

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Lived Experiences of Residents in Designated Supportive Living

November 2021

The HQCA interviewed **27 residents** from **18 designated supportive living sites** across Alberta from January to March 2020.

These experiences are presented in *The Lived Experiences of Residents in Designated Supportive Living (January to March 2020)* report, available at:
→ www.hqca.ca/DSLExperiences



PURPOSE

To understand what contributed to residents' experiences, and to explore if their experiences differed based on whether they lived in a high- or low-ranking site according to the Overall Care Rating the site received from the 2019 HQCA *Designated Supportive Living Resident Experience Survey*.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Most important to each residents' experience was understanding and honouring them as a person.



This 2020 province-wide study was in follow-up to the 2017 HQCA *I'm Still Me: The Lived Experiences of Residents in Designated Supportive Living* pilot study that was conducted in the Calgary Zone.



By better understanding residents' experiences, leaders, operators, and staff can learn how best to support residents as individuals throughout their entire designated supportive living journey.

KEY FINDINGS

1

Residents' experiences are generally similar

In general, **residents shared similar experiences with respect to transitioning into and living in designated supportive living**, regardless of age, sex, geographic location, site rank, and how long they lived in their home. In some specific instances, differences were present and are described in the report.

KEY FINDINGS, CONTINUED

2

Residents' expectations are linked to their lived experiences

When residents moved into designated supportive living, they **evaluated their current experiences against their expectations**, and decided whether their expectations were met or not. Notably, some residents did not have any expectations.

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“I was told what was going on before I moved in. I had no surprises.”

3

Moving to a new home is challenging

Residents **often** experienced:

- their move as a sudden and major life event;
- a lack of choice and knowledge of their new home; and,
- a loss of their previous home.

Despite these challenges, moves were **made easier** when they were supported by:

- welcoming and helpful staff; and,
- family who helped them set up the suite, visited regularly, and provided emotional support.

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“I couldn't live at home anymore. Because I couldn't handle it. But I stayed home as long as I could. My doctor kept telling me that I better think about it. And I did... But then I ended up...in the hospital.”

“

“[My family] brought me here... and kept coming back and looking after me...They knew I couldn't cope, when I first came in here... it made the transition much easier for me.”



KEY FINDINGS, CONTINUED

4

Residents adjust at their own pace

Residents **adjusted more easily** when they:

- accepted and managed change;
- lived their life in familiar ways; and,
- had a sense of community through friendships with residents and staff.

Residents **adjusted less well** when they:

- were unable to live their life in familiar ways and develop friendships;
- had to learn to live with other people and adapt to new routines; and,
- felt isolated in their new home.

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“They let you be yourself. You don’t have to fit into any mold or this kind of thing.”

“

“I’m not allowed to have a shower on my own...It took me a long time to adjust to that.”

5

Common factors influence residents’ experiences

Residents’ **experiences were more positive** when they had:

- personal relationships with staff;
- timely and proficient care;
- a home-like environment; and,
- access to engaging activities and socialization.

Residents’ felt there were **opportunities to better**:

- align the meals and dining service with their preferences;
- maintain their autonomy in the ways they desire; and,
- address their concerns and feedback.

“

“They’re all really super nice, and they listen to you, and they care about what you’re saying.”

“

“Old people, as a rule, don’t like modern food, so why do they force them to eat it?”

PATHS TO BEST EXPERIENCES

The key findings revealed **opportunities to facilitate more positive experiences throughout residents' transition into designated supportive living** and beyond. These paths to best experiences are described in the report.



THANK YOU

The HQCA would like to thank all residents who shared their experiences. Your voices provide invaluable insights about how to improve the lives and experiences of people like you in designated supportive living.



About the HQCA

The Health Quality Council of Alberta is a provincial agency that brings together patients, families, and our partners from across healthcare and academia to inspire improvement in patient safety, person-centred care, and health service quality.