

HOUSING THROUGH AN AUTISM LENS: A PATHWAY FROM CRISIS TO SOLUTION

December, 2021

National Network Prototype

As a result of a year of work in the Solutions Lab as well as the national context, there is momentum and interest in building a national network focusing on housing. This National Network would have a shared goal to change the outcomes of housing for autistic adults across Canada. This collaboration is committed to sharing perspectives, resources, time, and talent towards improving housing outcomes for autistic adults.

The purpose and core concept description

The National Network will harness the relationships and connections of Solutions Lab participants to continue the conversation about Housing through an Autism Lens and ways to influence change, for individual autistic adults, organisations, and public policy. The Network could involve activities including workshops, webinars, resource depositories, and working groups.

Who can help bring the prototype to reality and key partners?

The Solutions Lab participants comprise agents of this prototype. Their continued engagement and participation are essential. It also involves project partners to hold this space, build infrastructure, and host network sessions and events. At present, the network includes designers and architects, organizations that support autistics, policy makers and advocacy organizations, and autistic adults and their caregivers.

Guiding questions and new ways of thinking

There needs to be a space to continue learning and collaboration. Although no housing experience for autistic adults is the same, there is a lot to be learned through sharing stories and successes, evaluations, and ideas for the future. It is guided by the question of how we can foster the voice of autistic adults and reduce the silos amongst organisations and policy makers to improve housing outcomes.

Next steps and implementation

We need to formalise the Network governance and coordinator positions and determine how to transfer the HAL partnerships and relationships. Two National Network hosts have already self-identified from the lab.

Limiting beliefs, challenges, and how could this fail?

The hosts of the Network are essential to its coordination, implementation, and success. The Network is limited by their capacity and capabilities. Additionally, the Network must strive to harness and build upon the relationships made throughout the lab. The sessions must be interactive, participatory, and purposeful to add value to the existing work in this space. The Network must also ensure that it is centred by the autistic voice and self-determination. It must have autistic advisors to direct how the Network operates and the content it shares.

