**ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL HOUSING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY**

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Objectives:

Many adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Ontario find it difficult to obtain and maintain appropriate housing that address their behavioural needs. This is especially true when an individual shows aggressive, self-injurious or destructive behaviour, which can be referred to as ‘exceptional behaviour’. While there is no single underlying contributing factor for this exceptional behaviour, few studies have examined how it may be a response to the built environment or physical elements of a home. Therefore, the objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe the physical space and design arrangements of residences across Ontario that provide high support housing for persons with IDD and exceptional behavioural needs.
2. Identify key elements required for successful residential placement of persons with IDD and exceptional behavioural needs
3. Determine resident and staff outcomes in high support housing models in Ontario

Method:

This study used a mixed methods approach and collected qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data included nineteen key informant interviews conducted to identify physical space adaptations in Ontario high support homes. Key informants included clinicians, home staff members and persons with IDD.

We collected and analyzed quantitative data from five case studies. Collaborating community agencies provided information such as resident’s frequency of hospital admissions, serious incidents, and use of PRN medications. In addition, architectural drawings of each home and environment were created.

Results:

The most common themes identified in key informant interviews were environmental adaptations, and safety of the client and staff. Successful environmental adaptations included separate living spaces for residents, seamless floor material, and bungalow-style homes, rather than homes with stairs.

Architectural diagrams of case studies depict housing at the level of the neighbourhood, building and room. Neighbourhood diagrams reflect the homes proximity to amenities and green space. Building and room diagrams reflect the layout of a home such as communal spaces versus private, and level of security. Case studies also portray key elements within the home, such as toilet adaptations, and accessible showers. Data on hospital admissions, serious incidents and PRN medication are pending.

Discussion/Conclusions:

Despite the existence of specialized homes to address exceptional behavioural needs of individuals with IDD in Ontario, we lack knowledge about the physical environment adaptations that have been put in place. In order to respond to the increased demand for high support residential options and to successfully discharge individuals from hospital into the community, we need to understand what works and what does not. The study findings will be used to create a useful checklist tool to assess the presence and quality of key physical or design elements in residences.

As discussed in the Ontario Ombudsman report, ‘Nowhere to Turn’ there is a need to “engage in research and consultation across the developmental service and health sectors with a view to developing residential resources that meet the exceptional needs of individuals whose extreme behavioural challenges….present placement challenges”. This project helps to address that gap with the broader goal of guiding government and agency decision making.