP was not a once off event and that there is a commitment to ongoing consultation at the local level and regular reviews of the NFSD that involve all levels of staff.
- Successes and failures under the JPSP need to be shared provincially. Most of those we spoke with were relatively uninformed of changes in other offices in their region let alone changes in other regions.
- The roles of staff and management in this new workplace culture need to be clarified. What is management’s role where staff are being empowered? How does an office balance consultative problem-solving with the need for efficient operations?
- The change process needs to be resourced. First, staff and managers need training in problem solving and effective communication. Secondly, it needs to be recognized that a consultative problem-solving process takes time to conduct meaningful discussions. The organization may become less nimble. However in return, the organization should become more effective in converting the resources available into services for clients and become a healthier place to work.

#### Longer-run recommendations

- The change in workplace culture needs to permeate all levels of the organization. Input from frontline staff needs to be included in discussions of the implementation of new policies at higher levels of the organization before frontline staff are asked to implement these policies.

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<sup>11</sup> ODSP Delivery Framework: A New Framework for Service Delivery, Social Assistance and Municipal Operations Branch, April 1, 2005, p. 4.

- Further progress in improving working conditions and client services requires an investment in training in recognition of both the complexity of the tasks being performed in ODSP offices, but also the inherently difficult nature of some of the clients staff deal with. Lack of training was a significant source of stress amongst staff unsure how to deliver services to clients and degrades the quality of service clients receive. There is a need for comprehensive Ministry delivered training for new staff that includes both program policy and procedures training, functional duties training, and sensitivity training how to deal with disabled clients. This would go some way toward alleviating some of the turnover being experienced in a number of offices which in turn would improve workload issues and client services.
- Attention should be given to resource support for the “End to End” training initiative. The “End to End” training initiative rightly acknowledges staff expertise and the importance of peer training. However, while many staff expressed a desire and willingness to continue to mentor co-workers, they were reluctant given the lack of workload accommodation to facilitate this commitment to train others.
- Staff need to be confident and assured that if they engage management in discussions regarding local issues, it will not compromise opportunities for promotion.
- The move to a new workplace culture also raises new issues regarding the evaluation of management. While standard outcome measures will continue to be important, management also needs to be evaluated on its effectiveness in engaging staff in problem solving.
- The workload issue at ODSP offices has to be reviewed. This issue, more than any other, was a barrier to further changes in workplace culture under JPSP. This has two dimensions. There needs to be discussion and agreement on what standard of service will be delivered to clients given the resources available to deliver those services. At the same time, how offices are resourced needs to be evaluated. A model needs to be developed that adjusts staff resources in line with changes in client loads, program changes, varying vacation entitlements, extended absences.
- Related to the point above, both policy makers and senior ODSP management need to consider the workload impact on front-line staff of new initiatives/policies.
- Finally, further progress in improving services to clients, one of the goals of the JPSP, will require a discussion regarding the type of benefits ODSP offers its clients, the form in which they are delivered, and the capacity of clients to navigate the system. The two areas raised most often during the focus groups were the extent to which clients are asked to process documents

without staff support, and the balance between asking clients to justify relatively small benefits and the capacity of staff to process these justifications.

## **Appendix One: Project Methodology**

### **Establishing a pre-NFSD Benchmark**

There were two challenges in assessing the impact of the NFSD on working conditions, health indicators and service delivery. The first was establishing a pre-NFSD benchmark. Until 2002, most offices followed the BPR model quite closely, but after 2002 a number of offices began introducing changes to work practices that deviated from the original BPR model. In a sense, these offices had initiated a JPSP before the NFSD was agreed to by OPSEU and MCSS and well before field research began for this project.

A second methodological issue was that the first wave of data collection began in December of 2005, nearly eight months after the NFSD was launched. Ideally the first round of surveys should have been distributed at the beginning of 2005 to obtain a truer pre-NFSD benchmark. Over twenty percent of respondents to the first survey reported there had been significant changes already to the service delivery model resulting from the launch of the NFSD in April of 2005.

Our strategy for dealing with these methodological issues was to include retrospective questions on the first survey to measure working conditions prior to the launch of the NFSD. Respondents were asked to reflect on working conditions approximately one year (December 2004) prior to the survey being distributed. We also integrated the survey data and the focus group data to provide as nuanced an analysis as possible.

Caution is needed in interpreting the survey data that follows. The benchmark which we labeled “Early 2005” relies on recall data and includes a number of participants who had already moved some way from the service delivery model associated with BPR. A reported absence of change in the service delivery model since the launch of the NFSD does not necessarily imply a failure of the JPSP. In some of these cases, the major changes to the service delivery model took place prior to the launch of NFSD and there was no need for further changes under the NFSD. As well, the data labeled “Early 2006” includes offices employing the service delivery model in place at the launch of NFSD plus a number that had already made changes associated with the NFSD. For these reasons, the data likely underestimates both the extent of NFSD inspired changes in service delivery and the impact of these changes on working conditions.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups were conducted in all nine ODSP regions. In the first round in each region, there were three separate focus groups as follows:

- ISC & CSR classifications
- ISS classification

- ISM classification

For round two, a fourth focus group was conducted with representatives of community stakeholders.

Focus groups involved three to six participants. They were conducted during working hours at ODSP offices by one of the authors of this report. 130 OPSEU employees and thirty managers participated in the first round of focus groups. 123 OPSEU employees, fifty-four managers and fifty-seven community stakeholders participated in the second round of focus groups. For the most part, focus group participants were randomly selected at the regional or local level with the objective of achieving representation from as many offices in a region as possible. Most offices were represented in the focus groups. In some cases, scheduling problems prevented the selections from being truly random. Focus groups lasted approximately ninety minutes. They were recorded and key passages transcribed. An interview guide was employed, but each focus group was given a degree of latitude to discuss issues they felt were relevant to the questions at hand. Regional Directors and/or Program Managers were interviewed separately in most regions.

### **Online Survey**

The online surveys were open to all ODSP employees and management for approximately four weeks in January of 2006 and again in December of 2006. Steps were taken to ensure that only ODSP employees and management could access the survey and checks were performed to ensure that each employee completed only one survey.

The first survey in January 2006 included a retrospective assessment of work organization prior to the implementation of the NFSD and a benchmark of working conditions, client services and health indicators as of January of 2006. The second survey at the end of 2006 gathered data on working conditions, client services and health indicators after changes were made to the service delivery model. Throughout this report we label these three waves of survey data as “Early 2005”, “Early 2006” and “Early 2007.” Questions from two well established research instruments were included: the Karasek Job Demand-Control model and the Siegrist and Peters Effort Reward Imbalance model.

## Online Survey Sample Characteristics

Over 400 employees completed the first survey and over 700 completed the second survey. This represented thirty percent and fifty-six percent respectively of ODSP employees and local managers. Participation rates varied across regions. The ISC classification was the least likely to complete a survey. CSRs and ISSs constituted over seventy percent of total participants in both surveys.

**Table A.1: Regional Survey Participation Rates**

Region	Number of Survey Participants		Percentage of Employees in Each Region Participating in Survey	
	January 2006	December 2006	January 2006	December 2006
Central East	71	104	61	78
Central West	46	87	51	72
Eastern	34	71	27	48
Hamilton-Niagara	28	111	20	73
North East	30	48	50	71
Northern	55	54	71	58
South West	59	78	36	44
South East	35	31	49	41
Toronto	44	132	15	44
Total	402	716	35	56

**Table A.2: Survey Participation Rates by Job Classification**

Classification	Number of Survey Participants		Percentage of Employees in Each Classification Participating in Survey	
	January 2006	December 2006	January 2006	December 2006
CSR	124	232	28	52
ISS	161	284	33	56
ISC	45	81	21	39
ISM	31	39	38	42

**Table A.3: Survey Participation Rates by Gender (% of sample)**

	January 2006	December 2006
Female	86	86
Male	14	14

**Table A.4: Survey Participation Rates by ODSP Start Date (% of sample)**

	January 2006	December 2006
Before 1999	68	64
2000-2004	21	20
2005	11	16

### Possible Differences in the Two Survey Samples

One possible explanation for the trends reported in the main text could be the differences in the sample between the two surveys. There were 250 individuals who completed both surveys. Another 150 completed only survey one and 466 completed only survey two. To test if the difference in sample introduced any bias we compared the responses to several key questions for the 250 individuals who completed both surveys with the entire sample which includes people who completed both surveys and people who completed only one of the surveys.

**Table A.5: Comparison of Response from the Two Rounds of Surveys**

	% Reporting Good Working Conditions		% Stressed at Work Half the Days or More	
	Survey One	Survey Two	Survey One	Survey Two
Respondents who completed both surveys (250)	43.6	29.2	52.4	71.6
Full survey One sample (400)	44.0	-	52.5	-
Full survey Two sample (716)	-	33.5	-	64.9
t-test of equal means (p)	.8722	.0177	.9522	.0002

In both cases, had we used only the data from those who completed both surveys the deterioration in working conditions and the increase in the prevalence of stress at work would have been greater than reported in the main body of the report. We report in the body of the text that the number reporting good working conditions declined from 44.0 percent to 33.5 percent. Had we limited the analysis only to those who completed both surveys the decline would have been from 43.6 percent to 29.2 percent. We report in the body of the text that the frequency of being stressed at work half the days or more increased from 52.5 percent to 64.9 percent. Had we limited the analysis to only those who completed both surveys, the number reporting being stressed at work half the days or more would have increased from 52.4 percent to 71.6 percent.

By using the full survey two data we bias the study against finding deterioration in working conditions or deterioration in health outcomes. It also allows retention of more data which makes estimates of underlying conditions more accurate.

### **Analysis by Office Size and Job Classification**

Comments made during the first round of focus groups led the research team to conclude that the experience of work and how the JPSP functioned might differ by office size and by job classification. In what follows we report results by small (<15 employees), medium (15-39 employees) and large offices (40+ employees) and by job classification. The offices allocated to these three classifications can be found in Appendix Two. In the January survey, there were 69 participants from small offices, 193 from medium offices and 138 from large offices. In the December survey, there were 149 participants from small offices, 244 from medium offices and 323 from large offices.

To maintain confidentiality and minimize potential misinterpretation due to small cell sizes we report four job classifications (ISC, CSR, ISS and ISM including PM & RD) plus an “other” category for all respondents not included in the other four categories. The “other” category includes ERO, CPO, Admin Clerks and other classifications.

## Appendix Two: Composition of Office Size Categories

To allocate offices to the appropriate size category the number of employees as of September of 2005 was used. Had the number of employees as of December of 2006 been used, two offices would have changed columns. Burlington and Guelph would have moved into the medium office size column.

<b>Small offices (&lt;15)</b>	<b>Medium Offices (15-39)</b>	<b>Large Offices (=&gt;40)</b>
Lindsay Burlington Cambridge Guelph Pembroke Renfrew Simcoe Bracebridge Kirkland Lake Kenora Sarnia Stratford St.Thomas Brockville Smith Falls Woodstock	Barrie Newmarket Orillia Peterborough Whitby Kitchener Cornwall Hawkesbury Brantford North Bay Sault Ste. Marie South Porcupine Sudbury Thunder Bay Chatham Owen Sound Belleville Kingston	Mississauga Ottawa Hamilton St.Catharines London Windsor Toronto: Birchmount Sheppard Wilson Yonge

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## **Glossary**

BPR – Business Process Review

ERI - Effort Reward Imbalance

ERO - Eligibility Review Officer

CSR - Client Service Representative

CVP - Consolidated Verification Process

JD-C - Job Demand Control Model

JPSP - Joint Problem Solving Process

ISC - Income Support Clerk

ISM - Income Support Manager

ISS - Income Support Specialist

MSN - Mandatory Special Necessities

NFSD - New Framework for Service Delivery

ODSP- Ontario Disability Support Program

OPSEU - Ontario Public Service Employees Union

PM – Program Manager

RD – Regional Director

SDMT - Service Delivery Model Technology

# Survey One: January 2006

## SECTION ONE:

### PART A: IDENTIFICATION

1. Which of the following best describes your current position at ODSP (check one only)?

- Client Services Representative (CSR)
- Income Support Specialist (ISS)
- Income Support Clerk (ISC)
- Income Support Manager (ISM)
- Program Manager (PM)
- Eligibility Review Officers (ERO)
- Case Presentation Officer (CPO)
- Other

2. What year did you start working at ODSP? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years

4. Are you: male  female

5. What Region\Office do you work out of (choose one only)?

### PART B: THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK AND CLIENT SERVICES

1. As of December of 2004, how closely was your office following the work structures dictated by the 2001 Business Process Review Model?

- very closely  closely  some  not closely  not at all   
don't know

2. As of December 2004, to what extent was the work in your office separated into teams dedicated to either, Intake, CVP, or Case Management as proposed under the Business Process Review Model?

- a great deal  a lot  some  a little  not at all   
don't know

3. As of December 2004, to what extent was work in your office organized on a traditional "one worker one caseload" model?

a great deal     a lot     some     a little     not at all   
don't know

**4. As of December 2004, to what extent was work in your office organized on a case pooling model as proposed under the Business Process Review Model?**

a great deal     a lot     some     a little     not at all   
don't know

**5. In April of 2005, SAMO and OPSEU began implementing the “New Framework for Service Delivery”. Would you say that since that date there have been:**

few if any changes in how my workplace is organized   
modest changes in how my workplace is organized   
significant changes in how my workplace is organized

**6. Since April of 2005, how much input have you had into discussions of changes in work organization at your workplace?**

a great deal     a lot     some     a little     not at all

**7. How effectively have management and the union resolved problems during the implementation of the “New Framework for Service Delivery?”**

very effective     effective     somewhat effective     not effective     not effective at all

**8. Currently, how easy is it to develop relationships between clients and staff?**

very easy     easy     somewhat easy     not easy     not easy at all   
don't know

**9. Currently, how easy is it for clients to speak to people familiar with their information?**

very easy     easy     somewhat easy     not easy     not easy at all   
don't know

**10. Currently, how easy is it for clients to speak to people who make decisions that affect their income support?**

very easy     easy     somewhat easy     not easy     not easy at all   
don't know

**11. Overall, how would you describe your current working conditions at ODSP?**

excellent       good       okay       bad       very bad

**PART THREE: HEALTH INDICATORS**

- 1. In the last month, how often did work issues lead to problems sleeping?**  
every day       most days       half the days       a few days       never
- 2. In the last month, how often did work issues lead to headaches?**  
every day       most days       half the days       a few days       never
- 3. In the last month, how often were you tense and wound up (uptight) at work?**  
every day       most days       half the days       a few days       never
- 4. In the last month, how often was work stressful?**  
every day       most days       half the days       a few days       never
- 5. In the last month, how often have you felt exhausted after your workday?**  
every day       most days       half the days       a few days       never

## SECTION TWO: CURRENT WORK ORGANIZATION

Please answer all the questions in this section as they relate to your current work situation at ODSP.

1. **My job requires that I learn new things.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
2. **My job involves a lot of repetitive work.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
3. **My job requires me to be creative.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
4. **My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
5. **My job requires a high level of skill.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
6. **On my job, I am given a lot of freedom to decide how I do my work.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
7. **I get to do a variety of different things on my job.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
8. **I have a lot of say about what happens on my job.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
9. **I have an opportunity to develop my own special abilities.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
10. **My job requires working very fast.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
11. **My job requires working very hard.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
12. **I am not asked to do an excessive amount of work.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
13. **I have enough time to get the job done.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
14. **I am free from conflicting demands that others make.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree

### Effort Reward Imbalance Survey

For each of the following questions, please indicate whether you agree or disagree. If you disagree, please also indicate how much you are generally distressed by this situation by circling one of the numbers to the right of the box you checked. For example, if your response to question 1 below was disagree and this was somewhat distressing you would check the box disagree and circle the number 2 to the right of this box.

1. I receive the respect I deserve from my superiors.	disagree : ☹ agree G	1	Ⓢ	3	4
	I am very distressed				4
	I am distressed			3	
	I am somewhat distressed		2		
	I am not at all distressed	1			
1. I receive the respect I deserve from my superiors.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
2. I receive the respect I deserve from my colleagues.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
3. I experience adequate support in difficult situations.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
4. My current occupational position adequately reflects my education and training.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
5. Considering all my efforts and achievements, I receive the respect and prestige I deserve at work.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
6. Considering all my efforts and achievements, my work prospects are adequate.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
7. Considering all my efforts and achievements, my salary/income is adequate.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4

For each of the following questions, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with it. If you agree, please also indicate how much you are generally distressed by this situation by circling one of the numbers to the right of the box you checked.

	I am very distressed					4
	I am distressed			3		
	I am somewhat distressed		2			
	I am not at all distressed	1				
1. I have constant time pressure due to a heavy work load.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
2. I have many interruptions and disturbances in my job.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
3. I have a lot of responsibility in my job.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
4. I am often pressured to work overtime.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
5. My job is physically demanding.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
6. Over the past few years, my job has become more and more demanding.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
7. I am treated unfairly at work.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
8. I have experienced or I expect to experience an undesirable change in my work situation.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
9. My job promotion prospects are poor.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	
10. My job security is poor.	disagree G agree G ☹	1	2	3	4	

**SECTION THREE: WORK ORGANIZATION IN 2004**

**1. I was employed at ODSP in December of 2004**    Yes    No  
*(If no take to end of survey.)*

Please answer all the questions in this section as they relate to your conditions of work at ODSP approximately twelve months ago.

**2. Which of the following best describes your position at ODSP in December of 2004 (check one only)?**

- Client Services Representative (CSR)
- Income Support Specialist (ISS)
- Income Support Clerk (ISC)
- Income Support Manager (ISM)
- Program Manager (PM)
- Eligibility Review Officers (ERO)
- Case Presentation Officer (CPO)
- Other

**3. Twelve months ago, how easy was it to develop relationships between clients and staff?**

- very easy     easy     somewhat easy     not easy     not easy at all   
don't know

**4. Twelve months ago, how easy was it for clients to speak to people familiar with their information?**

- very easy     easy     somewhat easy     not easy     not easy at all   
don't know

**5. Twelve months ago, how easy was it for clients to speak to people who made decisions that affected their income support?**

- very easy     easy     somewhat easy     not easy     not easy at all   
don't know

**6. Twelve months ago, my job required that I learn new things.**

- strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree

**7. Twelve months ago, my job involved a lot of repetitive work.**

- strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree

**8. Twelve months ago, my job required me to be creative.**

- strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree

- 9. Twelve months ago, my job allowed me to make a lot of decisions on my own.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 10. Twelve months ago, my job required a high level of skill.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 11. Twelve months ago, on my job, I was given a lot of freedom to decide how I did my work.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 12. Twelve months ago, I got to do a variety of different things on my job.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 13. Twelve months ago, I had a lot of say about what happened on my job.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 14. Twelve months ago, I had an opportunity to develop my own special abilities.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 15. Twelve months ago, my job required working very fast.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 16. Twelve months ago, my job required working very hard.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 17. Twelve months ago, I was not asked to do an excessive amount of work.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 18. Twelve months ago, I had enough time to get the job done.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree
- 19. Twelve months ago, I was free from conflicting demands that others make.**  
 strongly agree                      agree                      disagree                      strongly disagree

## Effort Reward Imbalance Survey

For each of the following questions, please indicate whether you agree or disagree. If you disagree, please also indicate how much you are generally distressed by this situation by circling one of the numbers to the right of the box you checked. For example, if your response to question 1 below was disagree and this was somewhat distressing you would check the box disagree and circle the number 2 to the right of this box.

1. I receive the respect I deserve from my superiors.	disagree : ☹ agree G	1	☉	3	4
---	-------------------------	---	---	---	---

					4
				3	
			2		
		1			
1. Twelve months ago, I received the respect I deserved from my superiors.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
2. Twelve months ago, I received the respect I deserved from my colleagues.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
3. Twelve months ago, I experienced adequate support in difficult situations.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
4. Twelve months ago, my occupational position adequately reflected my education and training.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
5. Twelve months ago, considering all my efforts and achievements, I received the respect and prestige I deserved at work.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
6. Twelve months ago, considering all my efforts and achievements, my work prospects were adequate.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
7. Twelve months ago, considering all my efforts and achievements, my salary/income was adequate.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4

For each of the following questions, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with it. If you agree, please also indicate how much you are generally distressed by this situation by circling one of the numbers to the right of the box you checked.

	I was very distressed				4	
	I was distressed			3		
	I was somewhat distressed		2			
	I was not at all distressed	1				
1. Twelve months ago, I had constant time pressure due to a heavy work load.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
2. Twelve months ago, I had many interruptions and disturbances in my job.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
3. Twelve months ago, I had a lot of responsibility in my job.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
4. Twelve months ago, I was often pressured to work overtime.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
5. Twelve months ago, my job was physically demanding.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
6. Over the past few years, my job has become more and more demanding.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
7. Twelve months ago, I was treated unfairly at work.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
8. Twelve months ago, I experienced or I expected to experience an undesirable change in my work situation.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
9. Twelve months ago, my job promotion prospects were poor.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4
10. Twelve months ago, my job security was poor.	disagree agree	G G ☐	1	2	3	4

**If you have any comments you would like to add regarding how your current job is organized or regarding the implementation of the “New Framework for Service Delivery” please add them below.**

**Thank you for completing this survey. A preliminary report will be available in March of 2006. We will be doing a follow-up survey in about 12 months and we will produce a final report shortly thereafter.**

## Survey Two: December 2006

### SECTION ONE:

#### PART A: IDENTIFICATION

1. Which of the following best describes your current position at ODSP (check one only)?

- |                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Client Services Representative (CSR) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Income Support Specialist (ISS)      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Income Support Clerk (ISC)           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Income Support Manager (ISM)         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Program Manager (PM)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Eligibility Review Officers (ERO)    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Case Presentation Officer (CPO)      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. What year did you start working at ODSP? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years

4. Are you:        male         female

5. What Region\Office do you work out of (choose one only)?

**PART B: THE JOINT PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS AND THE NEW FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE DELIVERY**

**1. In April of 2005, SAMO and OPSEU began implementing the “New Framework for Service Delivery”. Would you say that since that date there have been:**

- few if any changes in how my workplace is organized
- modest changes in how my workplace is organized
- significant changes in how my workplace is organized

**2. Since April of 2005, how much input have you had into discussions of changes in work organization at your workplace?**

- a great deal
- a lot
- some
- a little
- not at all

**3. How effectively have management and the union resolved problems during the implementation of the “New Framework for Service Delivery?”**

- very effective
- effective
- somewhat effective
- not effective
- not effective at all

**4. Did you have the skills and training needed to prepare you to participate effectively in the Joint Problem Solving Process?**

- very prepared
- prepared
- somewhat prepared
- not prepared
- not prepared at all
- did not participate

**5. How seriously were your views considered during the Joint Problem Solving Process itself (ie. during meetings and other events linked to JPS)?**

- very seriously
- seriously
- somewhat seriously
- not seriously
- not seriously at all
- did not participate

**6. To what extent have the changes in work organization made as a result of the Joint Problem Solving Process reflected your input into the process?**

- a great deal
- a fair amount
- some
- a little
- not at all
- did not participate

**PART C: CLIENT SERVICES AND WORKING CONDITIONS**

**1. Currently, how easy is it to develop relationships between clients and staff?**

- very easy
- easy
- somewhat easy
- not easy
- not easy at all
- don't know

**2. Currently, how easy is it for clients to speak to people familiar with their information?**

very easy  easy  somewhat easy  not easy  not easy at all   
don't know

**3. Currently, how easy is it for clients to speak to people who make decisions that affect their income support?**

very easy  easy  somewhat easy  not easy  not easy at all   
don't know

**4. How has your capacity to service clients changed as a result of changes in work organization since March of 2005?**

much more effective  more effective  no change  less effective   
much less effective

**5. Overall, how would you describe your current working conditions at ODSP?**

excellent  good  okay  bad  very bad

**6. How has the fairness of work distribution in your office changed as a result of the changes in work organization since March of 2005?**

much fairer  fairer  no change  less fair  much less fair

**7. Has your level of stress at work changed as a result of the changes in work organization since March of 2005?**

much less stressful  less stressful  no change  more stressful  much more stressful

**8. How satisfied are you with the changes made in work organization as a result of the Joint Problem Solving Process**

very satisfied  satisfied  somewhat satisfied  not satisfied  not satisfied at all

**9. How much easier is it to do your job as a result of the changes in work organization since March of 2005?**

much easier  easier  no change  harder  much harder

## **PART D: HEALTH INDICATORS**

1. **In the last month, how often did work issues lead to problems sleeping?**  
every day     most days     half the days     a few days     never
2. **In the last month, how often did work issues lead to headaches?**  
every day     most days     half the days     a few days     never
3. **In the last month, how often were you tense and wound up (uptight) at work?**  
every day     most days     half the days     a few days     never
4. **In the last month, how often was work stressful?**  
every day     most days     half the days     a few days     never
5. **In the last month, how often have you felt exhausted after your workday?**  
every day     most days     half the days     a few days     never

## SECTION TWO: CURRENT WORK ORGANIZATION

Please answer all the questions in this section as they relate to your current work situation at ODSP.

1. **My job requires that I learn new things.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
2. **My job involves a lot of repetitive work.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
3. **My job requires me to be creative.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
4. **My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
5. **My job requires a high level of skill.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
6. **On my job, I am given a lot of freedom to decide how I do my work.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
7. **I get to do a variety of different things on my job.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
8. **I have a lot of say about what happens on my job.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
9. **I have an opportunity to develop my own special abilities.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
10. **My job requires working very fast.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
11. **My job requires working very hard.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
12. **I am not asked to do an excessive amount of work.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
13. **I have enough time to get the job done.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree
14. **I am free from conflicting demands that others make.**  
strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree

## Effort Reward Imbalance Survey

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I am very distressed				4
I am distressed			3	
I am somewhat distressed		2		
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1. I receive the respect I deserve from my superiors.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
2. I receive the respect I deserve from my colleagues.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
3. I experience adequate support in difficult situations.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
4. My current occupational position adequately reflects my education and training.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
5. Considering all my efforts and achievements, I receive the respect and prestige I deserve at work.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
6. Considering all my efforts and achievements, my work prospects are adequate.	disagree G ☹ agree G	1	2	3	4
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	I am very distressed				4	
	I am distressed			3		
	I am somewhat distressed		2			
	I am not at all distressed	1				
1. I have constant time pressure due to a heavy work load.	disagree agree	G G ∃	1	2	3	4
2. I have many interruptions and disturbances in my job.	disagree agree	G G ∃	1	2	3	4
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