



STEPS TO JUSTICE

INCOME ASSISTANCE

An OJEN workshop demonstrating a CLEO
public legal information resource.



CLEO

Community Legal Education Ontario
Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario



True or false?

1. When seeing whether I qualify for financial assistance through Ontario Works (OW), the government will look at the income of other people in my household.



True or false?

2. The Canada Pension Plan is something only old people should worry about. It's just a payment plan for retirees, right?



True or false?

3. My health condition has made it a little bit difficult to get to work lately. I can apply to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) because it gives money to anyone who has a health problem.



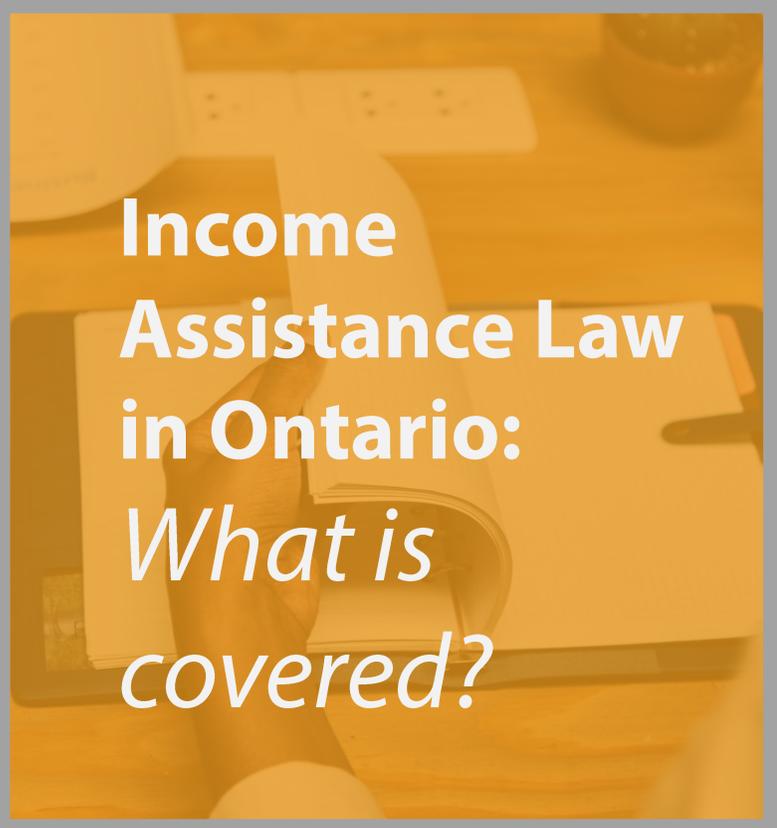
True or false?

4. ODSP is only for the worst medical disabilities. I'd never be able to qualify with my small medical condition.



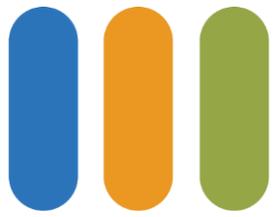
True or false?

5. My ex and I have a kid together and they spend most of the time at their place. I help out with caring for the child as often as I can but my ex usually does most of the work and makes most of the big decisions about our kid. I can still qualify for financial assistance through Canada's Child Benefit right?



**Income
Assistance Law
in Ontario:
*What is
covered?***

- Ontario Works
- Ontario Disability Support Program
- Child Tax Benefits
- Old Age Security
- Canada Pension Plan
- Canada Pension Plan disability benefits



Real Life Legal Problems *Demonstration Scenario*

My doctor says that my struggles with mental health might qualify as a disability. Somedays it can be hard to get out of bed, and it's been a struggle to do anything productive. I am not receiving Ontario Works (OW) or any other financial support from the government, but obviously, this makes it hard for me to work. She said the government will help me with my bills because of my health issues through a program called ODSP. How would I start an application for that?



Steps to Justice



Steps to Justice
Your guide to law in Ontario

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Steps to Justice

Step-by-step information about legal problems.
Reliable, practical, and easy to understand.

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- Abuse and Family Violence
- Criminal Law
- Debt and Consumer Rights
- Employment and Work
- Family Law
- Health and Disability
- Housing Law
- Human Rights
- Income Assistance
- Tribunals and Court

Live chat
Mon-Fri 11am-1pm



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Start on the Steps to Justice topic, "**Ontario Disability Support Program**" with the question, "How do I start an ODSP application?"

Some questions:

- What are the two main requirements in order to qualify for ODSP?
- I'm not on OW. Is there any difference between applying for ODSP because of this?
- I'm ready to see if I financially qualify for ODSP. How do I start?
- What will I need to fill out my application with the ODSP? Is it just me that needs to go the appointment?
- How long will it take for me to find out if I qualify? I need the money as soon as possible.



**Using the
Steps to Justice
Website**



Group Work

1. Navigate to the Steps to Justice website:
<http://stepstojustice.ca>
2. Read your scenario with your group.
3. Try to identify the main legal issues.
4. Imagine that you are the person in the scenario. Use the Steps to Justice website to answer the questions on your handout.
5. As you browse, try to find out more about how the law would affect the person in your scenario. What does it say? What are their options?
6. Record your answers on the handout.

If you get stuck, ask for help!



Large Group Scenario

FOCUS AREAS:

- 1) Ontario Works and ODSP
- 2) Changes to benefits
- 3) Factors in child tax benefits

I'm struggling with a mental illness that's made it very hard for me to work on a consistent basis. Sometimes I can barely get out of bed and there's nothing I can do about it. It's tough to ask for help, because I feel like people won't believe me and tell me to just suck it up.

I've been working here and there doing yard work, just to pay my bills. My parents died last year and didn't leave me much savings but they did give me their house and car. I'm not sure how this will affect my chances of getting ODSP. But it's still been really hard for me to find work, let alone go every day. In the meantime, my bills have been racking up and I'm starting to get swamped. This only makes my illness worse.

My partner and I also just decided to move in together. My partner and I have been on and off for a while, and have a child together. Up until now, our kid was living with my partner and her parents, but we decided to give it another shot. Although I'm happy she's coming to live with me, I don't think her parents are going to financially support the child anymore. I'm also worried what will happen to my assistance payments if we decide to separate again.