

PERSONAS

Personas are fictitious stories that highlight real themes of needs, barriers, and wishes that emerge from hanging out and listening to people affected by an issue. Stories and personas can help us empathize and see needs and barriers in different ways than simply a report. It is important to recognize that no persona can capture all the nuance and experiences of people. They are not meant to capture all of human experience. Be careful of using the personas as an oversimplification of needs and barriers. However, the persona stories below highlight where some of the gaps and opportunities lie within two diverse housing and inclusion journeys.

Below are two personas which shed a bit of light on understanding some of the common experiences, strengths, and needs of the segment of folks we are designing with/for. The two personas and their journeys are built upon research and conversations with family members of people with developmental disabilities, service providers, housing experts, and advocates. They represent common archetypes of who we will be designing with and for, but we acknowledge that there may be new scenarios, needs, and journeys discovered through the Housing Solutions Lab. We would also like you to notice tensions between system perspectives and individual's hopes, wishes and inclusion and belonging needs. Often these aren't aligned as well as everyone might hope.

For example, support workers in a system might have their support laid out in a transactional way because they have 9-5 jobs and need to see people in chunks of time during a day. A person they support might not need support from 2-3pm with employment support, what they might more deeply need is a person they can rely on, trust and call anytime to talk about an important issue, problem solve something and make some healthy choices.

Always be looking and asking yourself, what is deeply needed, what biases do I have that might get in the way of seeing what is really needed by people.



BACKGROUND

Taryn is a cheerful and caring young woman in her late 20s. She loves animals and music. Taryn has two sons who are 2 and 5 years old that currently live with her parents. She loves spending time with her children and values close relationships. Taryn would like to live close to family and friends, and have access to a green space as she hopes to get a dog.

Over the last year, Taryn has experienced homelessness after a string of evictions from apartment living arrangements due to missed rent payments. Taryn seeks and values close relationships, however sometimes illegal activities by guests to her home have also contributed to evictions. The need for relationships is a strong human need and often trumps safety. After accessing PDD services, Taryn was connected with a community service provider and has found housing in a scattered site supportive model. In this model, she lives in her own apartment in a community apartment building and can access support from a paid support worker when she needs it. The community apartment building is open to a variety of different community members (i.e. not just for people with disabilities). There is an office on the main floor where 24/7 people can drop by, connect and ask for any support that’s needed. Paid support workers are also available by phone 24/7 and

regularly check in with Taryn in person and over the phone. Taryn would like to see her children more often, however due to the location of her new home, she faces transportation barriers and is far from neighbourhood amenities for a young family.

SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

Support Currently Looks Like

AISH recipient (\$1685/month)
Designated as having complex service needs and receives daily support through PDD funding
PDD contracted support from a service provider
PDD approved for 25 hours/week.

***Taryn is able access 24/7 support as a result of having her funded hours combined with the hours of other PDD funded tenants in the building.*

Housing Status

Newly housed in a scattered site supportive housing model.

Work Status

Unemployed, faces barriers to employment but wants to work

Health Status

Struggles with managing and understanding substance use issues

TARYN'S PERSPECTIVE

Hope and Desires

- ▶ Finding and accessing stable housing
- ▶ Having choice and freedom in housing
- ▶ Living in one place for a while
- ▶ Find stable employment
- ▶ Develop trusting relationships with support and neighbours
- ▶ Strong connections with her community, culture and family

Physical & Support Needs

- ▶ Control over when and where she receives support
- ▶ Help with time management (scheduling and short- and long-term planning), budgeting (paying bills and for essential goods and services), meal planning, healthy interpersonal relationships, personal hygiene and managing and understanding substance use issues
- ▶ Support with problem solving challenges that emerge on a daily or weekly basis

Inclusion/Belonging Needs

- ▶ Choice in her housing journey and freedom in her own space to reflect her identity and values
- ▶ Home close to playgrounds and other child-friendly spaces to spend time with her children and meet other families
- ▶ Opportunities to participate in cultural and community activities
- ▶ Having people in her corner as allies and supports to help her thrive
- ▶ Opportunities of being able to contribute her gifts in her community and recognized for those contributions
- ▶ Some support to not just be “in” community, but has support to help her be “of” community-with relationships and connections
- ▶ Reconnecting with her culture and healing traditions

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ How do we create choice in affordable and supportive housing?
- ▶ What if there was a model that allowed for choice in when and how people access supports?
- ▶ How do we build connection and interdependence between housing, natural and paid support models?
- ▶ How can we help her have a deeper sense of belonging and relationships?



PERSONA #2

Karim

BACKGROUND

Karim is a very active young man who loves to swim and be in nature and works a couple hours a week at the local movie theatre. He has mainly lived with his parents and dreams of owning his own home. His family is able to contribute financially to a down payment, but Karim would have to be able to afford the mortgage on his own. Currently, owning a home doesn't seem possible on Karim's budget.

Karim accesses AISH and Family Managed Services funding through PDD and was recently able to develop a creative roommate situation. Karim's mom manages staffing, funds and the relationships with PDD for receiving FMS funding. She spends about 30 hours a week (unpaid by PDD) managing staff issues, payroll and coordinating shifts so that Karim can have his own place and support. Karim's parents are 66, about to retire and concerned about who will look out for Karim when they are not around. Kareem now lives in a privately rented house with a supportive roommate without a disability. Karim's roommate receives free rent and Karim's family pays out of their own pocket an additional \$500 stipend per month in exchange for being available at night to support Karim and help Karim stay connected. Karim's PDD funding

pays for a support worker 20 hours/week to assist him with his various activities. In order to find an affordable solution, Karim had to move further away from family, services, and amenities. His housing situation works well, but apart from his roommate, he feels isolated, disconnected from family, and experiences barriers to inclusion in his community.

SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

Support Currently Looks Like

AISH recipient
Family Managed Services funding through PDD
PDD approved for 20 hours/week at approximately \$21/hour.
Supportive roommate

Housing Status

Newly housed with a supportive roommate

Work Status

Employed part time

Health Status

Healthy, Active, Autism

KARIM'S PERSPECTIVE

Hope and Desires

- ▶ Home ownership
- ▶ To continue working at the local movie theatre
- ▶ Proximity to parks and greenspaces to meet other nature enthusiasts
- ▶ More opportunities to meet, connect, and build meaningful relationships with peers

Physical & Support Needs

- ▶ Receives Family Managed Services support funding through PDD
- ▶ Support with preparing meals, taking care of his home (e.g., staying on top of chores), and interpersonal relationships
- ▶ Access to services and amenities within his community
- ▶ Independence and control over his own space

Inclusion Needs

- ▶ Remain close to friends and family
- ▶ Community activities and spaces to connect with others and build new relationships
- ▶ Freedom in his own space to reflect his interests, identity, and values
- ▶ Opportunities to contribute his gifts and passions in his community and be recognized for those contributions
- ▶ Opportunities for continuous exploration, learning, growth, and new experiences to foster identity throughout his life

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ What is finding a house vs. finding a home?
- ▶ What if there was a housing model that allowed for individual space and communal living?