

# The Gravens Conference: Adult Outcomes

April Laramey



*“I spent time in an incubator, going home some months after my birth. Around the time I was six months old, my mother noticed something amiss. I was not holding my head up as an infant should by age.”*

At the time of my birth in 1978, whether I would survive was touch and go. I was born three months premature to a single mother with three other children. As I stayed in the NICU— a different city than where my mother resided - it was hard for her always to be there. I spent time in an incubator, going home some months after my birth. Around the time I was six months old, my mother noticed something amiss. I was not holding my head up as an infant should by age.

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It was then that I was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. At that time, for my mother, the condition was unknown. After being assured it would not kill me, my mother set out to address this diagnosis. This led her to a center where they focused on children with disabilities. I attended there from pre-

school from when I was six months old until I began Kindergarten. I attribute the intervention to helping get me where I am today.

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Leaving the relative shelter of the center to integrate into a mainstream school was difficult for me. I was likely amongst one of the only students with a disability they had ever taught. I recall a series of negative treatments from teachers and peer bullying, particularly after I had two surgeries to improve my walking. As I got older, responses in my relationships with social contacts improved, but it was not until I reached University that I truly came into my own.

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I obtained my Honours Bachelor of Social Science in Criminology in the summer of 2001. While I would never work in the field of criminology directly, my degree allowed me to work for the federal government of Canada. I have spent the last 24 years working in various areas but mostly concentrated in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. I now work as a Senior Policy Analyst in EDI, assisting in developing and interpreting legislation and policies that affect the Public Service of Canada.

*“Although I was born very preterm and had a significant disability, I have been able to contribute in significant ways as an adult. I am truly proud of being able to impact policy direction from my own lived experience. It has allowed me to come full circle regarding my disability and make a difference in the workplace.”*

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