

Introduction to Home Sharing For **HOME SHARING PROVIDERS**



**The search for home,
for the fulfillment
experienced through
meaningful relationships
and a shared life,
transcends disability...**

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What is Home Sharing?

Home sharing is one of the residential services options that Community Living BC (CLBC) funds to help eligible adults live, with support, in the community. It is a service type under CLBC's 'Shared Living' umbrella.

Community Living BC

Home sharing happens when a person eligible for CLBC and a person who is paid to provide support live together in a home that is rented or owned by the paid support person.¹



The paid support person is called a **Home Sharing Provider**.

Home sharing looks different for different people. Some people live with a family. Others live with a roommate or a couple. Some live in a separate suite (apartment) that is part of the home.

If you are interested in becoming a home sharing provider, how your shared home looks will depend on your home situation, the type of home sharing arrangement you are comfortable providing, and the wants and needs of the person for whom what you're offering is a fit.



1. In the other form of Shared Living called Live in Support, a paid support person shares a home that is owned/rented/leased by a person eligible for CLBC, with that person.

Some people whom CLBC supports want to live in a home sharing arrangement that gives them the opportunity to have a very close relationship with the people they share a home with, to be part of a family. They are interested in spending a lot of time together and doing daily activities together. They might also want or need support with things like making friends, their health, meals, personal care, or connecting to their community.

Other people like having different lives and schedules from the people they share a home with. They might even have a separate living space and only spend time with other people in the home when they want to.

You can visit the link below to read about a home sharing provider's experience with home sharing:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/who-does-clbc-support/individual-family-stories/home-sharing-safe-welcoming-home

Who is a good fit for being a home sharing provider?

Home sharing is not just a paid job or source of income. It works best for someone with a personal interest in supporting inclusive communities.

As a home sharing provider, you have the responsibility to support the person to live a full life and be a member of their community (in ways that will work for them).

You are responsible for following provincial and other guidelines and requirements including home sharing standards, policies, contract terms and conditions, and other expectations outlined by your agency coordinator and/or CLBC.

Whatever the home sharing situation looks like, the home must support the needs and choices of all the people sharing the home.

Like any other home, the person in your home can have friends and family visit, decorate their space, enjoy privacy when they want it, and be able to come and go as they please.

House rules should be established together and re-visited to make sure that everyone remains happy in the home.

Provincial and other requirements for home sharing providers

What is expected of home sharing providers is set out by the agency coordinating the home share and/or by CLBC in standards, policies, and other documents for home sharing.

To read these documents visit the CLBC website at the link below:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/for-service-providers/home-sharing-providers/home-sharing-providers/

Who is involved in home sharing?

Home sharing includes different people with different roles. The main ones are the:

1. **Person** - person receiving the home sharing service.
2. **Home Sharing Provider** - person paid to provide the home sharing service.
3. **Home Sharing Coordinator** – service agency staff who sets up home sharing and makes sure arrangements are working well.
4. **A person's Family, Friends, and Supporters, CLBC and the local community** that the home is in also play important roles in the home sharing service.



In home sharing that works, the person, any involved family/friends/supporters the person has, the home sharing provider and home sharing coordinator all work together so the person has the best possible experience.

What home sharing is meant to be

Home sharing was not created for emergency placement. Unless the home sharing situation has been specifically set up for this type of placement, more often than not it can leave you, the person sharing your home, and other people involved unhappy and, in some cases, not wanting to try home sharing again.



This is especially true when the home sharing provider, the person, and their family don't already have a relationship. In these cases, there isn't time to build a relationship, make sure the wants and needs of everyone match well enough to share a home, try out sharing a home together, or make sure a shared home is what everyone wants and needs.

If you are asked to provide an urgent place for someone to stay, you are encouraged to think carefully about whether this is right for you before accepting.

If you decide to use your home as a place for someone to stay in an urgent situation, it is important that you work out with your agency home sharing coordinator how long the arrangement will last and what transition plan is in place for the person to have a long-term home that is right for them.

Roles, rights, responsibilities in home sharing

RIGHTS of home sharing providers

- To be treated with consideration, trust, honesty, respect, acceptance, and fairness by others in the home sharing situation
- To, subject to privacy laws and with a person's consent, receive information about the person needed to make the home sharing situation work well (i.e., medical, support needs, family history, other as needed)
- To, subject to privacy laws and with a person's consent, consult with members of the person's support network, involved professionals, and CLBC as needed to meet the person's needs
- To have the tools, information, resources, and support needed to deliver effective service
- To receive and have access to services to support and stabilize the home/person in times of crisis
- To, subject to privacy laws and with a person's consent, be provided with an explanation when a contract is terminated

RESPONSIBILITIES of home sharing providers

- Always treat the person with respect and dignity. This includes respecting a person's right to privacy while living in a home sharing situation
- Fully include and treat the person as an equal member in the home and in community
- Ensure the person's safety and general well-being, provide support and guidance as needed, and offer or arrange for nutritious meals that respect cultural backgrounds and dietary needs
- Provide positive adult role modelling and create an atmosphere that fosters independence and personal growth balancing dignity of risk with safety
- Ensure the person is provided with appropriate medical and dental care and participates in the development of plans prescribed by health professionals
- Encourage and support the person to connect with their communities, including cultural and faith groups (See *DRIPA under resources*)
- Nurture positive relationships between the person and their friends and family

The person receiving service

All the people involved in a home sharing service work to make sure the person is safe and supported to live a full life in community. The home sharing situation may not be the only support to help the person to do this, but a safe and supportive home is a very important part of achieving this vision.

RIGHTS of the person receiving service

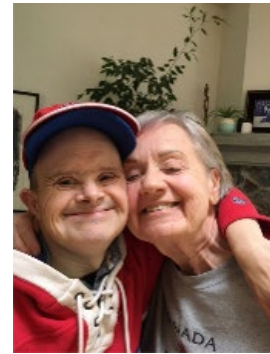
- To make choices and direct their service
- To have changes made if their wants and needs change, or the services are not working for them
- To be treated with dignity and respect whatever religion, culture, lifestyle friends and traditions they have
- To live in a safe home and be supported to participate safely in activities of their choice
- To have their rights and privacy as an adult respected
- To have their family, friends, and others important to them welcomed and encouraged to be involved in their shared home
- To live in a home that supports them to participate in valued social roles, experience the rights of citizenship, and contribute to community in a personally meaningful way
- To contact CLBC or an advocate if they are not comfortable bringing their concerns to their home sharing provider or agency

RESPONSIBILITIES of the person receiving service

- Treat the shared home and the people they live with in a respectful way
- Know their rights and responsibilities
- Be responsible for, and stick to, the agreements they have made with you about the home sharing arrangement
- Speak up if something isn't working for them, if they need something, or they would like something to change
- Know who to call if they have concerns

Family, friends, and supporters

The home is a 'shared home' and if the person has family, friends or other supporters involved in their life, they will probably want them to be a part of their home life. Friends and family may want to visit, they may want to stay overnight.



It is important to ensure a thoughtful transition process takes place, including how a person's family/personal support network can help. If a person is transitioning from a home to home sharing, there may be deep emotions associated with the move. Some families may welcome the transition as a natural life progression while others may feel anxiety, guilt and grieving associated with the decision. Sensitivity during the transition period is critical for everyone.

The person's choice about when and how their family and friends are involved in the shared home is as important as their choice about where they want to live.

The needs, concerns, and relationship of a person's family members and supporters may factor into the process of selecting and confirming whether you and a person are a good fit for sharing your home. The relationship between the family member(s) and potential home sharing provider must be nourished and maintained.

When choosing to live in a home sharing situation, persons are expected to let prospective home sharing providers and the agency home sharing coordinator know how they would like their family and friends to be involved.

That way, as a home sharing provider, you can decide if this is the kind of home sharing situation you can offer.



RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES of family, friends, supporters

- To be treated with consideration, trust, honesty, respect, acceptance, and fairness by others in the home sharing situation
- To be welcomed and involved in the shared home if the person wants them to be
- To have their deep understanding of their loved one heard and respected
- To be informed of important information about the person (if the person is okay with that)
- To contact CLBC or an advocate if they are not comfortable bringing their concerns to the home sharing provider or agency
- To treat the people involved in the home sharing situation in a respectful way and communicate in helpful ways
- To provide support to the home sharing provider as able
- To know their rights and responsibilities
- To be responsible for, and stick to, the agreements made about the home sharing situation

Home sharing providers

Home sharing providers can be a single person, couples, or families from many cultures and backgrounds. As a home sharing provider, you value inclusion and find meaning in supporting someone to be independent and included.

To become a home sharing provider, you must show you meet basic pre-qualifications and are qualified to do a good job before you start. You can do this by applying to be a home sharing provider with an agency that coordinates home sharing services.

You can read more about the application process to become a home sharing provider here:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/for-service-providers/home-sharing-providers/becoming-home-sharing-provider

Or watch Chilliwack Society for Community Living's introduction video to home sharing at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FB1CRBIIfpQ>

(or search www.Youtube.com for “An Introduction to Home Sharing at CSCL”)

Home sharing coordinator / service agency

Home sharing coordinators play an important role in the delivery of home sharing. They help create person centred plans and monitor how things are going to make sure persons in the shared home are receiving quality support. They make sure the home is working for both the home sharing provider and for the person in the home. They help keep positive relationships with everyone in the home and work things out when there are disagreements or things aren't working well.

Home sharing coordinators also provide information to the person, their family/friends/supporters, and you about updates, information, training, and learning opportunities.

Home sharing coordinators monitor the home to make sure you are following standards and policies, and have the knowledge, tools and supports you need to do a good job.

Important responsibilities of a home share coordinator and/or local service agency

- Find home sharing providers with the right values and do a 'home study' for each new home sharing provider to make sure the home is safe and suitable.
- Help persons and their families to meet and interview different home sharing providers to find the right match.
- Set-up the contract that explains what you (the home sharing provider) will be paid to do and check-in regularly with you and the person sharing your home to see how things are going.
- Be available to help if things are not going well.

When there is an emergency or you or person living in the home are in crisis, the home sharing coordinator supports everyone to find and implement solutions.

Home Sharing Coordinators stay in regular contact with the people involved in home sharing situation – by phone, video calls, and in person to make sure things are working well, everyone is safe and happy and the person receiving the service continues to get what they want and need in their shared home.

Community Living BC

CLBC is involved in home sharing in a few different ways:

- It funds home sharing services.
- It sets provincial rules, requirements, and guidelines for home sharing about what is expected and how it should work through standards, policies, and other guidance documents.
- It monitors the service agencies that coordinate home sharing.

Persons are free to contact Community Living BC if they are not comfortable telling you or the home sharing coordinator about a concern they have with the home sharing situation.

CLBC also helps persons and their families plan and request services - when a person is first interested in home sharing and if they have major life changes or changes in needs.

Local community

The community around the home is an important part of home sharing. The ability of the person to be part of their local community, to [share their strengths and gifts](#), is very important to having a good quality of life. Home sharing helps persons connect with their local community in the ways that they want, as much as they want.



Is being a home sharing provider right for me?

Home sharing was created to support persons with developmental disabilities to live a full community life, with others, where the rights of citizenship, belonging, and a rich quality of life are championed and promoted.

Home sharing is much more than a job, supporting someone with tasks, and offering a bed. It is about creating a long-term relationship and a commitment to sharing lives and creating a home together.



For many persons with developmental disabilities, especially those who have lived in institutions or been separated from their families, the need for a sense of family, home and belonging is important to their quality of life. Making sure you focus on the person's needs helps the person feel like they have a safe and reliable place to call home.

While home sharing is usually a very rewarding experience, there can be challenges. It is a lifestyle choice that needs to be carefully considered. Ideally, it is a long-term commitment, being part of and supporting the person you share your home with through different stages in their life, including as they age.

If you are interested in home sharing and already live with family or others, it is important to know that the approval process will involve screening and assessment of all members of your household. Multiple visits may be required to ensure all members of the household are introduced and interviewed and that different parts of the day's activities are observed. The goal is to ensure the home is the right fit for the person.

It is also important to know that if changes to the household are expected once home sharing is in place, these will need to be considered together with everyone involved in the home sharing situation.

If you would like to move forward with applying to become a home sharing provider or to learn more, visit the CLBC website here:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/for-service-providers/home-sharing-providers/becoming-home-sharing-provider/

Or contact your local CLBC office here:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/contact/local-offices



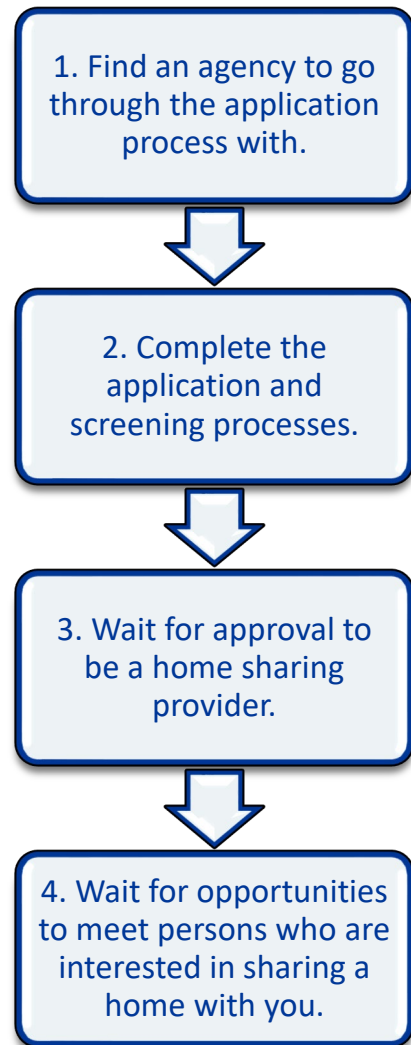
How to apply to become a home sharing provider

Find a service agency that offers home sharing services

The first step is to find a service agency in your area that coordinates home sharing services. They can provide more information and begin the application and screening process with you.

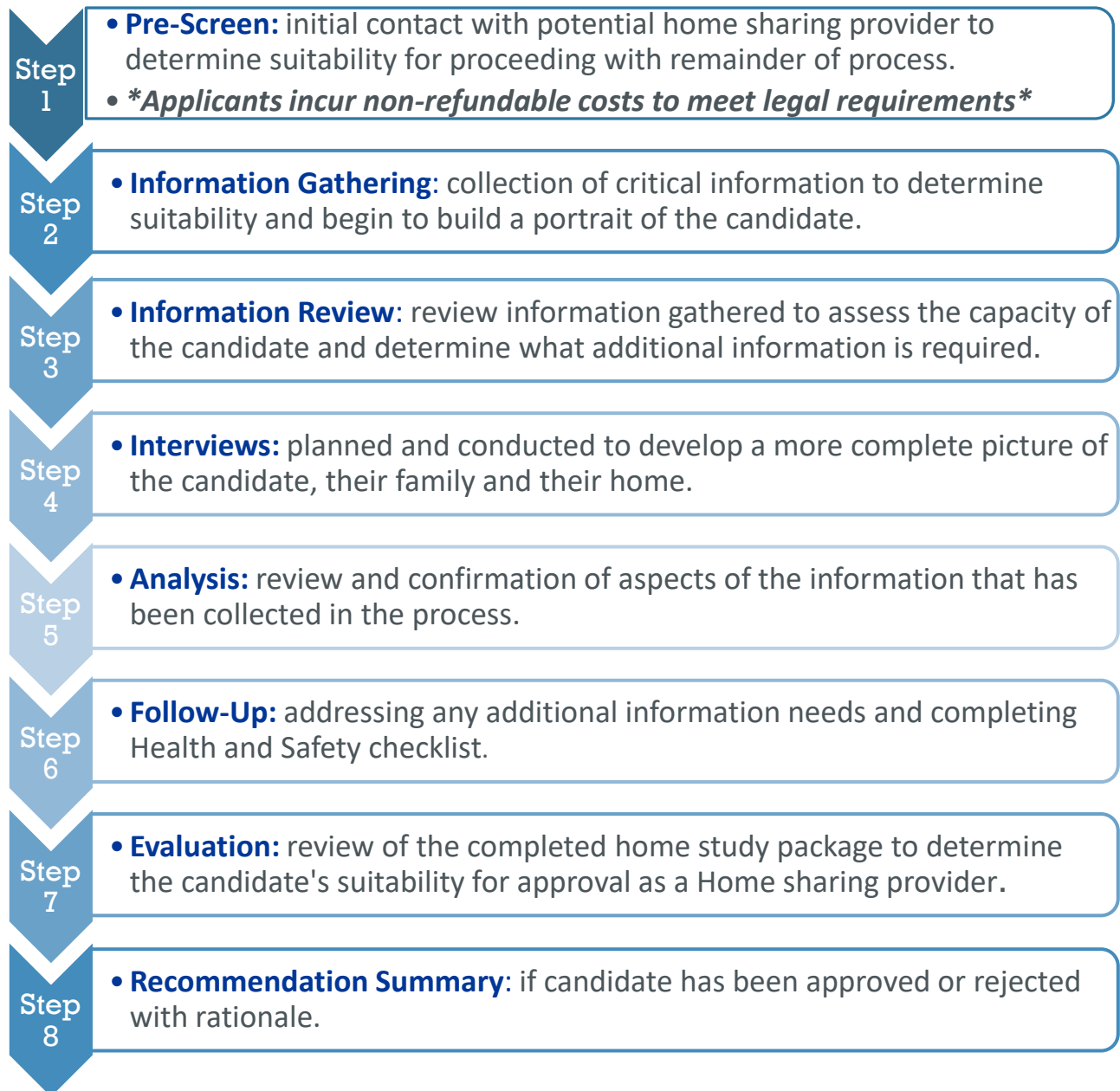
It is important to know there are agencies that coordinate home sharing services in almost every community in B.C. - usually more than one. You have a choice of which agency you would like to work with and you are encouraged to meet with more than one to find the best fit for you.

If you are in a community that doesn't have an agency that coordinates home sharing services – or if you have been unable to find the agencies in your area - you can contact the CLBC office near you for help with next steps.



Complete the application and screening processes

While each service agency has their own application and screening process, the steps usually follow a similar process in alignment with CLBC requirements and expectations:



Wait for approval to be a home sharing provider

Being approved as a home sharing provider is based on the results of the application and screening process. If you are not approved, you will have an opportunity to meet with the agency to understand the reason.

Wait to meet persons interested in sharing a home with you

Choice is a fundamental expression of self-determination for persons with developmental disabilities and core to the principle of home sharing. Selecting who they will live with is a fundamental right that must be upheld by agencies, CLBC, and others.

You will be brought forward to persons interested in home sharing as a potential candidate based on the match of your home with the person's likes, dislikes, needs, wishes, and dreams for their life and their shared home. Persons are given time to consider home sharing provider candidates and to consult with family, friends, and other supporters before deciding to explore the option further. Information about you and the shared home you are offering is shared in a manner that is appropriate for this stage of the exploration and in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA).

This same consideration and decision-making process applies to home sharing providers. You will be provided with information about a person interested in sharing your home in the ways and manner that is appropriate and in compliance with FOIPPA unless the person discloses it themselves. A person has the right to disclose whatever information they like, however, CLBC and the agency are held in compliance by FOIPPA.

Learn more about
privacy and
information
management here:
[Privacy and
Information
Management -
Community Living BC](#)

Becoming a home sharing provider to someone you know

Some home sharing providers began as unpaid people who were part of the of a person's life. In these cases, when the person became interested in having a shared home in community, they, and the people around them have approached a friend or member they already know, trust, and have things in common with to find out if they would be interested in sharing a home with the person.

Home sharing with someone you already know often works well if the right steps are taken. This is because everyone knows each other and has had time to build a positive relationship before living together.

People have created home sharing situations with relatives (like an adult brother or sister, cousin, aunt, or uncle), friend they know through school or work, or other person they know from community and social activities like church or sports teams or volunteering.

The most common and successful example of a paid person in someone's life becoming a home sharing provider is someone who has provided respite for the person and their family in the past. Other examples may include a teacher, coach or neighbour.

Compensation and levels of support

CLBC-funded services are provided based on a person's disability-related needs.

CLBC staff use a carefully developed tool called the Guide to Support Allocation (GSA) to help make fair and consistent decisions about how much service a person can receive.

The rate a home sharing provider receives is based on the GSA level of the Person who would be living in your home. These rates are [posted on CLBC's website here](#). (under the **For Service Providers > Home Sharing Providers** section)

For more information about home sharing provider compensation, speak with your service agency. As part of that conversation, it is also recommended that you discuss other expectations, costs, and supports available so that everyone is clear about expectations prior to the home sharing situation beginning (for example what the person's shelter portion/payment to you will be (using their disability assistance/Persons with Disability funds)).

Important topics to discuss with your home sharing coordinator / agency

- How does respite/breaks from providing support work?
- What transportation support responsibilities and costs are expected?
- Expectations and costs if shared vacations arise?
- Best practice when person sharing the home requires financial support for expenses not covered by other sources?
- Protocol if providing the service results in damage to the home?
- Required home sharing costs: WCB, Criminal record checks and five-year renewals for everyone in the home over 18 years old, required automobile and home or business insurance, First Aid certifications and renewals, required medical clearances.

Making the shared home a success

Getting ready and starting home sharing

No matter how much you talk things through ahead of time, there will be unexpected things that come up when you are sharing a home with someone, especially with someone new. For home sharing to work, everyone must be open to working through the challenges that come up when people live together.

The more time you take to get to know each other before sharing a home, the better. Spend time together to find out more about each other, your interests, and experiences, so you can see each other as people. Have coffee, make and share a meal together, go to events together, do sports or other activities together. Many people also find it helpful to do “trial runs.” This might look like a day, a weekend, or a week together here and there – or more regularly – to see if sharing a home makes sense for everyone involved. This is usually done as respite situations.

It is also important to get to know each other's family, friends, and others who could be involved in the home you share.

Sometimes, finding creative ways to share information about each other with each other (like your interests, dreams, goals, likes, dislikes, wants, needs, and the important people in your lives) is helpful.



Relationships

We know from people already living in home sharing that when there is a strong relationship between the person and home sharing provider, the home sharing situation is more successful long-term. If you did not have a relationship before, this is a chance to build a new relationship as you begin sharing a home with each other.



Commitment

Every strong and supportive relationship is built on a commitment to one another. Each person in the relationship needs to be clear about why they are in the relationship and what they expect. This commitment to each other will help when things are difficult.



Social life and community involvement

Friends, family, and involvement in our community helps to keep us healthy, connected and supported. People without these connections usually have more physical and mental health issues.



It is important that all the people sharing the home build friendships and relationships with others and find ways to be involved in their community. Some resources are referenced at findsupportbc.com/map while others will be specific to your community or situation.

Part of a home sharing provider's job is to know about the community – both the things it can offer and the ways the person sharing your home can share their gifts and strengths.

Home sharing coordinator's support

Home sharing coordinators (and the agencies they work for) are important people that help shared homes be successful.

Home sharing coordinators help the person plan what they want and need in their home and their life, in ways that they would like to plan. These plans might be about interests they have that they want to learn more about, finding paid work, attending university or college, making friends, joining sports teams, or other ways they'd like to be involved in their community.



Home sharing coordinators also check in about how things are going to make sure the shared home is working for everyone and that the person is getting quality support that meets their wants and needs.

They make sure you are following the rules and expectations for home sharing providers (standards, policies, and other documents). They help keep communication lines open between everyone involved. And they can help solve disagreements or other challenges that come up when sharing the home.

The regular involvement of the home sharing coordinator is another way to keep the shared home working well.

Communication, communication, communication

Finding continued success in sharing your home is about communication. Saying how you feel, talking regularly, talking about what's working and what's not is important for everyone to be successful in the home.



When persons, home sharing providers and home sharing coordinators are communicating and tracking important issues (i.e., documentation that demonstrates the start of dementia) things usually go well. When they aren't, that's when the challenges can happen.

Self care and taking breaks

Being a home sharing provider has an impact on you and the other members of your household. While there are many positive benefits and opportunities, there can also be stresses and challenges – physical, mental, and emotional.



Doing things that help you to take breaks, de-stress, rejuvenate, and maintain your own health and wellness will help you to support the same for the person with whom you are sharing a home.

When you are entering into a home sharing agreement, it is important to understand your options and plan to take breaks. Some home sharing providers hire a respite provider regularly to cover home sharing responsibilities so you can take a break. Some take a longer, annual break or periodic breaks at times that work for everyone in the home. Ask your agency what self care materials and supports they have.

Helping the person feel safe to say what they think

For communication to work, everyone needs to feel safe saying what they think and talking about what's working and what's NOT working. This can be hard for persons who have had negative experiences when speaking up for themselves in the past.



Many persons talk about their fear of speaking up or disagreeing with others. They share that they are afraid that if they speak up, they could lose their home, be treated differently, or hurt or upset people they care about. Some persons have learned that it is best if they “don’t rock the boat.”

Talk to the person you are sharing your home with if they seem afraid to say what they think, or to disagree with you or other people. Explain that you are interested to learn what is working and not working for them so you can continue to improve their experience. Remind them that you want to support them to have a full and fulfilled home life.

What to do if things aren't working well

When a conflict arises

Sometimes differences of opinion or other conflicts arise. The best way to prevent them is through frequent and frank communications. Don't let little things that are bothering you go by. Be proactive. Bring them up in a non-accusing way, using problem-solving techniques.



Don't let things
that are bothering
you go by.



Some Tips:

- Always talk to the person you are having the problem with first. Don't gossip about the problem with others.
- Give the person a chance to state their side of the story and try to understand their perspective.
- Listen actively and look for ways to resolve the situation.

These practices can often lead to a simple solution, which can prevent the problem from becoming bigger and adversely affecting your relationship with the person and/or family. Often finding a mutual solution to a difficult situation helps to build trust and strengthen your relationship. If you cannot solve the problem yourself, contact your agency coordinator for help with an approach, and for support to resolve the situation.

Ensure you have a copy of your service agency's conflict or dispute resolution process for situations that require a more formal approach.

When something hard happens in your life or in the person's life

All of us have hard and unexpected things happen at different times in our lives.

When you or the person you share a home with are dealing with something hard, it can affect the home sharing situation. If it's something big, it may take a while for things to get back to normal. Sometimes, things might not get back to normal.



When hard things happen that affect the home sharing situation, your biggest support is the agency home sharing coordinator. Part of their role is to help when you are experiencing a crisis. They can help you and the person you are sharing a home with get the help you need. They may also involve others to help – like family or supporters, CLBC, and other community and government supports, like those found here:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/resources/other-provincial-organizations

When the relationship is no longer working

Like any other relationship, things can change and sometimes the relationship needs to come to an end. It is okay if you no longer want to be a home sharing provider. This is the choice you have. It is important to follow the guidelines in your contract and let your agency know as soon as possible, so you can plan the move away from your home together with the person and their supporters in the least disruptive and most effective way possible. Working closely with the agency, the person and their supporters during this time is crucial to their ongoing success.

For more information and helpful resources about home sharing:

Visit the CLBC Website: www.communitylivingbc.ca

CLBC newsletter link: www.communitylivingbc.ca/whats-new/newsletters/

CLBC home sharing provider page link:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/for-service-providers/home-sharing-providers/

Visit the BC CEO Network Website: www.bcceonetwork.ca

Contact Your Local CLBC Office: www.communitylivingbc.ca/contact/local-offices/

DRIPA / B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples

WorkSafe BC: www.worksafebc.com/en

PLAN Lifetime Networks: www.plan.ca

Persons with Disabilities Assistance (PWD):

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/disability-assistance

Nidus: www.nidus.ca

Registered Disability Savings Plan: [Registered Disability Savings Plan \(rdsp.com\)](http://RegisteredDisabilitySavingsPlan.rdsp.com)

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee:

www.trustee.bc.ca/Pages/default.aspx