

Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance

Projecting the Housing Needs of Aging Atlantic Canadians

About ASHRA



The Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance (ASHRA) is an alliance with representatives from universities, seniors' organizations, government departments, housing developers and service providers from the Atlantic Provinces, including Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The project was designed to build a detailed picture of aging Atlantic Canadians and their potential living arrangement needs over the next 20 years, and examine emerging options in housing choices, support services, and policies that can effectively meet them. Three key research products have emerged from the ASHRA project, including the **Report on the Atlantic Seniors' Housing and Support Services Survey (2007)**; **Focus Group Report (2008)**; and **Case Studies (2008)**. This information sheet is one in a series providing information on the key messages that have been extracted from the project results. The focus of this fact sheet is to highlight the ASHRA Survey and Focus Group findings in relation to seniors' social supports. For more information about the ASHRA project and its research activities, visit www.ashra.ca.

Some Seniors do not Have Social Support

Facts about Seniors and their Social Supports



Results from ASHRA's survey with more than 1700 Atlantic Canadian seniors suggest a proportion of seniors do not receive social support that can often enhance one's quality of life. Access to such social support can play an important role in housing decisions.

- Almost 1 in 5 seniors (16%) do not have someone to listen to them when they need to talk.
- More than ten percent do not have someone to turn to for suggestions (12%), do not have someone to give them advice (11%), or do not have someone to help take their mind off things (11%).

Proportion of Seniors without Social Supports



Family is Main Source of Social Support

When seniors receive social support, it is primarily from family as opposed to neighbors/friends or individuals from volunteer organizations or formal agencies. For example:

- 94% of seniors receive love and affection from family
- 92% of seniors receive hugs from family
- 90% of seniors rely on family to give advice about a crisis and receive help from family with personal problems
- 89% of seniors share worries and fears with family and these are the individuals whose advice they want.

Neighbors and friends also play a role in providing social support but in less intimate or personal ways, such as having someone to relax with (16%) or to have a good time with (14%).



Voices of Specific Populations

In 2007, ASHRA researchers conducted 15 focus groups with specific populations, including Francophone, Rural/Remote, Aboriginal, Disabled, and Multicultural seniors. Participants indicated that much of their support was received from family, either through a sense of security or in the form of physical assistance.

"My son takes me wherever I want to go, and when he doesn't, my daughter...comes down."

Aboriginal Senior

Disabled Senior

"I have a son that lives with me. He gave up his career to stay with me...he has given up a lot for me, and I'm very thankful, and I'm very blessed."

"Well, I'm in my own home. I'm a widow. My son lives next door [for] which I'm very fortunate. My four girls are away."

Rural/Remote Senior

Francophone Senior

"I feel secure because my daughter lives upstairs. She is responsible for the house, but not for me because I am still self-sufficient, but still, she lives there and it releases me of the responsibility of maintenance for the house."



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