



posAbilities
Shared
Living

Is Shared Living Right For Me?

Shared Living is a residential model in which an adult with a developmental disability lives with a person who is contracted by **posAbilities** to provide ongoing support. This arrangement involves close relationships and the sharing of lives, hence the deliberate use of the term Shared Living. This model may be offered by community based agencies such as *posAbilities*, or directly by Community Living BC. Homes may be owned, rented or leased by the shared living provider or by the individual.

A variety of living arrangements are possible depending upon the needs and wishes of the person served:

- The shared living provider's family lives in the home as well.
- The shared living provider and the supported person live together as roommates.
- The supported person is more independent and has his or her own space within the home, for example, a separate suite.
- The shared living provider may also move into the home of the person served. For example, elderly parents may choose to facilitate a transition in caregiving through this model, while their son or daughter continues to live in the family home.

This person-centered residential model offers an opportunity for individuals to achieve an ideal balance of support and independence based on their unique goals and preferences. Support is flexible and evolves according to the individual's changing needs. For some, this model of support will last for many years, while for others, Shared Living is a stepping-stone to even greater independence.



How Do We Select Shared Living Providers?

The application, screening and approval process is very comprehensive and involves all members of the household. It is important to be aware that even if a family has been approved, there is no guarantee that they will receive a contract. Contracts are issued based on a number of variables including the individual's preferences and requirements for support, location, skill sets, access to transit and existing connections between the person and their community. In the end, it is all about the match.

Becoming a shared living provider is not generally viewed as an entry into the field of Community Living. Our contractors are expected to have previous experience supporting adults with a developmental disability. Speaking additional languages and experience in the areas of mental health and aging are also considered desirable assets.

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What are *posAbilities*' Responsibilities?

- Formal monitoring in the home
- Ongoing support for shared living providers
- 24/7 call support to address urgent response needs and to facilitate complaint resolution
- Support in referrals to community based resources (when required)
- Support to facilitate complaint resolution
- Frequent communication with shared living providers, as well as persons served
- Support to facilitate meetings with employment services, mental health teams, educational institutions, volunteer positions, as well as with other service providers



Frequently Asked Questions

Are the family and the individual entering the Shared Living service involved in the selection of the shared living provider?

Meetings are held with the family and the individual to determine what they are looking for in a shared living arrangement. This includes discussions about location, personal characteristics, accessibility to transit and more. Following this, *posAbilities* will select suitable home share providers to visit. The Association also shares some basic information with these prospective shared living providers prior to the visit. Following the initial visits, the individual chooses who they would like to visit again. At any time during this process, the individual or family may change their mind and be offered another choice.



What are the basic expenses associated with Shared Living? Typically, individuals make a contribution towards expenses as outlined by the Ministry of Social Development. This is considered a "user fee" and includes a shelter portion, food and other miscellaneous expenses such as basic cable, cleaning supplies, etc. Some individuals contribute only the shelter portion and choose to purchase their own food and other related household items with support.

What happens if the arrangement does not work out for either party? Shared living providers are required to provide a 30 day notice prior to the termination of their contract when possible. Individuals are also asked to provide notice when possible. *posAbilities* would arrange a meeting with the parties to ascertain what worked and what did not work. Following this, we would begin the next steps towards finding another shared living provider.

Can my family and friends visit me? We encourage family and friends to visit and for people to spend time together. These visits may be facilitated with the support of the shared living provider, the person and their family and friends. In other situations, the person can make these arrangements themselves.

What happens if I want to move? People do request to move for various reasons such as they would like a more independent model within our Shared Living service, they would like to move to a different area of Metro Vancouver, etc. This is typically communicated by the person served themselves, with the support of their family or the shared living provider. We do have to provide a notice period (typically 30 days) to the shared living provider then meet together to determine what it is the person is looking for. We then introduce them to some options and look at the transition phase to a new home.

What happens if the shared living provider wants to move? This can happen too. Oftentimes, everyone moves together but there are considerations such as transit accessibility, distance to family, friends and other supports, community resources, etc. The person served would be involved in looking for a new home with the family, packing and moving their belongings. There will be planning and transition meetings. If the person served chooses not to move, we will work together to find a new home.

For more information, please call 778-945-3368
or email sharedliving@posabilities.ca

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