



The Benefits of Inclusive Housing

People with disabilities, family members and many others are working to create meaningful inclusion and support self-determination for people with disabilities in employment, recreation, and in housing.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD, United Nations, 2006) includes the right to full participation and inclusion in society and community life. Article 19 of the Convention refers specifically to housing, stating that people with disabilities should have:

- 1) the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and without obligation to live in a particular living arrangement, and
- 2) access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community.

These rights are in the Convention based on research and decades of practice that shows both the benefits of community inclusion and the dangers of segregation (people with disabilities being apart from their communities) and congregation (grouping people with disabilities together).

The Dangers of Segregation and Congregation

Historically, services for people with developmental disabilities have been done in ways that take away people's choices, separate people from others in their communities, and put people with disabilities together because of their disability label. The result is poor quality of life outcomes. Research shows that when not meaningfully included and well supported, people with developmental disabilities are often lonely and experience isolation. In addition, people with developmental disabilities are more vulnerable when in segregated settings.

The Benefits of Inclusive Housing

We know that people living in community homes have greater community participation than people living in institutionsⁱ and those who live in smaller community settings have more participation than people in larger more segregated settings.ⁱⁱ

A review of research finds that the following factors have an impact on people's community participation:

- Opportunities to make their own choices and involvement in choosing their housing supports;
- Variety in peoples' environments and smaller sizes of homes;
- Employment and access to employment services;
- Availability of transportation;
- Greater family involvement and the availability of social support.ⁱⁱⁱ



In 2019, Community Living BC asked people about their housing as part of its *include Me!* Quality of Life surveys and found that satisfaction with their home correlated positively with 7 out of 8 quality of life domains.^{iv}

WELL-BEING	INDEPENDENCE	SOCIAL PARTICIPATION
Emotional Well-Being	Self-Determination	Rights
Material Well-Being	Personal Development	Interpersonal Relations
Physical Well-Being		Social Inclusion

Inclusion BC and Community Living BC brought together groups of people with disabilities and families to ask them about the benefits of inclusive housing. Here are some of the answers they gave:

- Independence – you can come and go as you choose, on your own terms and your own schedule; you have control of your life
- Interdependence – you move from dependency to independence to interdependence where you are part of a community that helps each other
- Freedom to move about
- Enough space for family and friends -- parties, who I want to live with, have a pet
- Able to make my own food
- Less time to get to and from work and other places
- Close to nature
- Proud of my own house
- Empowerment
- Choose who is in my life
- Less isolated and lonely
- Long term security
- Pathway to other benefits
- Different housing options-sense of choice and autonomy
- Destigmatization=dignity
- Benefit to whole community
- Share resources/information/skills
- Having my own furniture and keys
- To feel safe
- Increased self-confidence

Benefits to the community

Inclusive housing also benefits the entire community.

- People stay in their homes longer and form supportive relationships with neighbours – it helps build true community bonds.
- It provides ways for people of many walks of life to connect and interact.
- When housing and amenities are accessible and inclusive to people with disabilities, they are more welcoming to everyone.
- Inclusive housing plans help developers gain community support.

How might your community benefit?

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- I. Stancliffe, R. J., & Keane, S. (2000). Outcomes and costs of community living: A matched comparison of group homes and semi-independent living. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability, 25*(4), 281-305.
 - II. Verdonschot, M. M. L., de Witte, L. P., Reichrath, E., Buntinx, W. H. E., & Curfs, L. M. G. (2009). Community participation of people with an intellectual disability: A review of empirical findings. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 53*, 303-318.
 - III. Verdonschot, et al, 2009.
 - IV. For more information about IncludeMe! see <https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/provincial-projects/include-me-a-quality-of-life-focus/>