



# **SHEDD HOUSING DESIGN TOOL**

**SUCCESSFUL HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**



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The Successful Housing Elements and Developmental Disabilities (SHEDD) Housing Design Tool is a list of personal preferences with design suggestions about the physical space of a home.

## WHO IS THIS TOOL FOR

**This tool is for you** to help communicate what is important to you and make choices about your home. This includes your needs today and in the future, as they change over time.

**This tool is for people who provide you care and support** to learn about what is important to you. This includes family members, support staff, administrators, housing planning consultants and navigators.

**This tool is people who design and care for your home** to match your needs and wants with the physical features of your home. This includes facilities managers, maintenance staff, builders and architects.

## WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

Use this tool when you are planning to change your home. This includes when:

- you are planning to move to a new home
- you are planning to renovate or modify the home you live in now
- you are thinking about moving out of the home you grew up in
- you are working with a community agency to plan a transition to a home

**A SUCCESSFUL HOME  
IS PLANNED THE WAY YOU LIKE IT,  
HELPS YOU TO BE  
INCLUDED IN YOUR COMMUNITY,  
AND IS COMFORTABLE AND SAFE.**

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL



**CHECK** the topics on the next page that you agree with. Start with the topic that is most important to you.



**TALK** about the questions on the white pages with someone helping you plan. Write notes in the space provided.



**REVIEW** the yellow pages and consider how to include the design ideas into your home.

A summary of all the design ideas is included at the end of this document.

# MAKE A PLAN FOR YOUR HOME



### PERSONALIZED

A home honours personal preferences and needs.

1. I have a daily routine.
2. I like spending quiet time alone.
3. I like spending my time outside.
4. I like art, music, movies/TV, books, or radio.

### INCLUSIVE

A home promotes a sense of belonging.

5. I use technology in my home.
6. I like spending time with other people.
7. I go to places in my community.
8. I have support staff and/or caregivers.

### COMFORTABLE

A home is safe, robust and easy to maintain.

9. I want my home to be safe.
10. I want my home to be easy to take care of.
11. I want to move around my home easily.
12. I want my home to look and feel nice.

# I HAVE A DAILY ROUTINE.



**Your choices can guide the type of building you want to live in and the type of support you want in your home.**

*What do you like to do in the morning, afternoon, evening?  
What kind of housing is available in your neighbourhood?  
What supports are nearby?*



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**There are a variety of building types and support options, think about what is the right one for you.**

- Your daily activities and people you like spending time with are accessible from your home
- Your home is located near to employment, day programs, schools or public transit that can take you there
- Consider the type of buildings, such as a houses or apartments, available in your area
- Consider if you want to live alone, with family, with friends or roommates or in a building run by a care provider
- Consider what supports you need for your daily activities from paid or unpaid caregivers
- Consider how you will leave your home for day-to-day activities and in an emergency
- Consider how you will arrive home. Make sure your home is easy for you to find when you arrive there. If you live in an apartment building, consider how you could mark your door to make it easier to find
- Consider who lives near you and think about who can help introduce you to your neighbour(s), consider how these people fit into your daily routine or can help in case of an emergency
- Consider if you want to have a pet

# I LIKE SPENDING QUIET TIME ALONE.



Your home should include private spaces for you such as a personal bedroom, living area and bathroom.

*What activities do you like to do on your own?*



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- Rooms have windows to let in natural light and fresh air
- The walls have good insulation and sound proofing
- High-quality mechanical systems provide adequate ventilation, a pleasant climate, and are quiet
- High-quality heating and cooling units service zones of the home to meet individual needs and a backup is available in the event of failure

# I LIKE SPENDING TIME OUTSIDE.



It is important to have access to natural light, fresh air and outdoor space.

*What activities do you like to do outside?  
What is your favourite season?*



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- The home is located near parks and green space
- Windows, balconies and porches provide a connection between indoors and outdoors
- Operable windows allow you to choose when you let in light and fresh air
- Outdoor areas close to your home include larger spaces for groups and smaller spaces for individuals
- Outdoor space is available for activities such as gardening and storage for equipment
- Consider how to make your outdoor space safe and easy to move around in

# I LIKE ART, CRAFTS, MUSIC, MOVIES, BOOKS OR TELEVISION.



Having space to express yourself and do activities you like is an important part of your home.

*What types of creative activities do you like doing at home?*



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- Space for making arts and crafts, and accessible storage for these materials is provided
- Space for computers, televisions, other digital devices and media is provided in an accessible manner. Consider where these objects are placed and how they are stored when they are not being used
- Internet is reliable and accessible
- A variety of books, magazines, and other media are accessible
- Consider how your interests can be displayed or used as decoration in your space

# I USE TECHNOLOGY IN MY HOME.



Technology can help you to be safe, independent and connected to other people in your home.

*How do you use phones, tablets, computers or other technology in your day to day?*



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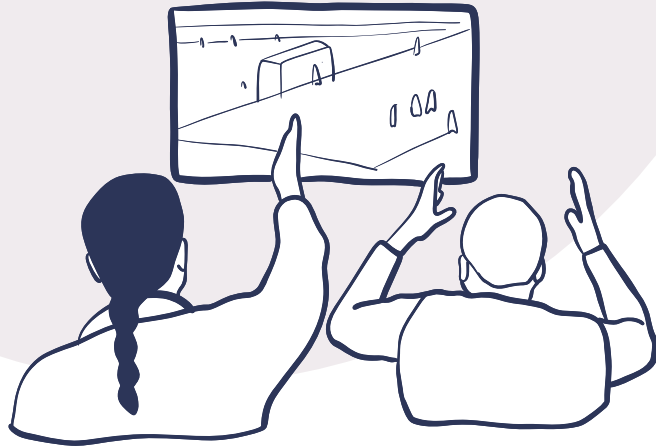
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- WiFi and devices for video calling are reliable and accessible
- Consider if computers, speakers or other technologies can support your communication with other people in your home or remotely
- If a door or cabinet needs a lock, consider a variety of locking mechanisms such as keys, code, sensors, card keys, magnetic locks, or bells
- Consider how sensors, timers can be used to increase your independence



# I LIKE SPENDING TIME WITH OTHERS OR MEETING NEW PEOPLE.



**Your home can be a welcoming place for other people to visit.**

*Do you want to live alone, with one person, or multiple people?  
How often do you like to see your friends and family?*



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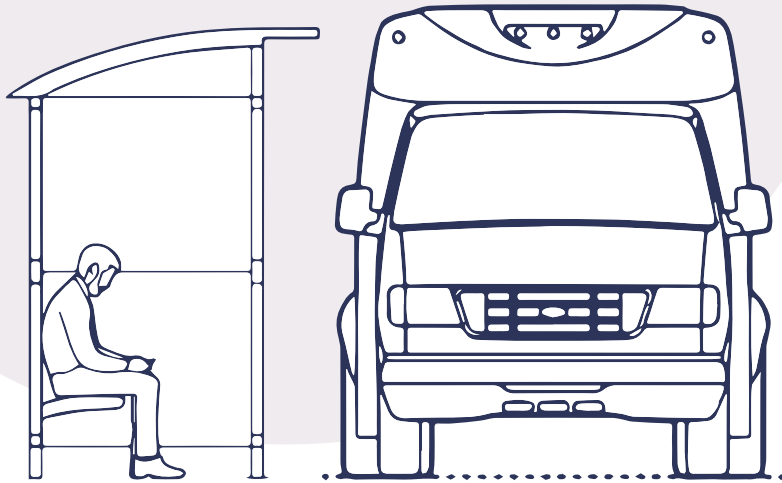
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- The home is located near friends and family or public transit that can take you to meet them
- People you know and like to spend time with live in the same building
- The building has indoor and outdoor communal space
- The home has adequate space to have visitors
- The kitchen has enough space to prepare meals, including space for other people, helpers, technology or equipment
- Consider units that are physically connected such as semi-detached houses with walk-through between units or adjoining suites in an apartment building with share communal space

**Your neighbourhood can be a place for chance encounters. A front porch, garden area or common room can be places to meet new people who live in your area.**

# I GO TO PLACES IN MY COMMUNITY.



From your home, you should be able to get to places and to see people in your neighborhood and community.

*What places outside your home do you go to regularly?  
How do you get to these places?*



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- The home is near public transit or in walking distance of activities and places you often visit in your community, which might include work, school, day programs, libraries, community centre, church, restaurants, coffee shops.
- Provide space in the entrance area of the house for getting dressed to leave the house

# I HAVE SUPPORT STAFF AND/OR CAREGIVERS.



People who help you may need space in your home to provide support in the way you want it.

*What activities do you need help with? This might include getting dressed, cooking or doing laundry.*

*What time of day do you need help and how often?*



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- Provide space for family, friends, or staff who support you to easily visit, use the space, and store their belongings as needed
- If someone supports you overnight, provide a room for them to sleep in
- If someone supports you during the day, provide space to them to do administrative tasks and store their belongings
- If multiple people support you, provide a space for them to meet, store shared equipment and a method for them to share information with each other.

# I WANT MY HOME TO BE SAFE.



**Your home should be a safe and secure place.**

*What makes you feel safe?*



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- Hallways and rooms allow ease in navigating the building, consider one-way circulation
- High traffic areas such as kitchens can have two entrances to allow for easy circulation
- Higher risk areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and mechanical rooms have locking mechanisms
- Plumbing elements and toilet cisterns are enclosed, consider inspection chambers to allow for unblocking
- Water shut-off is accessible from outside the bathroom to reduce risk of flooding
- Overall temperature control on hot water is installed
- Anti-slip, high visibility or texture stair tread are installed
- Unnecessary sharp edges on furniture and decoration are avoided
- Consider locating staff areas close to / at entrances to reduce the need for locks or using bells
- Consider the people who live near you, inform them of your personal safety needs.

# I WANT MY HOME TO BE EASY TO MAINTAIN.



**The materials used to build your house should make you feel comfortable and relaxed.**

*Are there any physical spaces you tend to focus on or bother you?*

*Are there areas of your home that often need repair?*



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- Consider the energy efficiency of your home such as installing a heat recovery unit and adequate insulation.
- Include extra drainage in bathrooms, kitchens, laundry areas to avoid flooding
- Water and tear resistant fabrics are used for furnishings
- Ventilation can be installed high up on walls or ceilings out of reach, if necessary
- Mattresses are durable with minimal seams
- Seams in wall and flooring materials are minimized. Sprinklers, fire alarm pulls, and exit signs can be recessed, covered or relocated, if necessary
- Vent covers can be seamless and radiators can be enclosed, if necessary
- Flimsy or fragile furnishings are removed, if necessary
- If curtains and blinds do not meet individual needs, consider alternative window covering such as blinds between windowpanes, or frosted glass in private areas

# I WANT TO MOVE AROUND MY HOME EASILY.



You should be able to move through your home as easily as possible whether you walk or use a mobility device.

*Do you use supports to help you move around your home like a cane, walker or wheelchair? Consider how this may change as you get older.*

*Do you have enough space to use and store it?*



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- The building is single story or has generous ground floor area to promote accessibility and visitability
- Corridors and entrances are wide enough to allow accessible and easy passage
- Ramps are used to allow accessible and easy movement
- Bathrooms are on the ground floor
- Showers and baths are barrier-free and large enough to accommodate mobility devices and support staff. Provide a handheld shower and a space to sit in the shower.
- Grab-bars or handrails are installed throughout the building

# I WANT MY HOME TO LOOK AND FEEL NICE.



**The objects, furniture and decoration in your home can help you feel relaxed and comfortable.**

*What colours, textures and sounds do you like?*

*Are there any that you do not like?*

*How can your personal interests and style be expressed in how your home is decorated?*



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- Choose the colour of walls. Consider paint colours, wall paper and decorations on the wall
- Display personal artworks and crafts. Consider framing artworks or painting them directly on the wall
- Choose the furniture for your room. Consider if you want heavier furniture that cannot be moved easily or light furniture that you can move around independently
- Include colours and textures that you like in your space. Select pillows, bedding, and curtains that you like
- Consider how you will organize your belongs. Do you prefer to have many objects out on display or do you need an easy way to store them?
- Consider how you will use your space throughout the day, week and season





# DESIGN MODIFICATION CHART

## I HAVE A DAILY ROUTINE.

- Your daily activities and people you like spending time with are accessible from your home
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- Rooms have windows to let in natural light and fresh air
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SSHRC  CRSH



Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**camh** | Azrieli Adult  
Neurodevelopmental Centre

SHEDD is an interdisciplinary team that shares ideas about housing design for people labeled with a developmental disability to help improve planning their homes in ways that they want.

This project brings together a multi-stakeholder group of academic researchers from social sciences, urban planning, health and law, trainees, community agencies that build and operate supportive housing, housing design professionals, and self-advocates and family leaders to exchange research and experiential knowledge about person-centered housing design and developmental disabilities. The built environment is a fundamental part of successful housing for people labeled with a developmental disability.

To learn more about the SHEDD research and knowledge mobilization project visit [toolshedd.ca](https://toolshedd.ca)

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