



What is Inclusive Housing?

Inclusive Housing means that people live in homes where they feel they are a part of their communities. They participate and have relationships with people in their community and have opportunities to give to their community. Inclusive housing should provide people with a sense of home and belonging within their community and promote quality of life. If you are planning a new housing project, or giving input to a community housing plan, keep in mind that inclusive housing includes the following five areas:

Choice and Control

Choice and control over your living space is important for your quality of life. It means you have the same rights and responsibilities as others living in the same building or type of place. For example, in inclusive housing you have choice about roommates, you have your own key, can choose to have pets if allowed by the landlord, and you get to decide who visits and when.

Accessibility

Inclusive housing gives people access to both their home and to their community. Accessibility is about physical access to your house and about how you access your community. An accessible home is affordable. It may be close to public transit to meet your needs. If you have a wheelchair or need assistive technology, inclusive house accommodates those needs. It gives you a place to feel safe, to be more independent, and take some risks to learn and grow.

Avoiding Congregation

Inclusive housing looks different in different communities but most important, it allows you to live in places made up of people with and without disabilities. Having lots of people with disabilities in a big apartment building is not as inclusive as being in a small home in a diverse neighbourhood. Housing made up of only people with developmental disabilities is only acceptable if it is in a single-family home, duplex or other small living arrangement and it does not stand apart in a single-family home neighbourhood. You want the number of people with disabilities in a housing complex to reflect the natural numbers and diversity of the community.



Diversity

Just like everyone else, you probably have your own interests, gifts, preferences, background and support needs. While people with disabilities may need some support, all people thrive in communities that are rich in diversity. When thinking about your housing, it is worth asking if the housing fits the community and whether everyone can access it or if it is meant to meet the needs of a particular group.

Sustainability

Inclusive housing is affordable and can be your home for a long-time, until you're ready for something new. You need to know that your home is stable. Support to live in your home should meet your needs using your personal networks, community resources, and cost-effective use of paid supports. People who stay in their homes for long periods get to know their neighbours and the people nearby at parks, stores, and coffee shops.

Inclusion BC and Community Living BC brought together groups of people with disabilities and families to ask them how they would describe “inclusive housing.” Here are some of the answers they gave.

Inclusive housing brings to mind these features:

- Where everyone belongs
- Support when and where we say we need it
- Affordable/accessible for both home and community
- Respectful
- Pride of ownership
- Long term security
- Location-appropriate
- Access to transportation
- Community Connections -- knowing your neighbors, neighborhood events, safety/security-people looking out for each other
- Choice/control/options – roommates, pets, location, etc.
- Cultural connections
- Intentional community which promotes independence (a self-directed life) and capacity and choice
- Support available whether a property manager or support person or wrap-around supports
- A place for skill development like cooking
- A sense of normality
- Inclusive spaces (gardens, social spaces)
- Supportive communities
- A place to age in place (i.e. housing modifications, adaptable as needs change)
- A place designed to be changed i.e. beams to withstand weight of lifts and slings

What does inclusive housing mean to you?