

## WHAT DO LANDLORDS RECOMMEND?

### SUCCESSFULLY HOUSING PEOPLE STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH OR ADDICTION



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**Quality of Life**  
**CHALLENGE**

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE is diverse community partners working together to generate long-lasting solutions that prevent and reduce poverty in BC's Capital Region. The CHALLENGE recently connected with landlords who house people with mental health and addictions issues about strategies that allow them to successfully house this population. This paper highlights ways for landlords to successfully house people struggling with mental health or addiction.

#### **Be Informed**

Understanding what addiction and mental health issues are allows landlords to provide compassionate housing. Know which resources are out there and who to call when a crisis occurs.

#### **Get a Referral**

BC Housing and Pacifica Housing offer a pre-screening process and tenant support. Through the referral process, landlords have the opportunity to know the outreach worker attached to their tenants.

*"We need to know who to call in the case of an emergency or crisis. These workers can provide information for us and have an idea of what is going on for a resident so that we know what to expect from them."* - Victoria landlord

#### **Be Flexible**

With a referral, landlords can be a bit creative in the tenant selection process as they can't always do things by the book. For example, many landlords do not require ID, a credit check or references when they have a referral, understanding that people with mental health or addictions issues often do not have supporting documentation. Offering month to month leases is also helpful.

#### **Set Rules**

Landlords state rules when new tenants arrive, and in some cases, have tenants sign house rules. Many landlords allow residents to do as they please in their own units if it does not put other residents or the building at risk, and as long as they respect other residents' quiet enjoyment of their units.

*“We try to make our building rules very clear and speak to our residents more than once before we consider evicting, especially those who have addictions or mental health issues.” - Victoria landlord*

While some properties do not allow friends to visit, others allow overnight guests.

*“We just have to be firm that the friends are the tenant’s responsibility. If there is a problem, we call their worker and talk to them and let them know there have been complaints. If that doesn’t help we follow Residential Tenancy Act guidelines to evict them.” - Victoria landlord*

### **Create a Community**

Whether it is hosting a monthly meeting with the tenants, organizing outings to recreation centers, or simply taking the time to listen to a person’s story, developing a sense of community really works.

*“We get to know the person really well. We feed people a lot, and at Christmas we host a big turkey dinner and give little gifts to those who don’t have anyone to celebrate with. We really try to treat people like family.” - Victoria landlord*

While housing people with mental health or addictions has its challenges, there are many landlords in Victoria who are giving people a chance to build pride and self-esteem by providing a place to live.

*“If you think you want to help someone with mental health or addictions issues, take a chance; try, and maybe you can help someone turn their life around.” - Victoria landlord*

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For more information on the CHALLENGE [www.qolchallenge.ca](http://www.qolchallenge.ca)