

Housing Through an Autism Lens

CTLabs - Lansdowne Consulting Group, Ottawa

NEWS RELEASE

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Addressing the housing crisis for Autistic adults

New 'solutions lab' tackles urgent problem

OTTAWA – A new initiative funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. aims to better understand the housing crisis facing Autistic adults across Canada and develop solutions to address major gaps between their needs and what the current housing market provides.

Housing through an autism lens: A pathway from crisis to solutions is an 18-month project to identify and address barriers faced by Autistic adults – especially in young adulthood and as they enter their senior years – in acquiring and maintaining affordable and stable housing that meets their needs.

“Long-term housing and independent living are elusive concepts for many Autistic adults, and that has to change,” says Pari Johnston, project founder and parent volunteer. “The first step is recognizing that there are many vulnerabilities and complex needs. I know from personal experience that innovative, integrated and collaborative housing solutions are required. The current crisis-driven housing support model fails to provide that.”

The *Housing through an autism lens* project will use a ‘social change lab’ process to explore the problem and develop potential solutions. Social change labs are designed to address complex, sticky problems by including representation from the entire system in question. They are exploratory and evidence-driven in nature. This lab will prototype and test promising ideas as potential solutions to the housing crisis.

The initiative initially aims to capture 300 to 500 mini-stories of housing experiences from those with lived experience, caregivers and other stakeholders. While drawing on experiences and insights from across Canada, the project will look for solutions particular to Ottawa, where significant shortcomings in meeting the housing needs of Autistic adults have been identified. Findings will then be shared with stakeholders across Canada, to support change and inform policy development in more communities.

Housing through an Autism lens is funded through CMHC's National Housing Strategy and led by 12 partner organizations and a group of Autistic self-advocates. For more information on the project, please visit www.HAL-Lab.ca or contact Fiona Wright, CTLabs/The Lansdowne Consulting Group 613.236.3333 x302, fiona@ctlabs.ca.

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Media Contact:

To book an interview with a member of our project team or one of our self-advocate project advisors, please contact:

Helen Murphy
Broadhorns Communications
613-608-8749
creative@broadhornscommunications.com