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Homesharing 101 *Beginners Guide For Homeowners*

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Homesharing is a wonderful solution for many people – both homeowners and potential housemates – and offers both groups enormous benefits. Financial freedom, socialization and companionship, security, and even help around the house are all advantages of a homesharing arrangement. In some cases, homesharing can even be an alternative for Canadians looking to age in place rather than having to sell their home and downsize.

The decision and circumstances under which a person decides to homeshare varies greatly, however when it comes to timing, generally the sooner you do it, the better. Sometimes, people consider homesharing only after a health crisis or emergency. In these cases, the homeowner's needs are usually too great; a personal support worker or home care agency may be a more suitable option. While task exchange homeshare arrangements are a great situation for those who need a little extra help around the home, that help doesn't include nursing and personal care.

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Add Homesharing to Your Plan

So, how do you know when you're ready for homesharing? If you're open to the idea and the benefits, then it's a good idea to plan for homesharing down the road. Consider homesharing when you hit some of life's major milestones:

- You buy your "forever" home – does the home's layout lend itself to a future homeshare configuration?
- Your children are young – a homeshare arrangement that includes child minding as part of the task exchange may help you reduce your childcare related expenses.
- Your child moves out – the extra income earned from homesharing could help you support your child's post-secondary education.
- Retirement – homesharing is a great option for retirees, especially snowbirds or those who travel frequently. Making it part of your retirement planning will help your retirement dollars go further.
- Your spouse passes away – while it's a difficult conversation to have with your spouse, homesharing offers many benefits to widows and widowers. Early planning before you lose a loved one can make the decision and transition much easier once that loved one is gone.



Sometimes life throws you a curve ball. Ideally, homesharing will become part of your future plans, but in some situations, like a divorce, it can be a great solution to an unexpected crisis. Whether you plan for it or find yourself in a situation where homesharing just makes sense, it's worth considering whether you're ready to share your home. Ask yourself:

- Are you open to sharing your living space?
- Are you willing to invest the time to find the right housemate?
- Are you clear on your expectations around homesharing? This is important! To communicate what you're looking for in a homeshare arrangement you need to first be clear on what you do and do not want the arrangement to look like.
- Are you willing to modify your home or your home's décor?



Which HOMESHARE Arrangement is Right for You?

- Value your space and privacy?
- Or would you love to share a meal a few times a week?
- Looking for someone who shares your interests?
- Wish you had a housemate you could depend on to watch your home while you travel?

Depending on your needs, there are two types of homeshare arrangements to suit different lifestyles:



Task Exchange



Supplemental Income

What is Homesharing for Task Exchange?

With task exchange homesharing two people share a home for mutual benefit, security, companionship, and household help. In lieu of rent (or reduced rent), householders receive companionship and extra help around the house such as light housekeeping or meal preparation for example.

What is Homesharing for Supplemental Income?

With this type of homesharing, two people share a home for mutual benefit, a compatible housemate, and in the case of the householder, a supplemental income.



Is a Task Exchange Homesharing Arrangement Right for You?

As a householder do you:

- Own or rent a property long-term?
- Have a home with a spare bedroom that can accommodate another person?
- Have an interest in sharing your home and living space with another person?
- Want to age in place and live in your own home independently for as long as possible?
- Need extra household support in the form of help around the house?
- Want regular companionship and security to avoid feeling lonely or isolated?
- Enjoy socializing and having extra company around?

As an adult child do you:

- Worry about your parent living on their own?
- Want peace of mind knowing your parent is not alone at night?
- Struggle to balance caring for your parent (and their home) with caring for yourself, your family and your own home?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then consider a task exchange homeshare.



Is a Supplemental Income Homesharing Arrangement Right for You?

As a householder do you:

- Own or rent a property long-term with a spare bedroom?
- Have a home that will accommodate another person?
- Willing to share your living space?
- Interested in a creative financial solution to supplement your income?
- Live independently and do not need additional support for household help?
- Note: We recommend you consider a task exchange homesharing arrangement if you need help around the house.
- Looking for a friendly companion you can share certain activities and interests with?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then consider supplemental income Homesharing.



How To Choose The Right Housemate

At HomeShare Alliance, we realize the importance of choosing the right housemate. Finding a potential housemate who is a compatible fit is one of the largest hurdles for homeowners who are considering a homeshare arrangement. That's why in addition to vetting each person for security and financial purposes, we also rely on a Lifestyle Compatibility Survey, which both the homeowner and housemate take. This tool ensures a compatible fit, and is also used to identify possible conflicts that should be discussed before moving in.

Are You Compatible?

Which information should you consider when you're thinking of living with someone? Whether that someone is a roommate, housemate, friend, family member, or intimate partner, the harmony of your home will depend on how compatible your lifestyles are.

There is a lot to consider when it comes to lifestyle compatibility. Some of the questions we ask are common considerations, like:

- **Household cleaning habits and organization** – do dishes in the sink drive you nuts? Do you clean as you go, or do you prefer to clean up at the end of the day? Everyone has different tolerances and expectations around what is "clean, neat and tidy."
- **Social activities** - especially around home entertaining, overnight guests, how social you are outside of the home, and expectations around social interactions with your housemate.
- **Schedules** – when do you work, sleep, cook, workout, or enjoy social activities?
- **Sounds and noise** – some people prefer quiet, and others prefer background noise at home.
- Feelings around smoking **tobacco** or **cannabis** and drinking **alcohol**.
- **Pets** – are they okay, or a definite no?

- **Allergies** – food, environmental (including scents), and pets are common allergies that are important to consider.
- There are other areas of lifestyle compatibility worth delving into, many of which you may not think about until you've already moved in and found that you and your housemate don't see eye to eye. We help avoid future problems by asking about:
- **Preferred temperature** settings in the home – some people feel cold and like the temperature turned up, and others feel warm and prefer having the temperature at a cooler setting.
- **Home décor style** – those who prefer a modern home with an industrial look may not be comfortable in a house where the décor is traditional or eclectic.
- **Morning routine** – if you like to sleep in, then living with an early riser may be an annoyance.
- **Energy** – Is energy efficiency important to you? If so, living with someone who regularly leaves lights and appliances on may be difficult.
- **Food, culture, hobbies, and interests** – from wearing outdoor footwear inside to music preferences, culture and lifestyle are important considerations for a harmonious living arrangement.
- **Travel** – Do you travel frequently? Are weekend get-a-ways a way of life? Having a housemate at home to keep an eye on things is a benefit of home sharing, so it's worth considering each other's travel preferences to see if a fit is possible.
- **Sleep** – A good night's sleep is an often overlooked element of a happy, healthy life! It's worth discussing nightly sleep routines and sleep habits to ensure you and your potential housemate won't interfere with each other's sleep.

Taking the time to explore the lifestyle compatibility of a potential housemate is time well spent. Doing so will help ensure a better fit, and will contribute to a happy, harmonious living arrangement.

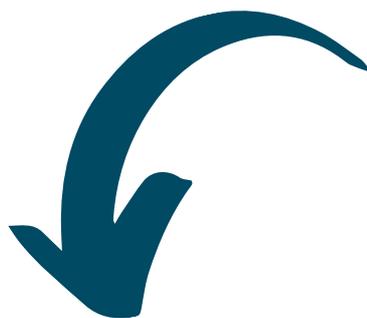




What is a Homeshare Agreement...and why is it different than a rental agreement?

One of the most common misconceptions about homesharing in Canada is that the arrangement between a homeowner and housemate is the same as a landlord and tenant. While there are some similarities, the fact remains that homesharing is not the same because the homeowner and housemate share specific common spaces of the residence (a kitchen, for example). Therefore, from a legal perspective, homesharing does not fall under the Residential Tenancies Act (we recommend visiting Community Legal Education Ontario to learn more about the legalities of home sharing).

So, a lease agreement doesn't apply to homeshare arrangements. **What exactly is a HomeShare Agreement**, then? Good question!





What is a HomeShare Agreement?

A HomeShare Agreement is a document that outlines the expectations of the homeowner and housemate. It is essential to put these expectations in writing. Doing so will ensure clear communication, help avoid problems, and provide a guideline to both parties should conflicts arise.

There is no one standard HomeShare Agreement. The agreement will likely vary depending on the parties involved and the details of the living arrangement. A HomeShare Agreement is one of the services that the team at HomeShare Alliance provides. We'll work with you to help draft a HomeShare Agreement that is customized to your specific preferences and needs.

What is Included in a HomeShare Agreement?

Keeping in mind that the HomeShare Agreement is unique to you and your situation, here are some of the details we recommend including:

- **Term** – From one month to a year or more, outline the term of your arrangement
- **Rent** – Agreements around rent, deposit and payments should be included
- **Inclusions** – Some homeowners include utilities, Internet, hydro, property taxes, etc. in the rent. Make sure you list what is included in the rent and detail how these items will be paid.

- **Space** – Which rooms and appliances are shared, and which are for private use? This includes parking spaces! Write these details down so there isn't any confusion.
- **Occupants** – Who is considered an occupant as part of the agreement? Make sure you discuss and include these details.
- **Insurance** - Most homeowners' property insurance doesn't include the housemate's personal belongings and contents.
- **Liability and damage** - Ensure the responsibility for liability and damage is spelled out.
- **Obligations and Responsibilities** - In a task exchange it's extremely important to set out the housemate's obligations and responsibilities that are included in exchange for subsidized rent. In a supplemental income home share arrangement, it's still a good idea to outline the obligations and responsibilities of each party. From washing dishes to noise levels to purchasing cleaning supplies – in both situations discussing and putting these details in writing will contribute to a harmonious living environment.
- **House Rules** – Is smoking, drinking or recreational drugs a problem? What about having friends over? Are pets allowed? Outline the house rules so everyone is on the same page.
- **Terminating the agreement** – How much notice is needed to vacate the premises or to give notice that the housemate will move out? How and under what circumstances can the agreement be terminated? This is important information to include.

These are just a few of the areas that a HomeShare Agreement covers. Contact the team at HomeShare Alliance to learn more about the strategies behind a successful homeshare arrangement.





In a HomeShare Arrangement, What Qualities Make for a Good Householder?

If you've been living alone for a while, it can be a challenging transition to learn to share your home. Homesharing, which involves having another person live in your household, provides many benefits if you're emotionally ready.

Successfully sharing your home requires flexibility, openness, and sticking to your HomeShare Agreement after your new housemate moves in. Based on our experience, both householders and housemates must act with kindness, honesty and have realistic expectations. While homesharing is geared towards the householder's lifestyle and most householders are very excited to share their home, there are some important things to keep in mind that will help ensure a harmonious homeshare experience.

Nobody's perfect, and as a result, no homeshare is perfect. It's normal to expect a few bumps along the way; mistakes will happen. A good motto for householders is "Don't sweat the small stuff!" Be flexible, communicate clearly, and practice tolerance.

Is your cup half empty or half full? Householders who have the half full perspective usually have successful homeshare experiences in comparison to half empty thinkers, who believe there are always problems to address, no matter how small those problems might be.

Although homesharing doesn't require the same level of hospitality that's expected of an Airbnb host, it is important to make your housemate feel welcomed and an important part of your household.

Householders will sometimes tell us that they are super clean and organized, or don't have company over regularly, when the exact opposite is true. Be honest with yourself during the homeshare journey. If householder's expect new housemates to be honest and upfront before moving in, then they need to be honest and upfront too!

A successful homeshare agreement requires give and take from both the householder and the housemate. If you think you're ready to share your home we'll walk you through the process, find a housemate who is a good fit, and help you make the most of the benefits that draw people to the homesharing lifestyle.

Whether you're ready for homesharing now or are interested in planning for a future that includes this lifestyle, give the team at HomeShare Alliance a call. We'll be happy to answer your questions and help you navigate the world of homesharing.

Whether you're ready for homesharing now or are interested in planning for the future, we'll be happy to answer your questions and help you navigate the world of homesharing. Schedule a complimentary **Discovery Call** to explore options, **advertise your homeshare** and help you decide if homesharing is right for you.



Thank You!

I hope you found this guide helpful for deciding on sharing your home.

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