Choices in Housing

When most people think about community living for people with developmental disabili-ties, group homes come to mind. This was true in the past; however, group homes are now only one of many options available for community living.

There are many housing and living arrangements available to someone transitioning from a developmental center. The list of options is growing as community provider agencies and DDD are working to provide creative solutions to meet individual needs.

A person’s housing choices are based on the type of living arrangement that best suits him or her. These choices are to live:

- in rented housing that is in his or her own name and hire his or her own staff;
- at home with family;
- in rented housing that is in his or her own name with an agency managing and providing supports;
- in a group home (no more than 4 people with their own rooms) or supervised apartment where the agency provides both the housing and the supports.
Privately Owned Home or Apartment
A person may choose to live in a privately-owned home or apartment. This may be an apartment or home he or she rents or they may chose to live in their family home. Supporting staff can be managed by the provider agency under the “provider managed” path, or by a person and his or her team under the “self directed” path.

Supervised Apartments and Supported Living
Supervised apartments are community-based apartments that are generally shared by two individuals. Full-time staff is nearby in the apartment complex and may assist in budgeting, cleaning, shopping, etc.

Supported living
Supported living arrangements are similar to supervised apartments, but supportive living staff may not be located on the premises or within the same apartment complex, depending on the residents’ level of need. Staff can be available 24 hours a day, as needed. Traditionally, supported living has been offered as a provider-managed support in apartments/housing owned or leased by the provider agency. While this is still available, a new option in housing is “provider-managed supported living,” where the housing is leased by the individual, and supports are managed by the community provider agency.

Group Homes
A group home is typically a single-family style home, shared by four people and each person has their own bedroom. At a group home, staff is typically nearby or on premises 24 hours a day, seven days a week, depending on the residents’ needs. Individuals living in group homes may attend day programs, work outside of the home, volunteer, or create their own daily schedule of activities.

Lifesharing
Lifesharing is actually sharing a home and building a relationship between the person and the lifesharer. This can be done in the person’s home or in the home of the lifesharer forming a caring and mutually supportive household.

The Project is in collaboration with the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities

Community Living Education Project (CLEP)
School of Public Health
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
335 George Street, Suite 2200
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Telephone: (732) 235-3277; Toll-free: 800-500-0448; Fax: (732) 235-5434
web.sph.rutgers.edu/linkweb; clep@sph.rutgers.edu