

# Autism and Affordable Housing: PROMOTING ACTION BY SHARING LESSONS LEARNED





**Sinneave**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION



# **Autism and Affordable Housing: Promoting Action by Sharing Lessons Learned**

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# Land Acknowledgement



In the spirit of reconciliation, we gratefully acknowledge that we are located on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

We pay our respect to elders, past and present, for stewarding the land, water and the life of this region. We also acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and seek to move forward together to make things better in the future and to be intentional about equality, inclusiveness and learning from the past.



We work with individuals,  
communities, and organizations  
to help autistic youth  
achieve life goals related to:



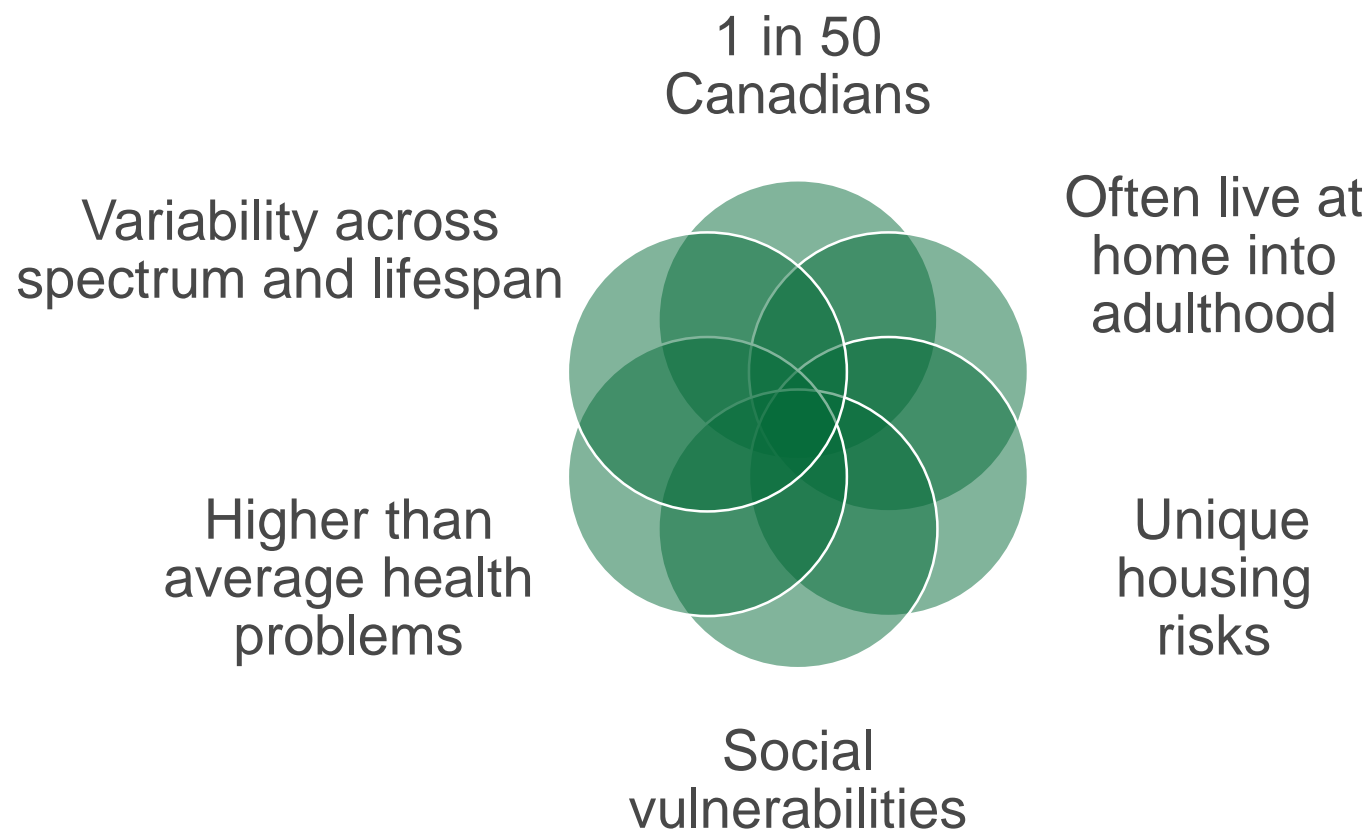
So they can...



**Thrive in Adulthood**  
both independently and  
within the community



# Why is There a Need?



# Poor Employment Outcomes

80-85% under or unemployed

Often in low-level, unskilled low paying jobs

High level of job switching

Fragmented work histories



# Cost of Living These Days!

Average bedroom rental

**\$1,629 in Calgary**

Rentals.ca 2022

Varies on where you live in Canada

Income support programs in each province must adjust to  
inflation or many risk homelessness





## INCLUSIVE HOUSING THROUGH AN AUTISM LENS 2.0

UPDATED AUGUST 2022



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**Autistic adults experience the world differently than the general population and therefore housing needs to consider more than bricks and mortar.**

A person-centered approach to housing means that individuals have the support and tools to think about, understand, and plan for housing that suits their unique personality, needs and circumstances.

### Person Centered Approach to Community Housing



#### Individual Considerations

- Am I making or being supported to make choices and manage my own life?
- What are my physical, emotional, social and safety needs?
- What are my sensory needs?
- What are my strengths and skills?
- What are "must-haves" and what are "prefer to have's"?
- What income do I have for housing and how stable is it?
- What are my support needs; what is currently in place (natural and paid); what are the sources of funding (and flexibility of) for supports?
- Who are the people and organizations that can support me in this journey?
- Can technology support my independence?

A connected network of individuals, families, housing builders, housing providers, support providers, the broader community, and policy makers all need to work together to influence, impact, and improve housing successes for autistic adults.

Sinneave's success working with individuals, housing and support providers, as well as over 200 stories from Autistic adults, families, care providers, and service agencies collected by the **Housing Through an Autism Lens Solutions Lab**, informed the elements of inclusive housing.



#### Housing and Community Considerations

- What housing characteristics would make a location suitable? (i.e. sensory, safety, transportation, amenities, pets, common space).
- What is the mix of tenants in the building?
- What community resources offer support and social connection?



[www.sinneavefoundation.org](http://www.sinneavefoundation.org)



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# What Support do you Need?



- Physical
- Emotional

- Social
- Safety
- Sensory

- Financial
- Deal breakers



# Who Supports You?



- Choices
- Skills and strengths
- Can you learn the skill
- Supports
  - Who - source
  - How - paid, free
- Technology



# Housing/Community Considerations

- Bricks and mortar
- Location
- Who else is in a building
- Surrounding area community/amenities
- Sinneave website Thinking About Moving Guide



# Housing Background



Horizon View (Horizon Housing)  
Calgary, AB



Bishops Manor (Forward Housing)  
Calgary, AB



Legacy on 5<sup>th</sup> (Homespace)  
Calgary, AB,



# Impact Video



# Lessons from Housing Providers

## Lesson

## Action

Affordable – 30% of income

- Universal definition of true affordability (30%)

Not enough affordable units

- Wait lists growing, consider more mixed market housing

Income threshold flexibility

- Policies sensitive to variable income

Sensory challenges

- Construction and other actions to mitigate





# Lessons from Housing Providers

## Lesson

## Action

Safety of vulnerable populations

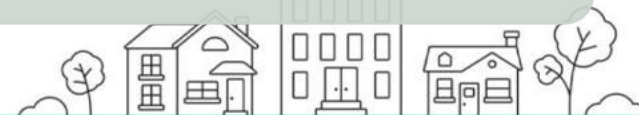
- Location, security measures, tenant mix

Flexible support

- Different support roles (building manager, front desk)

Landlord tenant communication

- Communication sensitive (eviction notices, policies)





# Lessons from Service Providers

## Lesson

## Action

Awareness of needs both autism and affordability

- Build relationships with affordable housing providers

Agency becomes access (agency of record)

- Become an agency of record

Quick response to availability

- Pre-assess, create a wait list ready to go



# Lessons from Service Providers

## Lesson

## Action

Tenant stability

- Find tenants who are the right fit

Lack of information on opportunities

- Create info sheets (square foot, cost, amenities, pets, parking or not, utilities)

Loss of contact with interested applicants

- Create consent basic info among partners



# Impact Video



# Lessons from Autistic Adults and Their Support Networks

## Lesson

## Action

Unique profiles

- Range of needs but what are your deal breakers

Support needs are not clear

- Assess but be flexible

Financial sustainability

- Learning how to budget, financial literacy courses

Takes time to work

- Start early. A leap of faith at times



# Impact Video



## Improving education, employment and housing outcomes for autistic youth and adults.



Located at The Ability Hub

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