

Two women are smiling at the camera. The woman on the left has long brown hair and wears glasses and a dark top. The woman on the right has long brown hair and wears a blue top. They are in a room with shelves in the background, one of which has a framed photo of two children.

## Tip Sheet

# Settling in to Your New Home!

Since 2003, Belonging Matters has walked alongside many people with intellectual disability and Autism to move beyond traditional group home living to imagine and create a home of their own. Following are some tips we have learnt along the way from people who have settled into their own home.

## Preparing to Move

- ✓ Start conversation early and make the idea of moving out of the family home part of everyday conversation.
- ✓ Use the example of siblings or friends moving out as a guide or something to aspire to.
- ✓ House sit for others as a way to trial living out of home.
- ✓ Parents could go on short holidays and leave their son or daughter to take care of the family home and the 'team' to provide support and assistance.
- ✓ Go on holidays with supporters and take more responsibility, eg. preparing meals, deciding what to do for the day, etc.

## Moving At Your Pace

- ✓ Spending time doing day to day things in the new home, whilst still sleeping at the previous home.
- ✓ Get to know a housemate that you plan to move in with while familiar supports are around, eg. going out for dinner, watching a DVD at home together, staying over one night in your new home. Then just catch up together without other supports.
- ✓ Take whatever time is needed to feel secure and safe. This might mean staying a few nights per week and increasing it over time or having a trusted friend, ally or support worker sleep over for a few nights.

# Tip Sheet

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## Settling in to My New Home

- ✓ Discover how to spend time in your new home, eg. doing hobbies that do not require support, creating spaces of familiarity and comfort.
- ✓ Spending quality time with your housemates.
- ✓ Honour important rituals and routines but at the same time recognising that new routines and rituals might be established.
- ✓ Decorate your home the way you prefer and create your own ambience, eg. familiar personal items, décor, pictures, albums, music, foods, plants, art work.
- ✓ Call your home 'my home' and rename your previous home, eg. 'my parents' home'.
- ✓ Have a housewarming celebration and invite your extended family and friends.
- ✓ Do things that create warmth and welcome. For example, host a dinner or party, have a housewarming celebration, have friends over.
- ✓ Establish good social and reciprocal connections with neighbours. For example, introduce yourself, invite them over for a cuppa, lend items, offer to do odd jobs if neighbours are away, exchange contact details, looking out for one another.
- ✓ Get to know your local neighbourhood. For example how to get to places, travel and transport options, walk around the area, visiting local shops, introduce yourself and becoming known, join local groups and clubs, become a regular at the local coffee shop.
- ✓ Establish and maintain other social connections. For example, invite and host a meal for your family and friends.
- ✓ Take up valued and meaningful roles in community to offer your skills and meet new people. For example, join the local gardening or walking group, volunteer at a local group you have an interest in, get a job locally.

## Reflect, Review and Try New Things

- ✓ Take the time you need to settle in, one day you will call your new place home.
- ✓ If something is not working, do not throw out everything. Take time to reflect and find new ways to do things.
- ✓ Planning is ongoing. Allow yourself to change and grow, reflect, review and try again.