

My Life, Your Life, Our Life

A guide to Shared Living

Easy Read version



How to use this document



This document is written in an easy to read way.
We use pictures to explain some ideas.



The document has been written by WA's
Individualised Services (Wais).



When you see the word 'we', it means Wais.



This Easy Read document is a summary of
another document.



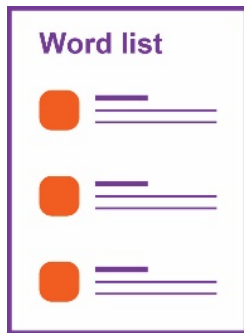
You can find the other document on our website at
[www.waindividualisedservices.org.au/wais-
publications-and-resources/](http://www.waindividualisedservices.org.au/wais-publications-and-resources/)



There are some words we use a lot in this document.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 5.



Some other words are written in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean too.

There is a list of these words on page 41.



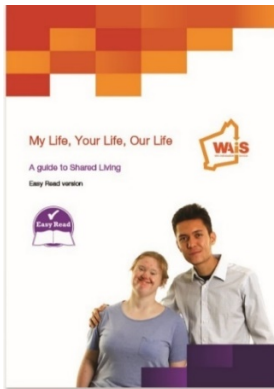
You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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Some words you need to know

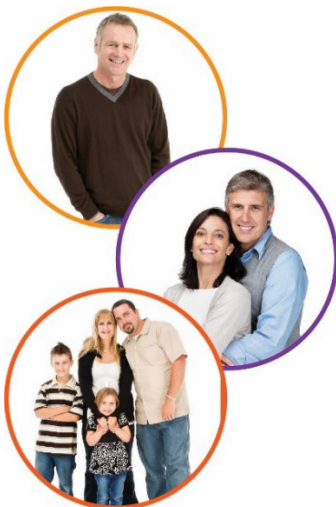


There are some words we use a lot in this document.



It's important to understand what they mean.

Shared Living



You share a home with:

- one other person
- a couple
- a family.



You might live in:

- your home
- their home.



You build a strong relationship and share your lives.



The person or people you share with offer you:

- support
- time together.

Shared Living Supporter



A Shared Living Supporter is the person or people you share a home with.



Your Shared Living Supporter could be:

- one person
- a couple.

Support Organisation



An organisation that gives support to people with disability.

Understanding Shared Living



Strong, trusting relationships with people who care about us, keep us safe in life.



Our lives are much better when other people:

- know us
- look out for us
- are there during tough times
- celebrate with us
- share happy times with us.



Everyone needs to feel:

- like they belong
- connected to other people.

We feel like we belong through:



- our close relationships



- our families



- our friendship groups



- connecting with other people who like the same things we do



- taking part in the community.



Shared Living is a way to:

- connect with people
- support each other
- share your lives.



Shared Living is good for everyone:

- the people who want support
- the people offering support.



Shared Living can give you and your supporter:

- new opportunities
- new experiences.

The Principles of Shared Living



There are 6 important ideas behind Shared Living that help make it work.



We call these the **Principles of Shared Living**.



1. Belonging and connection – you have the right to build relationships and connect with other people



2. Independent living – you can live an ordinary life



3. Self-determination – you can be in control of your own life and make choices about how you live



4. Flexibility – you can decide how things should be done so they suit the way you want to live your life



5. Choice – you can choose where and how you live



6. Trust – you can be trusted as an equal partner in your relationships.

How does Shared Living work?



Co-residency is when you share a home with someone and build a relationship with them.



We call them your Shared Living Supporter.

There are two ways to do this:



- you move into your Shared Living Supporter's home



- your Shared Living Supporter moves into your home.



There are many different ways that Shared Living can work.

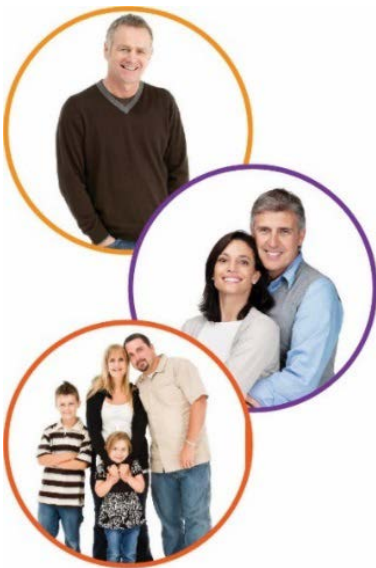


Everyone has different needs.



Your Shared Living arrangements need to work in a way that suits you.

You might live with:



- one person
- a couple
- a family.

Your Shared Living arrangement might be:



- all of the time



- some of the time



- during the week



- on the weekends.



You might need **Practical Assistance** or **Personal Assistance** as part of your Shared Living arrangement.

Practical Assistance is help and support to get things done such as:



- cooking
- shopping
- taking care of your home.



Personal Assistance is help and support for your:

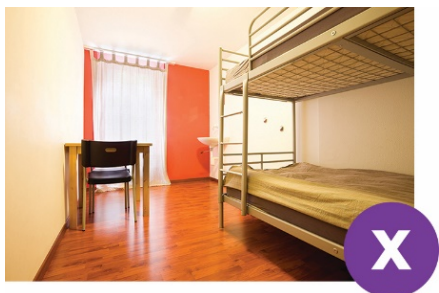
- emotional needs
- personal care.



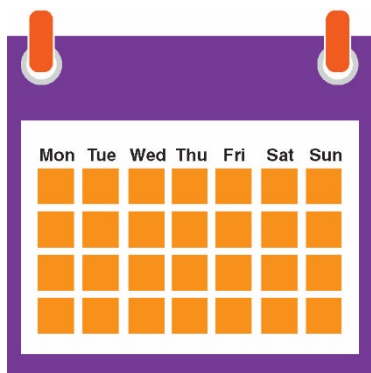
You might need extra support from other carers or support workers for some of the things you need.

What Shared Living is not

Shared Living is not:



- a hostel or group service



- a place where paid support workers come and go according to a work roster



- a group home for people with disability and carers who live there.

The benefits of Shared Living



There are lots of good things people can get from Shared Living.

We call these **benefits**.



A Shared Living arrangement should have benefits for all the people who take part.

Some of the benefits are:



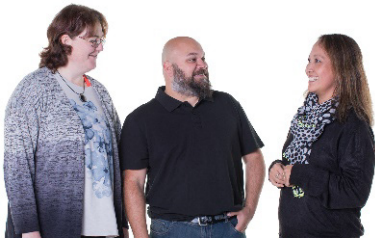
- having a home



- feeling like you belong



- being part of a relationship



- sharing life experiences



- deciding how things should be done so they suit the way you want to live your life



- connecting with others



- feeling like you are equal to other people



- being safe



- being supported.



Some Shared Living arrangements offer payments or other benefits to the Shared Living Supporter.

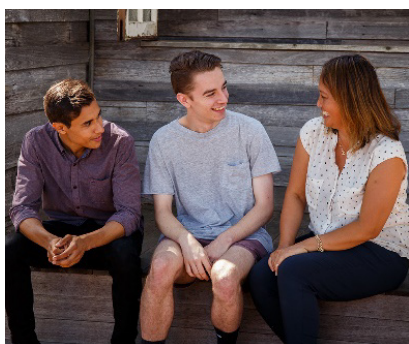
Who is Shared Living for?

People

Shared Living is an option for people who:



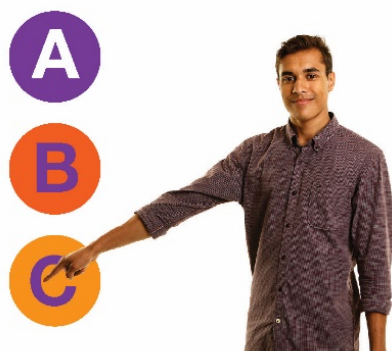
- want or need support



- want to spend time with other people



- want to offer friendship and support to others



- want to have more choice and control over their life and the supports they use



- want to be respected as an expert in their own life



- base the choices they make for their supports on what they want



- set their own goals and how they will achieve them.

Members of the community

Shared Living is an option for members of the community who are:



- committed to including someone who needs support in their:
 - life
 - home



- willing to share their:
 - lives
 - family
 - friends



- keen to experience the benefits that are offered



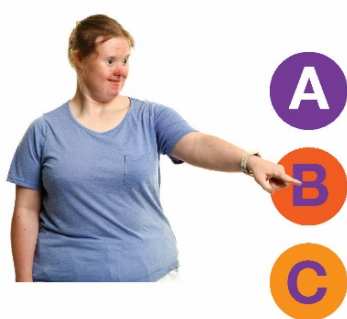
- willing to offer more than just:
 - Practical Assistance
 - Personal Assistance



- prepared to support someone in the decisions they make.

Support Organisations

Shared Living is an option for Support Organisations that are willing to:



- develop ways to give people choice and control in how they use support



- offer arrangements that are different to normal support worker arrangements



- support people to build relationships that are more than what support workers normally offer people



- problem solve



- work in a way that is not as straightforward as the way things are usually done



- work with people as part of a real partnership based on:
 - respect for each other
 - shared understanding
 - honest communication



- make sure everyone is safe and protected.

What makes Shared Living work well?

There are 4 main things that make a Shared Living arrangement work well:



- finding a good match that can make a strong connection



- offering each other respect and understanding

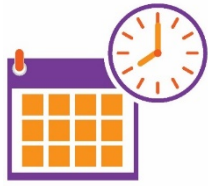


- commitment



- being open.

Finding a good match that can make a strong connection



It can take a while for a Shared Living arrangement to be developed.



A lot of time is needed to make sure a Shared Living Supporter is the right person.

You need to find out about someone's:

- values
- beliefs
- culture
- interests
- experiences.



People need to be honest about these things.

You might need to talk about topics that make you feel uncomfortable.



You need to think about how much you are willing to share about yourself and your life.



Offering each other respect and understanding



Many people choose Shared Living because it gives them a chance to build strong relationships with other adults.

These relationships can be built by sharing with each other:



- things you like to do
- things you are good at
- support
- respect
- understanding.



A Shared Living Supporter needs support to make sure they have the right knowledge and skills to offer what the person wants or needs.

Commitment

Everyone must be committed to a Shared Living arrangement, including:



- you
- your family
- the Shared Living Supporter
- the Support Organisation, if there is one involved.



Everyone needs to understand what is needed to make a Shared Living arrangement work.



Problems and issues come up when people live together.



Everyone needs to be prepared to work through them.



Everyone needs to build trust and a strong relationship with each other.

Support Organisations involved must be committed to giving their:



- time
- effort
- ongoing support.

Being open



People in a Shared Living arrangement need to be themselves.

They need to feel safe to talk about what is working and what is not working.

Support Organisations need to be clear about:



- what their role is
- how much support they can offer
- what might go wrong
- how to handle any problems that come up.

Developing and supporting Shared Living

There are different stages for developing and supporting Shared Living:



- explore and understand



- finding a way to make Shared Living succeed



- finding the right person to share a home with



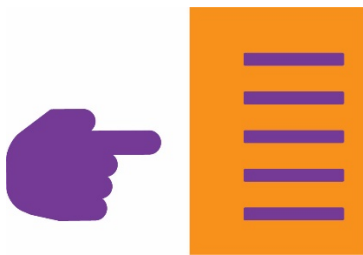
- getting the Shared Living relationship started



- making it work



- checking how things are going.



We talk about each stage on the following pages.



The information is designed to help you.



However, what works for you might be different.

Explore and understand

During this stage, you need to understand:



- how Shared Living works



- how it will work as part of your life.

There are important things to think about during this stage:



- understanding and knowing:
 - who you are
 - what you are looking for
 - what a good Shared Living arrangement would look like for you



- looking at whether Shared Living is the right arrangement



- understanding the best way to offer support while a Shared Living arrangement is being developed



- having good conversations that help you understand more about Shared Living.

Finding a way to make Shared Living succeed



During this stage, you need to work out what a good arrangement would look like for you.



Shared Living arrangements are more successful when people work together to create the right one.

There are important things to think about during this stage:



- working together with other people can help you come up with the right Shared Living arrangement for you



- working out what type of home would be most suitable, including:
 - the kind of property – a house, a unit or a flat
 - where the home is located
 - the community the home is in
 - the features the home has
 - things about the home that might need to be changed



- who would be the right person to share a home with



- the risks that need to be dealt with



- the safeguards that are in place to protect you.

Finding the right person to share a home with



During this stage, you need to find the right Shared Living Supporter.



The people who are part of the Shared Living arrangement need to meet and get to know each other.

This takes time.

There are important things to think about during this stage:



- checking to see if the person is right for the job



- building a relationship and getting to know each other



- preparing a **Shared Living Agreement** – a document that explains how the Shared Living arrangement will work and what is involved.

Getting the Shared Living arrangement started



During this stage, plans are made to get the Shared Living arrangement started.



Things don't always go to plan though, so everyone needs to be:

- flexible
- supportive.

There are important things to think about during this stage:



- doing things at a pace that works for everyone involved



- looking at the Shared Living Agreement and:



- making sure it is right
- making any changes that are needed



- building everyone's confidence that the Shared Living arrangement is right and will work well



- learning to live together.

Making it work

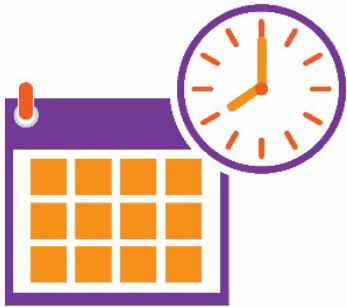


It's important to make sure the Shared Living arrangement can be successful into the future.



People need to develop real trust so they know they can rely on the relationship for support.

There are important things to think about during this stage:



- learning happens over time



- support might be needed when it comes to decision making



- understanding:
 - how you communicate
 - what helps when others communicate with you

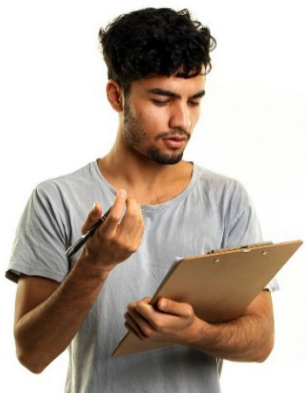


- problem-solving and finding a result that works for everyone is important



- routines could become boring – you might need to look at interesting opportunities and try new things.

Checking how things are going



The Support Organisation, if there is one involved, needs to look at how well the Shared Living arrangement is working.



You and your Shared Living Supporter need to be included.

They need to look at:



- what is working



- what needs to change



- new opportunities to explore.

There are important things to think about during this stage:



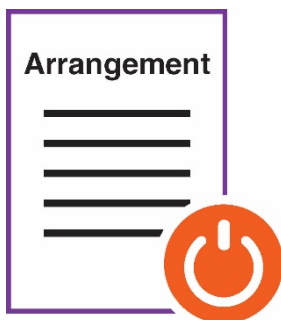
- what is working well and what is not working well



- building a life outside of the arrangement so you don't rely on your Shared Living Supporter for everything



- changing the arrangement



- ending the arrangement.

Word list



Benefits

The good things people can get from Shared Living.



Co-residency

When you share a home with someone and build a relationship with them.



Personal Assistance

Help and support for your:

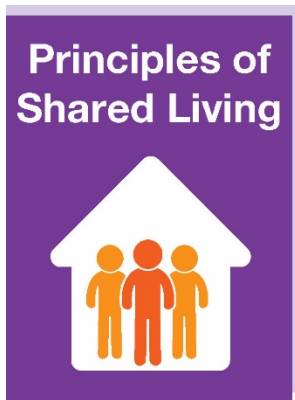
- emotional needs
- personal care.



Practical Assistance

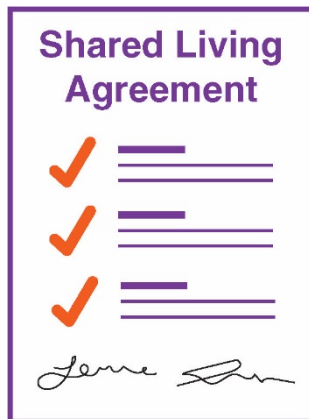
Help and support to get things done such as:

- cooking
- shopping
- taking care of your home.



Principles of Shared Living.

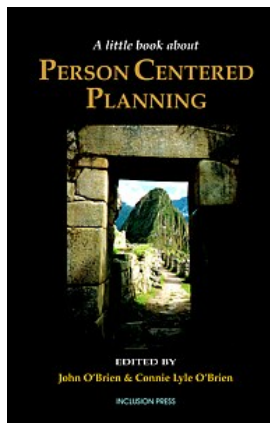
The 6 important ideas behind Shared Living that help make it work.



Shared Living Agreement

A document that explains how the Shared Living arrangement will work and what is involved.

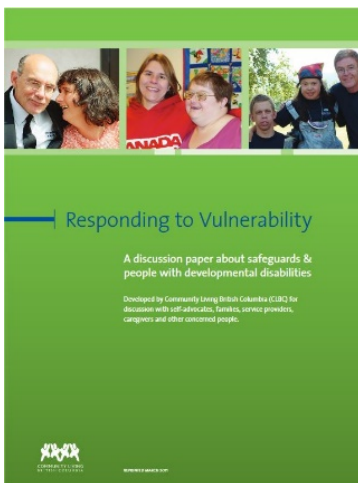
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