

SHEDD Webinar #3 Summary

Title: Person-Directed Planning for Housing: Built Environment Stories from Families

Date: March 25, 2022 12:00pm – 1:30 pm

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For information on SHEDD and to access the tool: www.toolSHEDD.ca

About SHEDD

Successful Housing Elements and Developmental Disabilities (SHEDD) began as a research project to identify key elements of housing design and construction (e.g., materials, space) that can help to support people labeled with developmental disabilities and exceptional behaviours that challenge.* The SHEDD tool was developed to promote built environments that can improve the wellbeing and community participation of adults with developmental disabilities. Further information about SHEDD can be found at www.toolSHEDD.ca

The current project is funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connection Grant (2021-2022) and aims to:

1. Share information about the SHEDD research and tool;
2. Make connections and share ideas about housing design with self-advocates, families, housing design and planning professionals, developmental service professionals and researchers; and,
3. Identify future research collaborations and ways to improve the SHEDD tool.

** Our team uses the term 'behaviours that challenge' to emphasize that behaviours such as self-harm, aggression, and property damage are forms of communication that may challenge people such as caregivers who provide support for people labeled with a disability.*

What was the **Person- Directed Planning for Housing: Built Environment Stories from Families** webinar about?

- This was the third webinar of a four-part series that will help to make connections and share ideas about improving built environments, such as the physical characteristics of homes and universal housing design. This webinar included two families and a facilitator in housing planning who discussed their journeys to finding housing that supports wellbeing and participation in daily activities for adults with developmental disabilities in their homes and communities. Panelists shared their experiences of finding partners, accessing funding, exploring housing options, considering timelines, and other factors for creating sustainable, person-directed housing for families. This webinar included:
- Two family members discussing how they found homes for their loved ones with developmental disabilities; and,

- A panel discussion where the presenters answered audience questions.

Who were the presenters?

Moderator:

- Yani Hamdani, PhD; Assistant Professor, Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, University of Toronto; Clinician-Scientist, CAMH

Panelists:

- Bonnie Heath; Family Leader, SHEDD Project Collaborator
- Marge McCabe; Family Leader, SHEDD Project Collaborator
- Carolyn Fast; C Fast Consulting, Partners for Planning

What was presented?

The webinar included a panel discussion focused on housing planning from the perspectives of families and people who support person-directed planning, and considerations for the wide range of housing possibilities. Presenters made the following important points:

- It is the people that make the home. The support in the home is almost as important as the design. A reason why a housing option may fail is because of the inconsistent and/or the wrong kind of support, not the building (space) itself. It is important for family members to feel included in the planning and have a sense of belonging.
- Important design aspects to consider included: one level housing to avoid stairs; only one wall connecting to neighbours for limited sound stimuli; in-house laundry; private bedrooms and social spaces such as living rooms; safety features such as grab rails; use of technology such as a keyless entry, smart speakers, etc.
- Make sure that design elements look like materials one would find in their own home (i.e., tempered glass instead of plexiglass, recessed lighting instead of cages, etc.) to avoid institutionalized appearances.
- Be sure to incorporate choice throughout the design process. This can be related to the colour of the wall, decorations, furniture styles, and more. People should feel supported, safe, and have a home of their choosing.
- The first home may not be the forever home. Families may go through several housing plans before finding the one that works best. Additionally, people are constantly changing and growing, thus what works for someone now may not work for them in the future. It is important to keep in mind the changing needs of family members as it relates to ageing, health, and new desires/interests. Person-directed planning is both in the moment and planning for the future.
- It is helpful to create partnerships to build towards sustainability. This can be with other parents, community living organizations, nonprofits, developmental service agencies, or



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[developmental services housing navigators](#). However, keep in mind that each family has unique needs; what works for one family may not work for another family.

- Have discussions about housing early, starting around the age that children begin high school and are looking towards their life after school to plan financially, emotionally, and logistically. Keep in mind the family trajectory (i.e., ageing caregivers, siblings, etc.). Plan early to avoid entering this process in a state of crisis.

How can the SHEDD tool help with housing planning and design?

The SHEDD tool provides information about

- Design considerations: Let's look at the building (inside and out): How bright is it? How big are the rooms? How is the outdoor space used? Is the environment contributing to self-injury, aggression towards others or destruction of physical property?
- Design principles: Where are the rooms located? How do people use the space? Is the space accessible and comfortable? What colour are the walls?
- Design modifications: What are some specific suggestions for living areas, kitchens, bedroom, and bathrooms? Are locks in high-risk areas needed?

Who can use this tool?

- People labelled with a disability, people who care for them, and people who design and care for the buildings in which they live. This includes self-advocates, families, housing planners, builders, architects and building managers.
- The tool can be incorporated into universal home design elements for everyone.

Where can you find this tool?

You can access the tool for free on www.toolshedd.ca

Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A

Question: **Do any of the homes you have worked on have any outdoor gardening? Have you developed specific recommendations to make the outside of the house safe and engaging for gardening, just as you have for the interior?**

Answer:

- There is a very short section on outdoor space in the SHEDD tool so far, however it is limited. Of all the homes we visited there weren't any specific gardening programs. This did come up in some of the literature included in our review – see [Casson et al., 2021](#).

Question: **What funding supports can people apply to when trying to create a home? As well as supports for daily living?**

Answer:

- Funding supports include:
 - [Ontario Disability Support Program \(ODSP\)](#)
 - [The Passport Program](#)
 - [LIGHTS-TO](#)
 - [Community Living Ontario](#)
 - Submitting a proposal to the [Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services \(MCSS\)](#)
 - Special initiatives from MCSS such as the [Developmental Services Housing Task Force](#), optimizing tax credits, and looking for grants for renovation funds

Question: **Going back to the built environment, is there a knowledge network or willingness in the developer community, especially in the affordable housing developer community, to incorporate design/build elements for people with ID and related issues?**

Answer:

- Yes, [Trillium housing](#) has creative mortgage services that can help to make the home affordable. They have also done work in accessible housing. Another resource is [Blue Door](#), who has also done creative and innovative things on this topic.

Question: **How can families network with other families to find others who are ready to explore housing options for their family member?**

Answer:

Here are resources shared by the speakers:

- [Families Connected in Ontario](#) Facebook group



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- [Post Developmental Services Housing Task Force](#) Facebook group
- [Scarborough Residential Alternatives](#) Facebook group or contact via email (scarboroughresidentialalternat@gmail.com)
- [Housing Task Force report and pilot programs](#)
- [Partners for Planning](#) events and webinars
- [Community Living Ontario](#)
- [DSO Housing Navigator and Toolkit](#)
- [Disability Advocacy Network of Eastern Ontario](#) (DANEO) work on Cooperative Housing ideas and have regular Zoom presentations with guest speakers
- Another option is to post this question on [Family Networks](#) and other community groups, asking family members who have similar ideas, who have already created options in other communities or are looking for others to join their project, to send you a personal message, email or phone number to connect

Question: **How could the built environment help families share scarce support resources or meet the needs of very challenged individuals to encourage inclusion?**

Answer:

- Family members, especially those who have significant challenges, can benefit from qualified, professional support. Together this can create a successful and stable home. One suggestion is to find apartments or townhomes with connecting doors for individuals to rent side by side and share support personnel. Nonetheless, structuring for success needs solidly planned policies, procedures, and role assignment and most of all a 'conflict resolution' process, as planning and development of such projects by families is much different from hands-on 'operation and management' of the project

Question: **Was the home purchased by family members or rented by the residents using ODSP and passport funding?**

Answer:

- Presenters said they rented the homes, as it was not financially feasible to purchase another home. They use ODSP to pay rent.

Question: **How does one compete with the market demand for housing that is out of reach for many people let alone someone whose income is limited and needs to be used to access various supports? Supported housing is limited and not always accessible to amenities that allow individuals to exercise independence.**

Answer:

- It is getting more and more difficult to compete for housing. Speakers shared that in their most recent move, both parents had to sign the lease to guarantee the rent. Also, there is a lot of prejudice against people with developmental disabilities and landlords may not want to rent to them. However, they can't technically refuse to rent to a person. While this is a big issue

provincially, a lot of work is being done at municipal levels to build relationships between town and city housing departments, nonprofit housing providers, and developers. Additionally, it is important to advocate to include individuals with developmental disabilities in low-income target groups, 10-year strategic plans for Affordable Housing, and Social Housing rent subsidies.

Additional Resources

- Making Homes that Work, a book by John Rowell and George Braddock ([PDF](#) or [book](#))
- [Long-term low investment loans for construction of affordable housing](#)
- [Never Going Back](#) by Gord Ferguson, the founder of a Brockville Ontario People's First branch
- [Partners for Planning](#) (P4P)
 - [P4P Housing Task Force Booklet](#)
 - [P4P Family Network Directory](#)
 - [P4P Facilitator Directory](#)
 - [Tiffany's Story](#)
- Transformation of the Developmental Services (2007) - the last item to be implemented by 2023 is establishing the Funding Entity. Additional details can be found [here](#). The latest continuation of this document is the [Journey to Belonging](#).
- [Families Matter Co-op](#): support resources for families in Ottawa