



Navigating the Differences Between Second Stage and Long-Term Housing

Operating Second Stage and Long-Term Housing Under an Umbrella of Women-Centred Care

While both Second Stage housing and Long-Term housing fall under different models and policies, both can be operated from a women-centred lens that is [violence and trauma-informed](#). The following practices can be used to apply a violence and trauma-informed lens to both housing types.

- Utilize [eviction prevention](#) education and practices.
- Provide tenant/participant supports in both programs and housing.
- Provide cultural supports and programming to create a culturally safe environment.
- Apply [women-centred housing design](#) in all housing that is for women and children with experiences of violence.
- Prioritize engagement and input from women with lived experience to co-create their housing in both the built environment and operations.
- Ensure rent is [affordable](#).
- Design housing with navigating the National Occupancy Standard (NOS) guidelines in mind - ideally ensuring the built environment can be flexible to changing family size and intersectionality. See [Finding Rooms for Families NOS Study Infographic](#) and the [BC Housing directive and Information Sheet](#) about the Application of the National Occupancy Standard for further information.
- Provide training and a safe environment that supports staff to practice and reflect on their work from a violence and trauma-informed lens.

The table below outlines the key differences between Second Stage Housing and Long-Term Housing in BC.

Second Stage Housing	Long-Term Housing
Women are Program Participants	Women are Tenants
Eviction is through Program Agreement	Eviction under the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA)
Transitional in nature: typically stays are between 6 and 18 months	Long-term in nature: Tenancies are long-term with no fixed end date unless defined in the Tenancy Agreement
Units are typically semi-furnished	Units are typically not furnished
National Occupancy Standard Guidelines: More flexibility to not adhere to them	National Occupancy Standard Guidelines: More often applied
Women and children (often an age limit on male children) only in housing	Women-only tenancies are legal however guests cannot be unreasonably restricted under the RTA
Programs set their own security and pet damage deposits	Security and pet damage deposit amounts are outlined under the RTA and there are specific requirements with respect to receiving and returning deposits

<p>Rent is rent geared to income or 30%</p>	<p>Rent under BC Housing WTHSP follows a rent geared to income model calculated at 30%. Other models such as housing co-operatives follow housing charges calculations.</p>
<p>Program Participants take part in programming offered by the organization (sometimes mandatory as part of the Program Agreement)</p>	<p>Tenants do not need to attend programming under the RTA (however some organizations may have an addendum stating programming requirements). Supportive housing programs must be offered as voluntary.</p>
<p>Organization staff work with Participants on a Transition Plan to support them in moving along the housing continuum</p>	<p>Tenants do not work on a Transition Plan but may be offered educational workshops to support their tenancy (e.g. financial literacy, tenancy education)</p>
<p>Organizations operate across a continuum of harm reduction policies and practices which are outlined in the Program Agreement</p>	<p>Under the RTA, tenants are able to use substances so long as they respect the other tenants right to “quiet enjoyment” and do not pose a risk to health/safety or the Landlord’s property</p>
<p>Program Participants can only be away from the Program for a limited amount of time as outlined in the Program Agreement</p>	<p>Tenants can leave their unit for longer periods of time or sublet so long as rent is paid and they have their landlords permission.</p>

Operational Practices to Ensure Your Second Stage Housing is Clearly Transitional

- Document all conversations with program participants when transition to alternate housing has been discussed.

- Use terminology consistent with temporary housing instead of terms used in the RTA (e.g., “program participant” instead of “tenant”, “program agreement” instead of “tenancy agreement”, and “participation fee” instead of “rent”).

- Ensure there is a clear understanding between the housing provider and the occupant that the accommodation is being provided on a temporary basis.

- Ensure that the housing provider is receiving funding from the government for the purpose of providing accommodation.

- Ensure programs are provided to the occupant to facilitate them living independently and clearly outline what is being offered as part of the program in a Program Agreement.

Further Resources

- [Community Legal Assistance Program: Non-Profit Housing and the Residential Tenancy Act](#)
- [NOS BC Housing directive and Information Sheet](#)
- [Sample Residential Tenancy Agreement](#)
- [BC Housing Tenant Handbook](#)
- [Residential Tenancy Branch: Tenancy Videos](#)