

Preparing For A Move

The lead-up to a move can bring mixed feelings. It can be exciting, but there's also a lot of logistics to work through.

This section offers ideas on what can help during this time, like managing payments, building routines, practicing skills, and lining up the right supports.

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Understanding rights and responsibilities

Clear information and communication can instill confidence, support decision making, and help prevent misunderstandings.

Here we offer tips to make rental agreements and tenant rights and responsibilities easier to understand.

Get familiar with the housing agreement



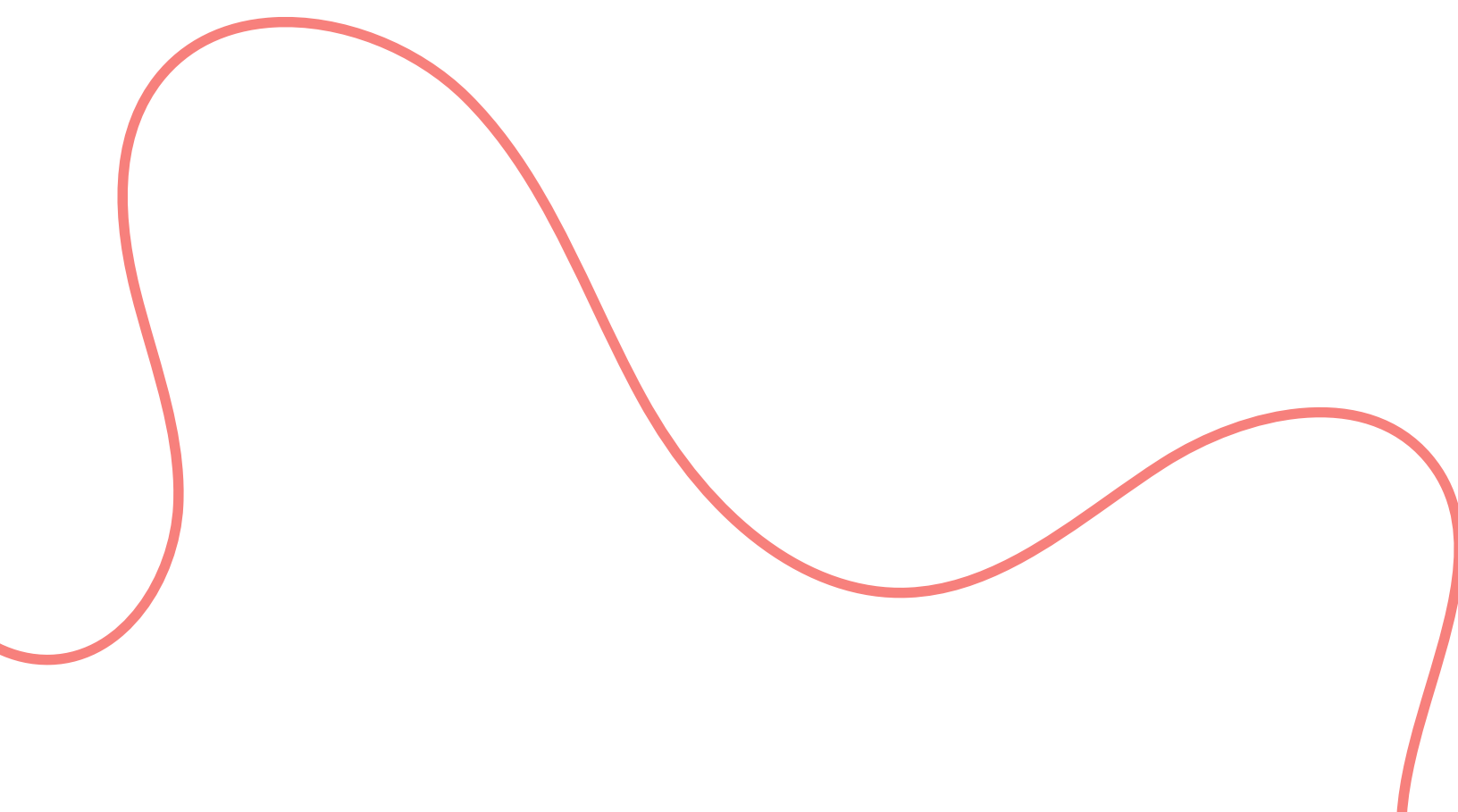
Insight: We heard it's important for property managers, landlords, and tenants to take time to understand and familiarize themselves with the full rental agreement. It's a key legal document and knowing what's in it helps everyone understand the responsibilities, and roles from the start.



Tip: Connect with a housing advocate or legal aid service for support to understand your lease, your rights as a tenant, and fair housing laws. They can also help with resolving disputes or addressing concerns around accessibility and discrimination.



Application: Check out our tips on [Understanding Rental Agreements](#), a tool that explains key elements of a rental agreement in a simple way.



Understanding Rental Agreements

Rental agreements can be confusing and overwhelming because they often include complex language, legal jargon, and small details that vary depending on the province and housing provider. For many Neurodivergent renters, this can create barriers to understanding expectations, asserting their rights, or feeling confident in the decisions they're making.

Using clear, plain-language explanations and taking the time to walk through key points can go a long way in building trust, reducing misunderstandings, and supporting successful tenancies.

Here is an example of how common details in most rental agreements can be communicated in a clear, simple way.



What you'll pay and what's included:

- Rent is usually due on the 1st of each month.
- You may be asked to pay first and last month's rent upfront before moving in.
- Landlords can't ask for extra deposits for things like pets or cleaning fees.
- You can ask for a rent receipt at any time.



What landlords are responsible for:

- Keeping the home in good repair, for example, maintaining heat, plumbing, and smoke alarms.
- Making sure important services like hot water and electricity are working.
- Giving at least 24 hours' notice before entering the home (unless it's an emergency)



What you are responsible for:

- Paying rent on time and in full.
- Keeping the home clean and avoiding damage.
- Letting the landlord know if something breaks.
- Following basic rules like quiet hours or no smoking areas.



Moving out or being asked to leave:

- You usually need to tell the landlord in advance if you plan to move.
- Landlords need a legal reason to ask you to leave and must follow a formal process.
- Landlords can't lock you out or shut off your utilities.
- You have the right to a hearing if an eviction is being considered.

Need help or have questions?

- Have another person go over the lease too, just to make sure everything makes sense
- Contact a legal clinic or tenant support line for free advice
- Visit the provincial Landlord and Tenant Board website to learn more

Encourage clear communication about housing agreements and contracts



Inclusivity: Contracts and agreements often contain a lot of legal terms. Making these documents easy to understand by offering them in accessible formats, writing in plain language, and providing visual guides benefits everyone.



Tip: Review lease agreements with a trusted support person or housing coordinator who can explain key terms and answer questions.



Tip: Make sure the housing agreement explains what happens if a tenant misses a payment or ends the lease early, since these common situations can involve fees, notice periods, or legal steps.



Application: Check out our [10 Tips for Communicating in Plain Language](#).

10 Tips for Communicating in Plain Language

1

Know who will be reading or using the document

2

Separate the content into small sections with headings

3

Use short and simple words

4

Put the most important information first

5

Only have one idea in each sentence

6

Don't use different words to describe the same thing

7

Avoid abbreviations and acronyms

8

Leave space between sentences and paragraphs

9

Use pictures to explain the content

10

Ask people who will use the documents to review it

Managing housing payments

Managing money can be one of the trickiest parts of maintaining a home. That's why it's useful to do a bit of prep before moving in, to build skills and routines. Whether it's setting up reminders, automating payments, or talking through how life changes affect budgets, these strategies build confidence and reduce stress.

Create a plan for rent and bill payments



Inclusivity: Having a plan for paying bills before taking on that responsibility can prepare people for managing future bills, avoiding late fees, and keeping essential services like heat and water running.



Tip: Create a visual guide to understand the amount, timing, and method of each payment. For example, identify whether the bill is paid online, in-person, or through a service provider.

- Use calendar reminders or a checklist to review scheduled payments regularly.
- Set reminders to update billing addresses or cancel payments to previous services when moving.
- Set end dates for pre-authorized transfers to avoid overpayments.

Talk about how life changes can affect budgets



Insight: We heard that life events like starting a new job, going back to school, or changes to benefits can impact income and monthly costs.



Tip: Discuss how income, bills, and other essential supports might change. Using real-life examples can make it easier and more relevant to talk about.



Application: Check out our [Starting a “Just in Case” Fund](#) conversation prompts to help you think through and talk about building a small emergency fund.

Starting a “Just in Case” Fund

Life happens. Sometimes unexpected things like needing time off work, a surprise utility bill, or something breaking down at home can cause stress, especially when money is already tight.

That’s where a small “just in case” fund can help. This doesn’t have to mean saving a huge amount. Start with what feels doable. Even setting aside \$10 a week can make a real difference over time.

We get that saving isn’t always easy, especially with the financial barriers many people face. Therefore, this isn’t about doing it perfectly, it’s about making a simple plan and taking steps.

Suggested prompts for personal reflection or family conversations

It’s okay to not have all the answers. These prompts can support planning ahead in a way that feels doable.

What would count as a “just in case” moment when we could use it?

Where would we keep the money so it’s easy to access but not tempting to spend?

What could this look like for me or for my family?

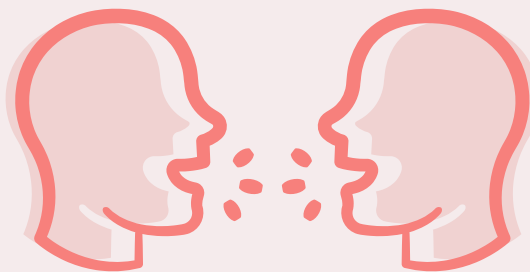
Would it help to check in monthly or quarterly to talk about it?

Is there a way to make this automatic, like a recurring transfer?

How can we avoid dipping into it for other reasons?

How much could we realistically set aside on a weekly or monthly basis?

Is this scheduled this every payday or when benefits come in?



Building confidence with everyday tasks

Daily routines like cooking, laundry, and cleaning can feel more manageable when they're broken into smaller steps. Practicing ahead of time can build comfort and confidence, making the move into a new home feel smoother and less stressful. Here are practical ways to build those everyday skills and routines.

Practice skills like cooking, cleaning, or laundry before the move



Insight: We heard that building comfort with day-to-day tasks can ease stress during housing transitions. This might look like practicing meal planning, building a grocery list or learning to use an appliance.



Tip: Break tasks into steps and practice them in the current living space.



Tip: Try the Pomodoro technique to break tasks into focused work and rest periods. It involves choosing one task to work on for a set time, like 25 minutes, followed by a short 5-minute break. You can use a visual timer or search “Pomodoro timer” online to help keep track.

Talk through what daily activities might look like in the new space



Insight: We learned that it can be helpful to discuss what might be new or different in a new environment. Part of this should include talking about daily activities like cooking, getting ready, or managing chores.



Tip: If possible, visit the new space and plan how to set it up to make daily routines easier. For example, when thinking about cooking, consider what supplies are needed and where to store them to support the flow of the task.

Setting up support systems ahead of time

Moving to a new home often means setting up or adjusting supports. Here we offer practical ways to make sure the right services are in place, from healthcare and transportation to meal prep or daily living. Planning ahead can prevent gaps and reduce stress.

Make a checklist of support services to transition to the new home



Insight: We learned that not all supports automatically transfer to the new home location. That means that gaps in supports might happen if they are not coordinated in advance.



Tip: Ask current support providers about what needs to happen to ensure a smooth transition of the services.



Application: Check out our fillable template, [Keeping Track of Your Supports During a Move](#), to stay organized and connected with supports. Find it on page 29.

Add supports to match the needs in the new home



Inclusivity: A new home often means new routines and new support needs to help with daily tasks. This can be especially true in the first few months of the transition.



Example: We spent a lot of time with Autistic people talking about supports when moving into a new home to make sure that daily living and household needs were being met.



"I can't use meal delivery services anymore, and I can't always find someone to drive me to the grocery store, so someone who comes in and stops you from falling through the cracks is integral."



They also shared that a local community program geared towards independent living taught them how to use the bus system, organize their house, and cook simple meals.



"A friend of mine who just stays next door and in case of any issues which need fixing like maybe under the sink, or furniture and such, that friend of mine is there and can help me."



They shared how having someone to assist with small household maintenance tasks was very helpful when they moved out on their own for the first time.

Talk to health professionals who support people in their home



Inclusivity: Some health and support professionals can help people set up their home in ways that work better for their daily routines. For example, occupational therapists can spot areas where changes or tools can make a big difference in day-to-day life.



Tip: View our [Housing Ecosystem Map](https://nihouse.ca/ecosystem/) (<https://nihouse.ca/ecosystem/>) to learn about different roles in the housing ecosystem and how they can support Neurodivergent people.



Tip: Ask healthcare providers or local health services for referrals.

Connect with the local community before the move



Insight: We heard that feeling connected to a community plays a big role in how happy people are with their housing. Being able to recognize familiar places and faces can make the new surroundings more comfortable.



Tip: Arrange to meet local service providers, tour the neighbourhood, or attend nearby events.



Tip: Seek out someone who can show people around the neighbourhood, and guide them to places like medical clinics, libraries, grocery stores, or fitness centres.



Application: Check out our [Web of Connections](#) template to think about the people and places that are part of daily life and housing experiences.

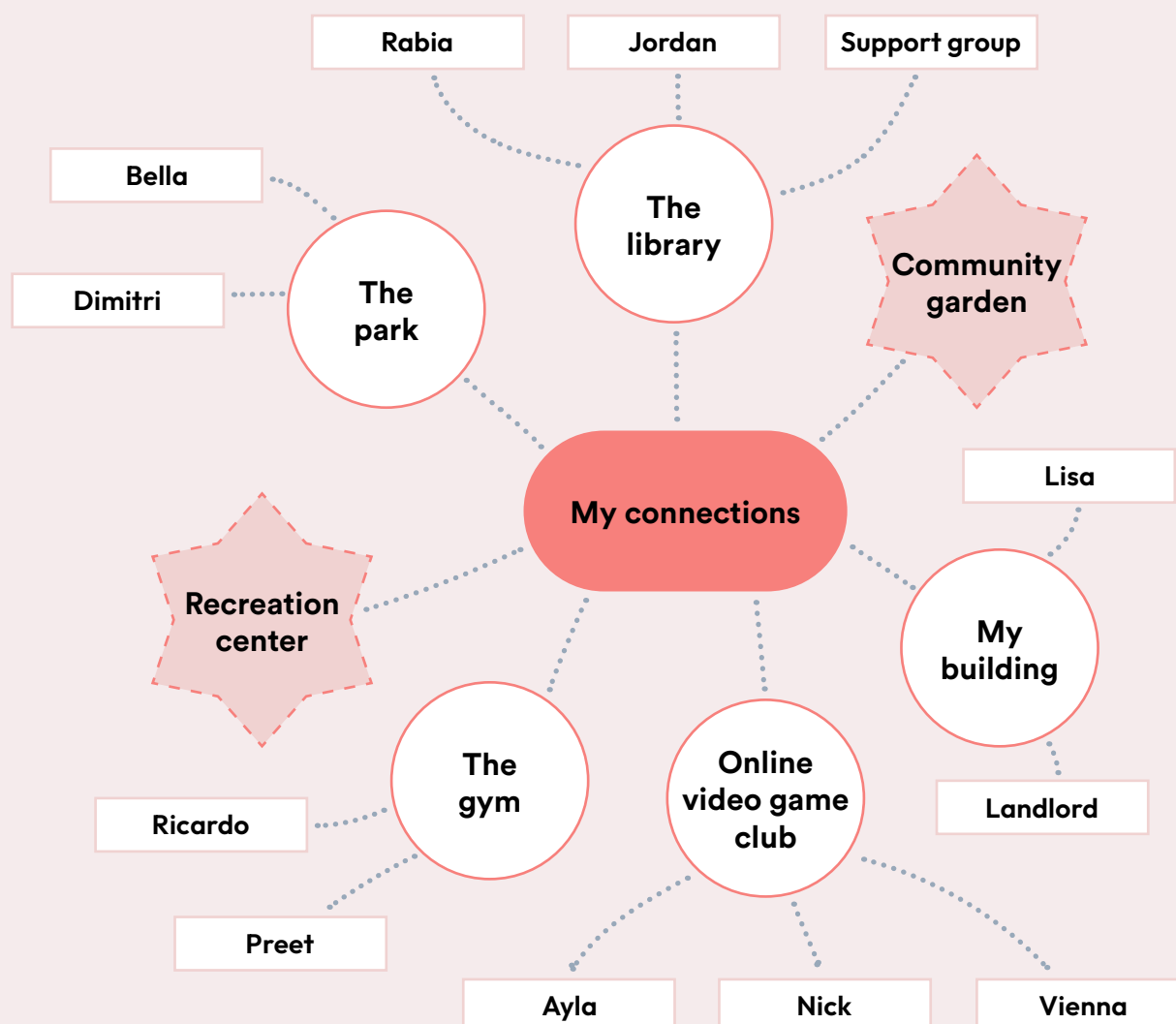
Web of Connections

Thinking about the people and places that make you feel connected can be useful in your current or new home. That's why we created this tool for mapping out and exploring your current connections, with the potential for adding future connections too.

We started with circles to show the places we felt connected to. Then, we used lines and boxes to link those places to the people we connect with there. We used stars to identify places in our community that we haven't explored yet, which are opportunities to make new connections.

We've included an example of a completed Web of Connections, along with a blank template.

You don't have to use circles, boxes, or stars for your own Web of Connections. Use whatever symbols, shapes, and drawings you like to represent the places and people you connect with.



Blank version

