



Resource Packet On Shared Living Arrangements For A Person With A Disability

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Questions from Rhode Island about Shared Living Arrangements

- How does VT do Shared Living Arrangements?
 - VT started shared living arrangements when we closed our institution in the 80's. It is the most popular residential option used in VT. We have very few group homes. No one wants to live there.
 - Shared Living Providers are independent contractors. They are NOT employees of an agency. They are paid a non-taxed stipend called a difficulty of care payment according to Adult Foster Care rules. They get the stipend and they get room and board from person's Social Security. Since they are NOT employees there are no rules around how many hours the person works in a week.



Questions from Rhode Island about Shared Living Arrangements

- **Who monitors?**
 - Case managers are supposed to visit once a month
 - Under the new Home Care Act, it narrowed the home care exemptions. The person with a disability cannot have their own apartment and have the shared living provider live with them. Also in the past the provider was able to pay a stipend for a weekend of respite but now respite workers are paid hourly wages.



Questions from Rhode Island about Shared Living Arrangements

- Where can a person go if an Shared Living Arrangement doesn't work?
 - Yes a person can of course you move out if they want.
 - Agencies have a database of potential Shared Living Providers
 - And of course the person has to move out if the shared living provider does not want to provide services anymore.
 - If it is an emergency, then the person may go to live temporarily with an Emergency respite provider or they might have to stay in some sort of crisis placement



Questions from Rhode Island about Shared Living Arrangements

- Any advice you can share with us? Things to watch out for as the system makes a definite PUSH for them instead of other residential support options.
 - Get in regulation how many people with disabilities can live there and make sure the state enforces this rule. In VT no more than 2 people can live with a provider.
 - We consider shared living to be a high level of supervision and in Vermont people tend to get stuck here and do not move on to more independent housing supports because it is cheap to do. So make sure people have a real chance to move on to get their own place if they want it.
 - There are real training and supervision issues because the shared living provider are NOT employees of an agency. So labor laws restrict the agencies from providing close supervision and training because then it looks like they are employees.



Questions from Rhode Island about Shared Living Arrangements

- Any advice you can share with us? Things to watch out for as the system makes a definite PUSH for them instead of other residential support options.
 - Beware of “wrap” services. In Vermont to save money they give all the direct support money to the Shared Living Provider. And then the shared living provider hires and supervises the respite workers and the community support workers (people who work with the person during the day). This means the agency have very little contact with the person and we fear it can be unsafe.
 - Make sure the case manager does at least one in-home visit a month. How else can you know what is really going on.
 - Make it part of the contract that shared living providers must have a land line for a phone. Or make it a rule that if there is no land line the person with a disability has to have a cell phone and know how to use it.



Questions from Rhode Island about Shared Living Arrangements

- Also, do people have the ability to have a "reverse SLA" and have a person move into their home instead of vice versa? (the answer is no – Topper will explain)
 - This is complicated.... It involves the:
 - Fair Labor Standards Act
 - and also the Adult Foster Care Federal rules (which basically means the staff person does NOT get wages. The money they get is basically called a difficulty of care payment and that is why they do not have to pay income taxes on the money they get.)



Questions from Rhode Island about Shared Living Arrangements

RI asked: Some people say that shared living with a family is less restrictive than living in your own place with staff coming in often to support you?

VT said: Not True!

** Shared living is much more restrictive than living in your own place. In Shared Living you will most likely need to accept someone's routine and activities. It typically reduces the choices in your life.

** Remember that Shared Living providers are not parents and should not play that role.

** Sometimes you'll have more money. There is a set amount you pay for shared living. And it could be cheaper than living on your own or with a roommate.

Sample Ads for Shared Living Providers

Young man in his early 20's with mild autism is seeking a home in a village setting. He has a strong interest in gaming, role-playing, anime, and film making. A single person, with similar interests or open to learning, would be a great match. He would like support in improving daily living skills and developing a social network. Tax-free annual stipend of \$27,300, room & board of \$8,500, plus respite budget. Call ...

Shared Living Provider for recent high school grad with an intellectual disability and some gender identity issues. This farm raised backwoods Vermonter seeks similar lifestyle. Likes all animals. Wants to get connected to peers, plays guitar, writes songs, and loves country music, hiking, fishing, smoking and coffee. At times needs significant emotional support because of past trauma. Experiences a manageable level of auditory hallucinations. Desires to feel safe, learn skills, and maintain her job. Generous tax-free stipend w/respite budget, room & board payment. Contact ...

Shared Living Provider needed for a 31 year old woman with a mild intellectual disability. She enjoys art, the Red Sox, music, animals, shopping and being outdoors. Would like to adopt an older cat. The ideal home would be with a single, grandparent-y type with no children living at home who can dedicate significant time working towards her life goals and healthy relationships. Generous tax-free stipend of \$25,000, room & board payment of \$8,500, plus respite budget. Contact

Making good decisions about where to live:



- What are my choices?
- What might I need help with?
- What's important to me?
- How much will it cost?
- Is it safe?
- Have I talked about this with people I trust?

4 different styles of living

1. Living with a family or couple in their home who are paid to support me (called Shared Living Provider or arrangement):



2. Living with a roommate who is paid to support me and living in their home (also called shared living arrangement)

3. Living in my own apartment where staff visits



4. Living with a roommate where staff visits us

1. Living with a family or couple in their home who are paid to support me (called Shared Living):



- You can feel like you're part of the family.
- You don't need to have a lot of furniture.
- People are around.
- It may be easier to pay bills.
- They might help you with transportation.
- You could learn social skills from the people you're living with



- You might not feel like you fit in with the family.
- The home is already decorated and there are already "rules", so you might feel like it's not your home.
- Do you want a family around? Are you comfortable being around children or pets?
- How do you end the relationship if it's not meeting your needs?
- The family could decide that they don't want you to live with them anymore.



2. Living with a roommate who is paid to support me, living in their home (also shared living)



- You could make new friends through your roommate.
- You don't need to have a lot of furniture.
- This doesn't feel as much like having "staff".



- You might not get along with your roommate or their friends.
- New friends may not be "safe". There's a greater chance that people can take advantage of you.
- Is your roommate a friend or staff? This can be confusing.

3. Living in my own apartment where a support person visits me often



- You have privacy.
- You have freedom to do things your own way--decorating your apartment any way you want to.
- You can decide to have friends over when you want.
- You control your money.
- The phone, food, and everything else is yours.
- You have a lot of responsibility.
- You still get support from a staff person.
- Having a smart home is the way to go. Check out this video –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuHLj2U0SMQ>



- You might feel lonely.
- New friends may not be “safe”. There’s a greater chance that people can take advantage of you.
- The staff person might visit you too often or not often enough.
- It can be challenging to deal with neighbors, friends who are around too often, etc.
- It can be stressful to manage your budget and take care of your home.





4. Living with a roommate where a support person visits us often



- You can share expenses.
- There is someone around for companionship.
- You have the experience of living in the community.
- You have help with the budget and household chores.
- They might have furniture to help decorate the home.
- You still get support from a staff person.
- Two people living together- can combine their support hours



- Even if you know the person, it's often difficult to get along with a roommate.
- Your roommate might be messy, loud, not pay their bills, or do other things like this.
- It can be stressful to share the responsibility of managing your budget and take care of your home with someone.
- You need to get good advice about finding the right Section 8 voucher or apartment for 2 people