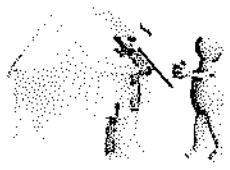


## THE HOUSING CRISIS AND FINDING MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In the South Okanagan especially Penticton we have seen a huge increase in our homeless population. As a front line worker (Outreach Support Worker) with the Brain Injury Society I am constantly getting asked "Where are all these people coming from?" Most of our newly homeless are not new residence of Penticton or the South Okanagan. Most of them have lived here for many years and some even grew up here, but now find themselves homeless. Why is this? It surely is not because they choose to be homeless, are lazy, or drug addicts. It is because the housing market has exploded. With more people needing housing, and less places available, landlords are evicting lower income individuals, many of these have acquired brain injuries (this also includes people who are the working poor, on CPP or PWD) who can't afford the large increases in rent. Finding ourselves in a housing crisis where there are more wanted ads for housing then rental ads on social media and in the papers. Many communities are looking for solutions; the simple solution is affordable housing or increased number of subsidized housing units that accepts people where they are at. Meaning with a brain injury, a disability or retired with a limited income. There are many models out there to fix homelessness the truth is one standard model doesn't fit all communities. Having more affordable housing that doesn't discriminate towards the working poor, people with disabilities, people on CPP will decrease the homeless numbers. BC Housing has been working hard to create more subsidized housing, they even have made agreements with a couple local motels to hold a certain number of suites for BC Housing clients. This has helped greatly but hasn't fixed our homeless problem. Municipalities are now starting to get more involved with creating subsidized housing but this takes time. In the meantime there are many different organizations in the Penticton community working with these clients trying to help them have their basic needs met.



Links to visit for more information:

BC Housing: [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org)  
Brain Injury Society: [www.sosbis.com](http://www.sosbis.com)  
SOWINS: [www.sowins.com](http://www.sowins.com)  
Access Centre: [www.accesscentre.org](http://www.accesscentre.org)

*Submitted by Angie Eneas, Outreach Support Worker*

## FIVE TIPS TO BEING A GREAT TENANT

In a tight rental market developing a trusting, lasting relationship with landlords really helps in securing and maintaining a tenancy. Here are some tips to being a great tenant and maintaining your relationship with your landlord.

- Be honest on your application – Your credibility is one of your greatest assets as a new tenant.
- Read the tenancy agreement – Ask questions if you do not understand so you know what you've signed up for. Keep a copy in a safe place; know the rules and your rights.
- Say what you'll do and do what you say – Keep appointments with your landlord/property manager. Return paperwork when you say you will. Pay your rent on time, if you are unable to do so communicate this with your landlord and let them know when you will be able to pay. Do not try to sneak pets into your rental unit
- Treat your living space as if it's your own – Let your landlord know if something needs to be repaired or if there is damage. Keep your rental unit clean and tidy inside and out.
- Be a good neighbour – Be respectful of others by keeping noise levels to a reasonable volume; remember others have the right to peace and quiet. If you have pets clean up after them and keep them under control.

Using these tips along with open and respectful communication will aid you in having a successful tenancy. Keep a positive attitude when interacting with landlords, smile, and be open. Don't be afraid to ask your landlord questions about your tenancy; landlords and property managers are there to support their tenants.

*Submitted by Sinead Neary, Housing Facilitator*



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