



livegreen 

# Tenant Engagement on Sustainability: A SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDE

FOR ENGAGING SENIORS, PEOPLE WITH MENTAL AND  
PHYSICAL DISABILITY, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

**Focus on Energy Conservation**  
**Version 1 | March 2014**



BC Housing

## PROJECT PARTNERS

This document was written by BC Healthy Communities Society and is based on the *livegreen* Tenant Engagement on Sustainability pilot project conducted by BC Housing in partnership with BC Healthy Communities Society.



Project co-development, facilitation and tool-kit development

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# SECTION ONE: PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE



## DESCRIPTION OF THE GUIDE

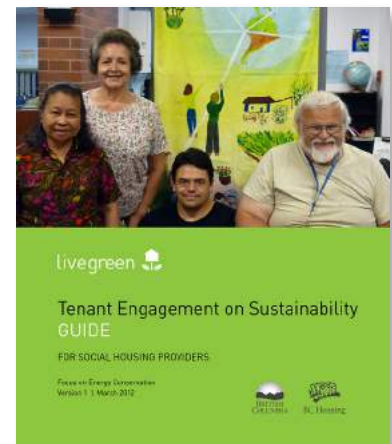
The purpose of this supplementary guide is to offer strategies to engage diverse populations on issues of sustainability. It provides practical resources, an in-depth overview of engagement strategies, and new ideas to build into your tenant engagement initiative. Diverse audiences include seniors, youth, children and families (or age-friendly approaches) as well as people with mental or physical disabilities, and those living in poverty. This guide is for social housing providers/ community developers who are interested in engaging their tenants on issues related to sustainability, such as energy consumption, including reduction in heat, water, electricity, and air conditioning costs, as well as waste diversion and enhanced food security. The guide also provides direction on how to enhance tenant satisfaction and capacity at individual sites.

All of the materials in this guide flow from a pilot project conducted at a few BC Housing sites in the Lower Mainland/Interior regions of B.C. This guide and the associated resources may enhance your ability to meet the unique and diverse needs of people living in social housing facilities.

The previous *livegreen* Tenant Engagement on Sustainability publications include:

- a) **Guide for Social Housing Providers**  
The purpose of this guide is to share practical information and a tested approach for engaging social housing tenants on issues of sustainability, and more specifically on **energy conservation**. It provides practical steps on how to start a meaningful tenant engagement initiative that results in energy savings while strengthening community development. This publication is available from BC Housing at [livegreen Tenant Engagement on Sustainability: Guide for Social Housing Providers](#)
- b) **Facilitators' Handbook for Social Housing Providers**  
The handbook is for facilitators who will be directly designing and facilitating *livegreen* engagement strategies with tenants of social housing. It is a hands-on resource that includes education and social marketing materials plus activity modules. This resource is available from BC Housing at [livegreen Tenant Engagement on Sustainability: Facilitators Handbook](#)
- c) **Communications Materials**  
These materials support the *livegreen* behaviour change objectives for energy conservation, and are available online through the BC Housing website in the aforementioned publications.
- d) **List of Additional Resources**  
A list of supplementary resources for energy conservation behaviour change, and engagement strategies is available through BC Housing in the aforementioned publications.

For more information on the *livegreen* Tenant Engagement on Sustainability initiatives check these two publications.



*livegreen* Tenant Engagement on Sustainability: Guide for Social Housing Providers

## OVERVIEW OF *livegreen* TENANT ENGAGEMENT ON SUSTAINABILITY

This guide consists of four main sections.

**Part 1: What is Tenant Engagement on Sustainability:** This section provides a brief overview of the *livegreen* TES initiative. It expands upon the information presented in the toolkit.

**Part 2: A Deeper Look at Building Capacity:** This section describes *how* to build capacity and engagement in the tenants and yourself throughout the course of the *livegreen* TES initiative.



*livegreen* Tenant Engagement on Sustainability: Facilitators Handbook



**Part 3: Getting Practical:** This section discusses practical tools and tips to create engaging events and initiative to engage diverse audiences.



**Part 4: Sustaining Your Efforts:** This section explores different support models to consider in sustaining your efforts.

The focus of the *livegreen* tenant engagement strategy (and this guide) is to build the capacity of tenants to participate in the tenant engagement strategy on energy conservation, waste diversion and food security through behaviour change.

## What is Sustainability?

'Sustainability' has become a buzzword that encompasses everything from energy conservation to local food initiatives. But what does sustainability mean for social housing?

Sustainability integrates environmental, economic, social, and health considerations into how we live and make decisions. Working towards sustainability means maximizing outcomes in all of these areas, rather than addressing each one in isolation from the other.

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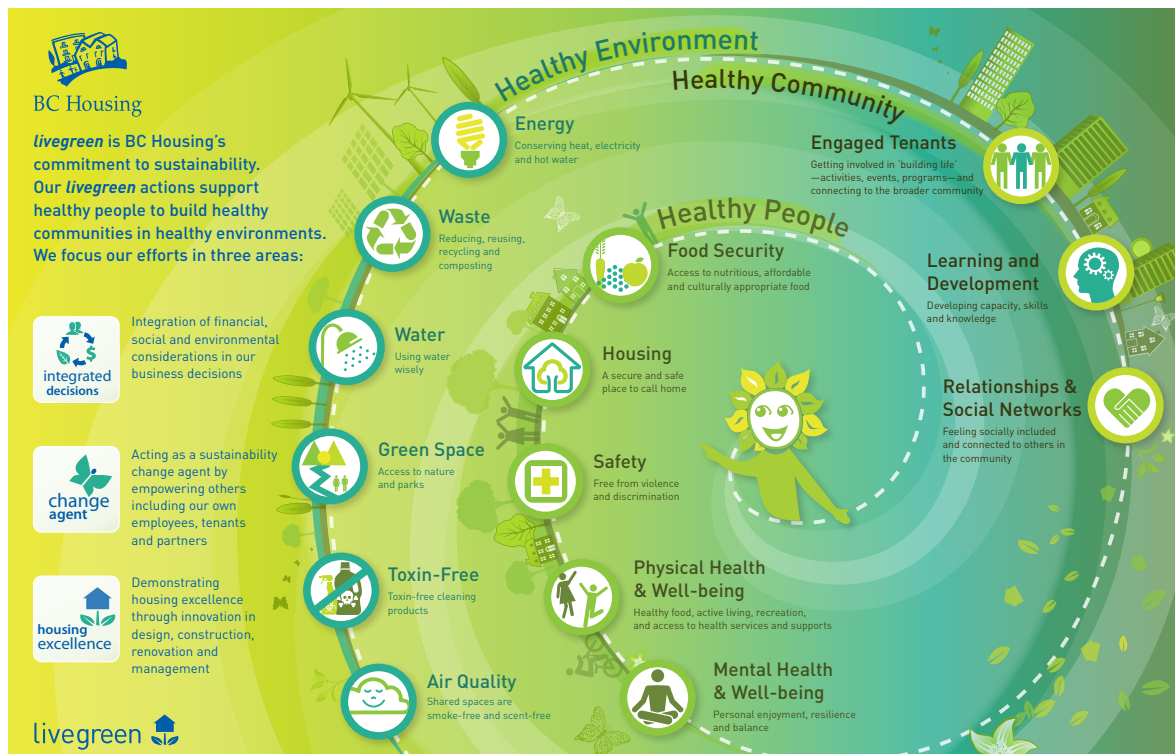


Figure 1. *livegreen* TES Sustainability Framework

Sustainability and tenant engagement are both essential components of this initiative. Sustainability can be thought of as “the ideal we are working to achieve” and tenant engagement can be thought of as “how we will accomplish the defined outcomes.” Engagement means people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement.

# SECTION TWO- A DEEPER LOOK AT BUILDING CAPACITY



## WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building describes processes and activities that maximize individual and community potential. A comprehensive, integrated approach to capacity building nurtures excellence and expansion in all areas of human and community development: physical, psychological, social, cultural, environmental and economic. In this way, capacity building efforts reflect the complexity of people, and the communities in which we live our lives.

BC Healthy Communities uses an Integral Capacity Building Framework that supports individuals, organizations and communities to become more aware of the capacities that already exist and identify how they can improve their ability to influence their own healthy development.

### Integral Capacity Building Framework<sup>2</sup>

This framework builds on the wealth of existing knowledge and experience in BC and enhances our capacity as a province to create healthy individuals, organizations and communities by paying attention to the following areas:

#### 1. Community Learning:

Learning in community takes place in relationships that develop over time as people share common pursuits and goals. As conditions shift and new issues emerge, thriving communities will be able to learn quickly and draw upon local experiences to create local knowledge. Community learning helps us to continually assess and reflect upon the effectiveness of our actions, drawing out and building upon lessons learned.

#### 2. Community Engagement:

Even the brightest and best ideas will not have an impact unless engagement involves people in a meaningful way, connecting to the intangible heart of what matters to individuals and communities - their values, motivations and visions. Effective engagement increases personal connectedness and fosters collective thought and action. It also meets people where they are at, building on strengths and assets in a way that serves their level of understanding.

#### 3. Expanding Community Assets:

Healthy communities foster the development of both tangible and intangible assets in individuals and communities:

TANGIBLE ASSETS INCLUDE:	INTANGIBLE ASSETS INCLUDE:
Physical capital (i.e. infrastructure, housing)	Social capital (relationships and trust)
Policy Development	Political commitment
Financial capital	Community knowledge/awareness
Healthy Environment	Shared visions or values

<sup>2</sup> BC Healthy Communities Accessed on February 2014 from <http://bchealthycommunities.ca/>

#### 4. Community Collaboration:

As we increasingly 'connect the dots' between issues, we also need to increase our capacity to think and act in collaborative ways that seek and expand common ground, shape a desired future and encourage joint ownership over the issues at hand. Successful collaborations take time to build trust, relationships, and agreements about not only what we do together, but also how we choose to do things.

#### What is Tenant Engagement?

Engagement can build a sense of connectedness, a sense of belonging, and an expanding sense of caring beyond the self or group – both individually and collectively. Meaningful engagement can lead to a greater sense of ownership of the issues as well as a greater sense of ability to influence community goals, visions, and decisions. In this way, it is also a critical way of generating greater health – by increasing a sense of control over the conditions in which we live, work, and play. Engagement also promotes effective decision-making and involvement by providing tenants with the information and resources they need to be involved in a meaningful way. Engagement is also about communicating with tenants about how their input affects the particular sustainability issues you are working to address (why should they know or care about waste diversion, reducing heat, etc.)

#### What is Community Based Social Marketing?

Community Based Social Marketing is used throughout the *livegreen* Tenant Engagement on Sustainability initiative. CBSM is an approach to behaviour change that applies the principles of social marketing at a community level. This approach assumes that behaviour change is more successful when peer-to-peer interaction and social learning support it. CBSM offers a pragmatic approach to designing behaviour change interventions based on five main steps. To learn more about CBSM please refer to page 16 of the [livegreen Tenant Engagement on Sustainability: Guide for Social Housing Providers](#)

#### Building Relationships and Trust

Trust and relationship-building are core components of all engagement activities, and are foundational to working effectively with people to help develop reciprocity and cooperation. All of the practical engagement techniques and methods suggested in this guide include these core components to create safety, invite input, and work towards mutual respect. In order to build relationships, tenant engagement must include activities that help people get to know each other, to bond with each other, and at the same time, to create a relationship with the facilitator/community developer.

## TENANT ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM



It can be helpful to consider engagement as a spectrum or a continuum which includes various approaches and tools to meet multiple needs of participants.

The success of all engagement efforts depends on your engagement practices. This guide suggests a framework for your engagement practices and a series of principles to ensure the people you interact with end up feeling valued, respected, and appreciated. The engagement spectrum used in the *livegreen* TES initiative has been adapted for various applications from the work of the International Association of Public Participation or IAP2. The framework is described in greater details in the *livegreen* Tenant Engagement Handbook on Sustainability initiative based on tenant interactions.

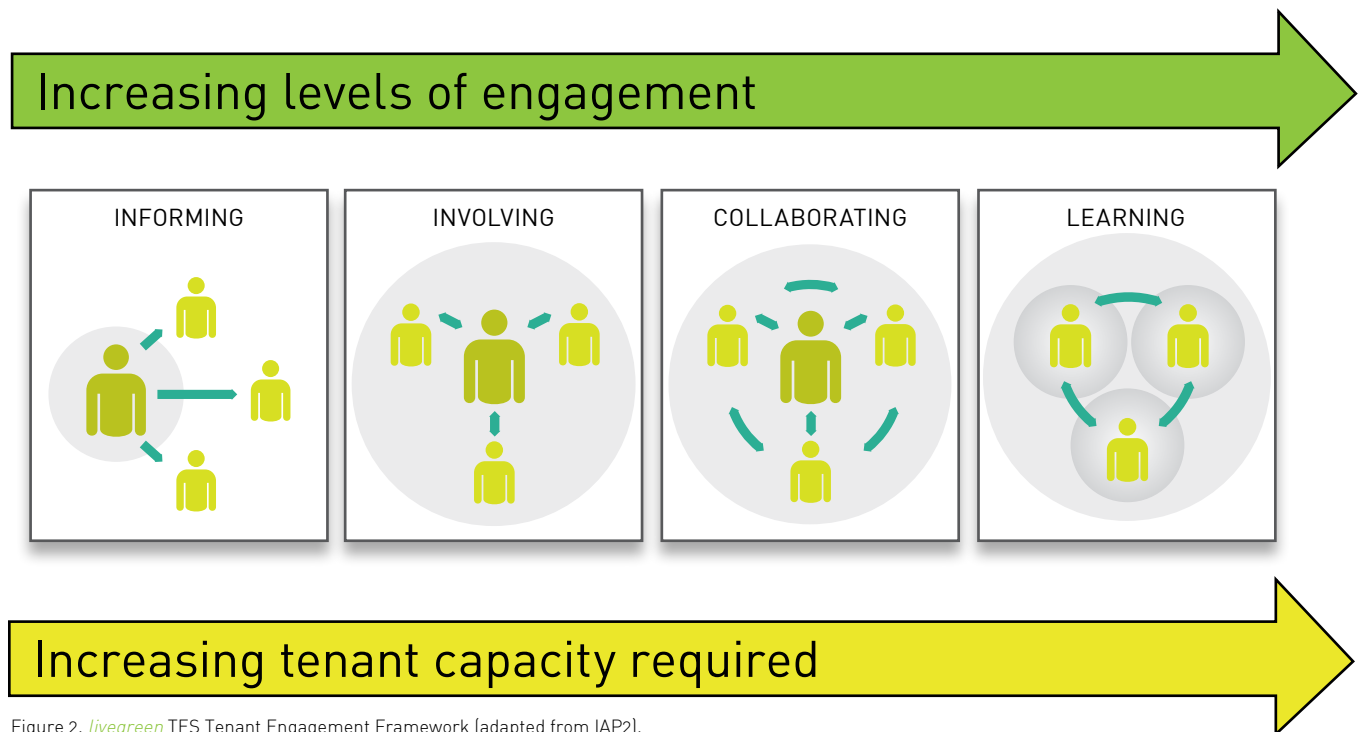
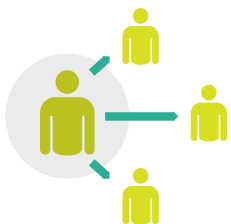


Figure 2. *livegreen* TES Tenant Engagement Framework (adapted from IAP2).

### Considerations for Engagement

#### Informing



Informing is typically a one-way flow of information from community developer to tenant. You offer information, and someone takes the information or listens to it. Many social media campaigns (Facebook, Twitter and social marketing) consider this. Another example is informational campaigns designed to communicate messages. There are two samples of this type of engagement strategy below.

One-way information channels include educational signs, posters, newsletters, meetings, presentations, or other in-person formats. Although helpful as a prompt when we want to encourage behaviour change, the provision of information alone is unlikely to lead to sustained change in anyone.



In a group context, one-way information channels include giving updates, presenting ideas, generating lists through brainstorming and ranking or prioritizing. Although information sharing plays a key role in citizen engagement, information alone does not create shared ownership of a community issue.

**TIPS FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE INFORMATION SHARING STRATEGIES:**

- Create easily read visual posters that everyone can understand.
- Incorporate visual symbols where possible rather than words.
- Consider easily understood directions (low literacy level).
- Consider large print for people with visual disabilities or seniors.
- Provide adequate signage and lighting.
- Use interpreters if possible.

**Involving**



When we involve diverse groups of people it is important to tell them **why** we want their involvement and **what will result from it**. If you don't know or are unsure about what the result will be – communicate that too, as it is important to be transparent with your hopes, ideas and expectations.

These are some of the methods you can use if you want to involve diverse populations:

- Design individual or group surveys with appropriate language for populations with low literacy needs. For reference see: [How to Write Low Literacy Materials](#)<sup>3</sup>;
- Conduct visual surveys or arts based activities to get feedback from children; or large print surveys for seniors.
- Conduct personal interviews or focus groups in accessible, neutral locations (e.g. common rooms) and advise participants how the results will create change.

Invite ideas from tenants about activities they would like to get involved. In the *livegreen* TES pilot, we investigated what behaviours people were engaged in to save energy and we also asked them what the challenges and opportunities for changing behaviour were. This is a two-way engagement.



Remember to tell people whether or not you will act on the information you gain, and how the information will be used as sometimes people are reluctant to participate if they are unsure about how information will be used. Tenants may also express concerns about privacy and worry about disclosing personal information; be clear that their information will not be shared without their consent.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.joe.org/joe/2001february/tt2.php>



**Figure 4: Examples of social marketing efforts**

## Collaborating



Collaboration implies that the people you want the people involved to have a say in determining both what you do and how you execute your plan. This approach encourages all participants in the session to generate insights and action beyond what any single person could do alone. It is also a way to hear many different perspectives and to draw out the best approaches that may work for your particular sustainability issue.

When people have barriers like physical disabilities or low literacy, we may hold assumptions about what they can or cannot do. It is important to understand directly from people what they find challenging or difficult so activities can be adjusted accordingly. Often, we hold unspoken assumptions and expectations of others. By exposing our assumptions and hearing from others about their assumptions, it allows us to consider as many options and solutions as possible and to choose the best option.

Methods for collaboration include:

- [conversation cafes](#), [World Cafe](#) or [Open Space](#) forums (e.g. bringing together groups of tenants for informal discussions about a particular topic) For more information on Open Space see Chris Corrigan's site.
- program planning as a group
- collective priority setting
- arts/activity based approaches that allow participants to create shared ownership over an issue or solution
- community mapping exercises. See the TES Facilitators Guide or [Mapping Community Assets](#).

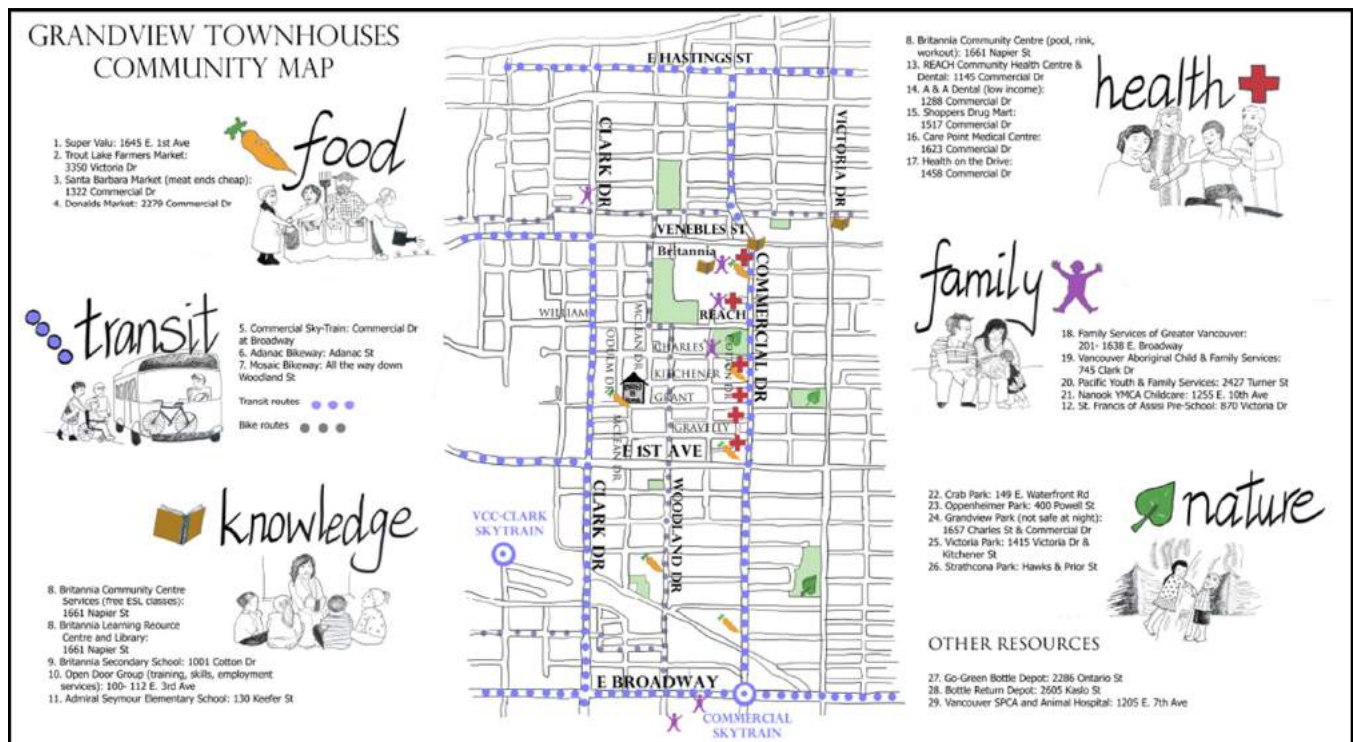
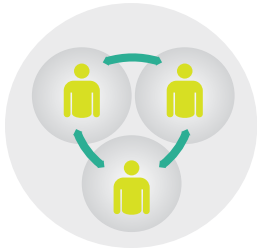


Figure 5: Community map created by Grandview Towers residents

## Leading



The concept of leading suggests that the people involved in the project can act as forerunners with their own ideas, decision-making, and plans. Leading an initiative requires the ability to perceive and understand what others want and to take the best of those ideas forward, while at the same time, involving a group of people in carrying out the activity.

It is important to think about power (including the perception of power) and the dynamics of power among the tenants in the context in which you are working. For example, a tenant who works may be perceived to hold more influence than a tenant who has mental health issues. As a community developer, how can you find assets in both people so that the perception of power is minimized? How can you encourage tenant insight from within regarding power imbalances?

Managing conflict effectively is another important leadership skill and requires that one can see both sides of a disagreement and find neutral solutions. Some people are not able to see more than their own opinion and so the facilitator can help by illuminating other possibilities and choices to resolve the conflict.

Thinking through the level of involvement the tenants can manage will help you decide what kinds of engagement methods you will use. For example, a group of tenants might take a shared leadership role in various activities rather than assigning a single person to complete an activity. Some common methods for engaged leadership include:

- tenant led committees
- tenant panels
- tenant conservation groups
- mentorship models
- tenant/youth ambassadors

In order for a group to lead on an issue, it is essential that they clearly understand the parameters of their role and authority. When tenants have diverse needs, external facilitation supports may be required. It is helpful to define this in advance of the group's work. When previous tenant-led initiatives have been unsuccessful, what learning from earlier attempts can be applied to new efforts? How can tenant leadership be restructured to allow for greater success? How could the facilitator support leadership efforts that reduce conflicts and minimize power imbalances? It is important to explore these questions before suggesting leadership possibilities.

The engagement spectrum is fluid. Every learning opportunity presents multiple opportunities for people to realize their individual and collective potential. Some people may believe that one level of engagement is better than another. All of the elements in the engagement spectrum have value, and it is most important to find the engagement methods and tools that work best for the tenants you support.

## ENHANCING TENANT CAPACITY

Building capacity to improve health, enhance the community, or create change on a sustainability issue includes the development of skills, resources, and abilities in the tenants. Building capacity in participants fosters shared knowledge, leadership skills, and mentorship, and helps to create a shared vision. Community developers and tenant support workers need to address both tenant capacity and the specific issue they are working to address.

## How to Enhance Capacity? Know your Tenants

It is important to spend time assessing the needs of the tenants while you are getting to know people. In order to assess capacities, you need to know people more deeply and understand how to build on their existing strengths and minimize their challenges. It will also help you assess their ability to lead, collaborate, be involved and help you better understand their individual life conditions.

People in communities are diverse. Populations may include seniors, youth, children and families who may have a myriad of life experiences and varied life conditions. Some examples of tenant life conditions include:

- Substance misuse/addictions
- Job loss
- Varied literacy levels
- Chronic health conditions
- Mental health issues
- Other types of diversity (sexual orientation, gender, age)
- Disabilities
- Being a newcomer to Canada and have English as second language
- Loss of children through death, divorce or adoption, custody.
- Poverty
- Incarceration
- Experienced homelessness
- Previous trauma
- Intimate partner violence
- Illness and/or death of a partner
- Social isolation

While these particular experiences may affect the individual, they do not define the person. Each person has hopes, dreams and desires. They have families or extended families (in many cases) and they want to feel valued, respected, and included. People are usually striving to achieve greater potential (in most cases) and sometimes life conditions do not allow them to focus on the greater good or community activities because they are so focused on simply meeting their own daily living needs. These life conditions may have lead people to experience stigma or fear, or may have affected their general perception of safety. Outreach strategies must be carefully crafted to include addressing these concerns.

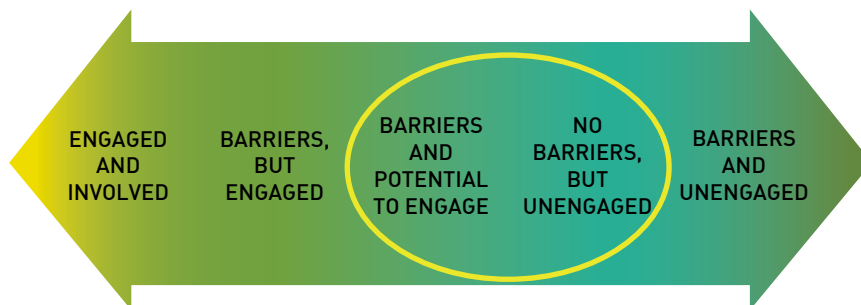


Figure 6: Spectrum of Tenant Capacity

Getting to know the tenants you work with will help build the skills you need to work effectively with diverse populations described in this spectrum of tenant capacity. It also helps you to understand why current circumstances in some tenants' lives may influence their ability to be involved.



This diagram describes some of the patterns we noticed in tenant engagement – your experience may be the same or it may be very different.

- a. **Engaged and involved:** A core group of tenants typically participate fully in most activities offered in the building including *livegreen* activities. They may take on more of a leadership role if adequate support and or recognition are provided. This group shares a common commitment to be involved in the housing community and are often already engaged in many different types of activities at the housing site-however these activities may not include involvement or outreach to the larger community (neighbourhood).
- b. **Barriers, but engaged:** This group of tenants faces multiple barriers (e.g. language, physical ability, mental health, food insecurity, poverty, and/or trauma) yet still engage (perhaps less frequently) in *livegreen* activities and other initiatives at the housing site. It is likely that the *livegreen* initiative offers critical social (interaction with others), physical (healthy food), or emotional needs (knowing someone cares) for these tenants. Their barriers may be impediments to serve in leadership roles in the initiative. Moreover, barriers such as mental health issues or physical disabilities may also affect their capacity to change personal behaviours (a tenant may keep their lights on at night to help him or her feel safe, for example). The timing and location of events may also influence participation seniors may feel unsafe attending events in the evening and visual presentations are an immediate barrier to anyone with a visual impairment.
- c. **Barriers and potential to engage:** These tenants face barriers to participation and will likely need extra support and/or encouragement to connect. Engagement for this group of tenants can be increased through spending extra time with them, through door-to-door outreach and by extending personal invitations to participate. Try to have more in-depth conversations when they enter or leave the building, and remind them about upcoming events. Design events to ensure that tenants experiencing barriers can fully participate (consider child care, healthy food, diet restrictions etc.).
- d. **No barriers, but unengaged:** This group enjoys higher capacity, but has not been participating in tenant programming for a variety of reasons. Many of these tenants may work or be involved in other programs outside of the building or be otherwise engaged in activities in the community. Finding creative ways to connect with this group is essential to bringing the housing community on board with energy conservation and other community goals. This group may be accessible through other community activities at times when they do not work or attend programs, through email, mail or text messaging. It's important to be creative with your outreach strategies.
- e. **Barriers and Unengaged:** This group of tenants faces multiple barriers and are not yet feeling safe enough or connected enough to be involved in group activities, and may be suspicious or fearful of one-to-one outreach as well. This group is concerned about the basics in life – things like safety, having enough to eat, having a safe place to rest and to call home. Their current life conditions may require they are self-focused.

## Addressing Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity and intercultural competencies have become an important and ever growing requirement in our global environment. It is beyond the scope of this guide to help you understand the vast array of competencies you may require to interact effectively with people from different cultures (ethnic groups, values

or spiritual differences). However, the field of 'cultural intelligence' provides tips on what kinds of skills you may need to develop in yourself to become increasingly culturally intelligent.

It is important to understand cultural and spiritual norms and influences and work at your ability to interact effectively with other cultures. This requires a combination of skill sets focused on being present to your current experience, being curious about differences, and interacting in a way that is respectful of differences.

Cultural differences may play out in the tenant populations through cultural norms about waste, food, holidays, and spiritual rituals. It is important to explore these differences and use them to adjust your programming so you can engage more people in your efforts. As a community developer or tenant support worker, you can be mindful of celebrating different cultural traditions, acknowledging holidays and observing cultural food practices, for example.





## SECTION THREE: GETTING PRACTICAL

### LOGISTICS

When you take the time to engage people, think also about creating a hospitable space for the engagement to happen and try to address some of the underlying needs the tenants might have. This includes thinking about when tenants may be running low on food and money and planning healthy food options for those times in particular.

#### Healthy Food and Refreshments

*Have you ensured that some of the following choices are available?*

- vegetables and/or fruit whole grain products protein (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, legumes)
- lower fat milk products (made with skim or partially skimmed milk)
- food appealing to children and youth such as raisins, unsweetened juices and fruits cut in fun shapes
- consider halal/gluten free/vegetarian/diet restriction options

*Have you chosen to offer some the following options?*

#### Beverages

- 100% fruit and/or vegetable juices or squeezing your own juice
- watering down fruit juices by 2 parts water to 1 part Juice
- non-dairy options (soy milk, rice milk)\*
- coffee and tea with low fat milk or milk alternates
- decaffeinated coffee and herbal teas
- chilled tap water

#### Morning/Breakfast Options

- small wholegrain bagels or muffins protein options: nut butters/yogurt/eggs (poached or boiled)
- fresh fruit (whole or cut up)
- trans fat free spreads (margarine, peanut butter\*, jams and jellies)

#### Afternoon/Lunch/Dinner Options

- grilled, baked or poached meats, fish and/or poultry
- high fibre beans/legumes (i.e. lentils, garbanzo, kidney)
- vegetables, and/or fruit choices
- whole grain breads/wraps/rolls
- lower fat dips and dressings offered on the side

#### Dessert Options

- fresh fruit (whole or cut up)
- fruit salad with lower fat/frozen yogurt

\*Food allergies are common so please ask about allergies and preferences in advance of the session. Also include culturally diverse foods as this helps people feel welcomed and valued. Remember to include food items people who have chronic illnesses such as diabetes can eat (sugar replacements etc.).

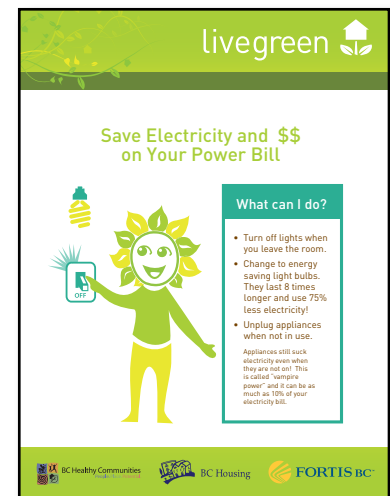


## Physical Space

- Can you accommodate wheelchairs, someone who is hard of hearing or visually impaired?
- Is there easy physical access to the room and the building?
- Do people with disabilities require care aides who may also require seating?
- Some people who are visually impaired have specialized reader computers that allow them to read documents if you provide copies of what will be discussed on a USB drive.
- Can you comfortably seat the number of participants in the area you have and does the space have a comfortable ambiance (windows, outdoor areas, good acoustics etc.)?
- Can the room(s) be re-arranged to accommodate the process you will use (e.g. activity based/small groups)?
- If you hold an event off-site, consider walking together or using transport together to reach venues; avoid booking locations that are not easily accessible by transportation or by foot.
- Consider offering prizes, reimbursing transit, or covering expenses like childcare in a separate but nearby area so people with children can attend.

## Marketing and communication strategies

- Ask people who live in the building the best way to communicate information within the building.
- Common areas in the building like lobbies, near mailboxes, and in elevators are good places to post information about upcoming events in larger buildings. In townhome complexes where people are more spread out, it is more challenging to communicate information (sometimes door-to-door campaigns are needed or a central location for information can be established (a community bulletin board for example). You may be able to get student help or support to do this legwork.
- Many buildings deliver fliers to tenants. How can you get your event included or on the radar in communications that already reach tenants?
- Is there an email or phone number that you can access to broadcast information to tenants that have computers or phones?
- Does your building have an existing tenant orientation guide that can be modified to include introducing *livegreen* or can you develop one that introduces people to *livegreen*?
- Children, young people and some older people will require innovative ways of marketing and communication- what is appealing to one age group may not appeal to others.
- Can you communicate information to people who cannot attend? Can you ask people how they prefer to receive information?
- Can information be made available as required, for example, in a different language, or format such as large print, CD-ROM, DVD etc.?
- Try to avoid jargon. All communication to the public should be in plain English and should have a Grade 6 literacy level. There is a tool called [SMOG \(Simple Measure of Gobbledegook\)](#) calculators to help you determine what literacy level your writing is. You can find some of those [here](#).
- Try to use gender-neutral language that favours inclusion rather than exclusion.



## Timing of Events

Although there will never be a time that supports everyone's attendance, you can consider:

- Times when the majority of people would attend: Typically, many seniors may not feel safe after dark, for example. You can also offer events at different times to see what kinds of attendance you get.
- Inconvenience: Consider limitations on the time people might be available, as experienced by commuters, parents (school times and holidays).
- Holidays: Some people may have extended families and be away, and others may find this time more isolating if they do not have family or friends nearby. Consider what might work for your tenants in summer or during religious or cultural festivals when many people are away or focused on other issues.

## Timing of Activities

- Has sufficient time for the process been allocated?
- Is the time of day of the activity going to meet the needs of the tenants? You may want to try hosting some events during the day and some in the evening as you may capture the input of different people. How can you facilitate and understand the needs of the tenants better?
- Is the event planned at a time when people are likely to be running short of financial resources and if so, how will this affect your results? During the pilot, we offered healthy food during events especially at times when tenants might be running short of food or other resources. We also encouraged tenants to try different types of food.
- Is your event on a day when tenants have received their benefits that month? If so, how will this affect your event?

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

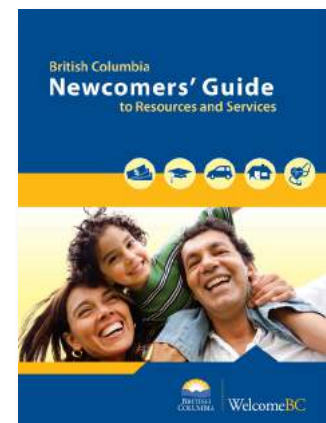
### Newcomers and Immigrants

Canada is widely acknowledged for its ethnic diversity and broad immigration policies, and supports approximately 250,000 newcomers per year. Many of these newcomers are highly skilled and integrate with readily into Canadian society. There are four categories of immigration to Canada. These classes include:

- family class (closely related persons of Canadian residents living in Canada)
- economic immigrants (skilled workers and business people)
- other (people accepted as immigrants for humanitarian or compassionate reasons)
- refugees (people who are escaping persecution, torture or cruel and unusual punishment)

When people arrive from other countries, they go through a period of upheaval and settlement and are often unfamiliar with the language, customs, and traditions. There are many important considerations for working effectively with newcomers, and you can consider the following points in your programming:

- Has language translation/interpretation been considered for people who do not speak English? This resources list prepared by a consortium of libraries called [New to BC](#) offers numerous resources to new Canadians such as this [Newcomer's Guide](#). The B.C. Newcomers' Guide can give you the information you and your family need to settle in B.C. quickly and easily.



- Are your materials easy to understand visually? Ideally if they are visual and universally understood that helps eliminate the need for translation.
- Is there a friend or neighbour who would provide translation support? If so, remember to include frequent stops in what you are saying to allow translation time.
- [Welcome BC](#) has numerous resources and programs that anyone can access and are helpful for addressing the needs of newcomers and immigrants.

## Age-Friendly Approaches

In age-friendly environments, the policies, services and structures are designed to help seniors and people of all ages and abilities participate. Age-friendly approaches support involvement and engagement of people of all ages and abilities to feel included and valued in their communities.

In age-friendly communities we consider:

- Keeping areas well-lit and safe from physical barriers
- Installing automatic door openers and elevators
- Facilitating the involvement of seniors and people of all ages in community activities

Age-friendly communities recognize that seniors and people of all ages have a wide range of abilities and skills. Age-friendly approaches work towards addressing the age related needs of seniors and people through the course of the life span.

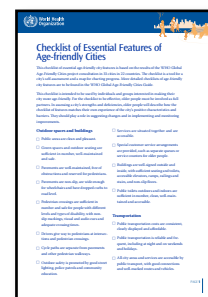
These are additional considerations:

- Is childcare (or elder care) being offered at the event, or a stipend for those who have young children/elders?
- Can you plan separate activities to engage children seniors and youth that are age appropriate?
- Can you plan activities that integrate the different generations?
- Is the location accessible, washroom, doorways, seating areas etc.?
- Are seniors and young people supported to stay active and socially connected?
- Is the location of the event safe and barrier-free?
- Can you easily and safely access green spaces that are nearby?
- Are wider interior doorways available for people who use wheelchairs, scooters or walkers?
- Are there designated parking spaces for easy building access?
- Can you protect seniors or others people who may feel or are vulnerable?
- Is your event planned for daytime hours?

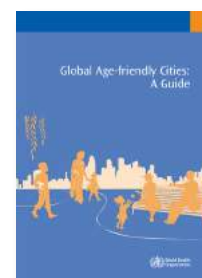
BC produces a [Seniors Guide](#) that is available in numerous languages called Age-friendly BC, Government of British Columbia (Seniors Directorate) and also a [guide](#) on becoming an age friendly community for local governments. This is a compilation of information and resources to help us all plan for and live a healthy lifestyle as we age. It includes information on provincial and federal programs, with sections on benefits, health, lifestyle, housing, transportation, finances, safety and security, and other services.



These are other great resources for age-friendly approaches:



[World Health Organizations Age-friendly Guide](#)



[Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide](#)

These are other great resources for age-friendly approaches:

[Checklist of Essential Features of Age Friendly Cities](#)

This checklist published by the World Health Organization is a tool that can be used to self-assess cities and to chart progress towards becoming more age friendly. The checklist can be used in many different environments.

[Global Age-friendly Cities: A guide](#)

The purpose of this guide is to engage cities to become more age-friendly. The guide also describes techniques to involve older adults in planning and the process that led to age friendly checklists across a variety of cities.

## People with Disabilities

“Disability” covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some invisible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. There are physical, mental and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities, and other conditions.



Today, there is a focus on inclusion and addressing barriers. The resource called [Do Something](#) created by an international youth group based in New York suggests we can all do something to make the world a little more inclusive. They offer a resource guide that promotes various programs

and services as well. The Active Living Alliance also has resources available in their Inclusion Toolkit. You can order the toolkit [online](#). The toolkit was designed to make active living more inclusive for people with disabilities

This Guide to Including and Engaging People with Disabilities in Service and Conservation was published by the Utah Service Corps and The Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University. It includes an inclusion toolkit and describes steps any program can take to become more inclusive for people with disabilities.

<https://ucc.usu.edu>



## People with Mental Health Issues or Dual Diagnoses

Mental health issues will affect approximately one in six Canadians during their lifetime, so the chance that you or someone you know may be impacted is very high. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, “mental illness indirectly affects all of us at some time through a family member, friend or colleague and 20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime”<sup>4</sup>.

There are numerous resources available to help you understand more about mental health issues. Mental health issues cover a wide array of conditions, from depression to early psychosis to eating disorders. There are a number of good resources available to help understand mental health challenges and address the stigma and discrimination often related to it.

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Mental Health Association Accessed on September 13, 2013 at <http://www.cmha.ca/media/fast-facts-about-mental-illness/#.UkIKNBAVZ8E>

## RESOURCES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND REDUCING STIGMA



Canadian Mental Health Association-[What is mental health/illness?](#)

This resource includes a number of fact guides on various mental health issues.

The University of Michigan offers a number of resources including a [health library](#), quizzes and screening questionnaires for mental health and addictions.

[Understanding Minds](#) –This website offers mental health resources to organizations. Their intention is to help make Canadian communities safer and healthier places to work, live, grow and play. They offer a variety of workshops and training resources.

[Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) – This resource focuses on prevention, promotion, and guidance to implement these standards in Canadian workplaces. This is a voluntary standard that provides guidelines for Canadian employers that enable them to develop and continuously improve psychologically safe and healthy workplaces.

The [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#) focuses on Canada and workplace mental health. The website also has a speaker's bureau and resources for all age groups, webinar's and a library of resource materials.

[Opening Minds](#) is a project of the Mental Health Commission of Canada and focuses on reducing stigma linked to mental health issues. There are four main target groups:

- health care providers,
- youth,
- the workforce
- the media.

[Stand Up for Mental Health](#) – This is a BC based program offering comedy, recovery, speakers and inclusion resources. The site also offers videos and positive media coverage. Victoria is the main site in BC.

## ENGAGING ALL AUDIENCES

Chances are you will never know the multitude of issues, cultures, disabilities, or mental health issues you may encounter in your role. You will need to adjust your strategy and learn from what works and what does not work. It's best if you can do so with a sense of humility and openness. Adjusting and varying your style and setting can be achieved with good planning and knowing your audience, but there will always be the need to "learn on your feet" and adjust your techniques and style according to who is present in the room that day. We found that asking genuine questions and listening for how we could adjust was very helpful.



## SECTION FOUR: SUSTAINING YOUR EFFORTS



### SUPPORT MODELS

Peer support programs promote the idea of a group of tenants or youth working together to support one another on their plans, such as energy conservation or community kitchens. However, there are multiple models for peer support programs. In this guide, we have highlighted the peer support models that have the greatest likelihood of success (given our experiences working with the tenant population) in community based and social housing settings. These models attempt to address some of the power imbalances and conflicts that can arise in tenant led approaches. Your experience and knowing the people you work with will help you choose the best approach for your particular needs.

These tenant support models include:

#### 1. Facilitated group visits with peer exchanges between tenants

This model provides onsite support through an organization skilled in community development and community based social marketing techniques. The group of tenants would meet for a series of dates at a prearranged time to determine an energy focus and a plan for implementation. The advantage to this model is that it allows for a skilled professional to help tenants with conflicts and to manage any power imbalances that may exist. This model requires involvement of facilitators and therefore is potentially more costly to operate unless there are ways to incorporate *livegreen* programming into the existing supports onsite (assuming there are supports). This is similar to the pilot project supports that have been used in Metro Vancouver and Kelowna.

#### 2. Peer-led face-to-face session

Voluntary peer-led models have several advantages (people who live on the sites understand the unique challenges they face) and they also have disadvantages (some of the challenges we discussed earlier include conflict and power dynamics between tenants). This model uses peers to provide information and encourage behavioural changes. The group could be excellent role models for others less shrewdness about energy conservation. Peer-led programs often have staffing support allocated to ensure sound recruitment of leaders, ensuring that space is allocated for sessions and helping to organize the logistics by providing space and refreshments. Training is provided to peer leaders and regular recognition events recognize their efforts. There are regular meetings to discuss and troubleshoot any challenges.

#### 3. Peer coaches

Peer coaching models typically provide one-to-one supports and meetings with other tenants. Typically, peer coaches have demonstrated buy-in to the existing program and would be good leaders and positive role models for other tenants. This role could be rotated among a group of tenants if power or conflict issues were present. Training is provided to peer coaches to ensure the approach is consistent with the model of mentorship (open to listening and problem solving) and to ensure accurate information and a consistent approach is used. Potentially, this model could include risks if the person was working with children or other vulnerable adults. Once again, support for recruitment, training, and ongoing follow-up is important. Compensation may include monetary payment, payment by food vouchers, or other creative strategies.

#### 4. Community health workers/tenant support workers

Tenant support workers provide onsite support integrated into regular programming activities, with the focus of the activity changing approximately every 8-10 weeks. This approach integrates relationship building by having a consistent person onsite. In order to incorporate *livegreen* activities into the

regularly scheduled activities, it means a currently scheduled activity must end. There is a fear that if *livegreen* programming is integrated then other important opportunities may not be accessible to the tenants.



#### 5. Support group model

This model provides support from the group itself and does not rely on outside support or ongoing training or follow up. We do not believe this model would succeed in most settings in which we have worked. This model provides some advantages in terms of costs and success. Since support groups are widely supported in our culture, the possibility that the right person is available to operate it should be considered. Support group leaders are generally volunteers and are not compensated in any way.

### Community Resources

Most communities have one or more community-based directories that can help you and others navigate and learn about the resources available in your specific community. This guide includes resources compiled for the communities of Burnaby and Vancouver in Appendix A. It includes community resources and also includes a variety of resources on energy conservation resources available through BC Housing and other service providers.

The United Way of the Lower Mainland sponsors [BC 211 \(Information and Referral Services\)](#) that provides phone, Internet or email access to services and resources both government and non-government organizations in Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley and Squamish –Lillooet.

### WORK WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In addition to the peer support models described above, most communities have multiple community partners who address:

#### **Energy Conservation Tips and Resources**

We have included a series of resources that are from other programs and services in Appendix A.

#### **Waste Diversion**

Most municipalities offer or contract with companies to provide waste diversion including food waste and recycling, and offer arrangements or resources to recycle everything from cell phones to barbeques. Waste diversion rules and processes may differ from location to location, but generally there is someone who can help you with tenant education and resources. If you apply sufficient pressure they may be willing to visit your site on more than once or on a regular basis.

#### **Food Security**

Most communities have local food security groups (community kitchens, gardens etc.) Check your community directory to see if you can learn about one in your area.

Food security includes everything from charitable food services like food banks or food recovery services to developing health food policy in governments and the private sector. Community kitchens, food-sharing programs, bulk buying programs, or pocket markets (small scale farmers markets) can help people access healthier food choices. Connect with food security groups in your area to learn about services they can provide on or off-site.

## GLOSSARY

**Capacity Building:** *Capacity building* describes processes and activities that maximize human potential. A comprehensive, integrated approach to capacity building nurtures expansion and positive change in *all* areas of human experience: social, environmental, economic, physical, psychological, and cultural.

**Child:** According to the Representative for Children and Youth Act a child is considered anyone under 19 years of age.<sup>5</sup>

**Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM):** *CBSM* is an approach to behaviour change that applies the principles of social marketing at a community level. It is based on the assumption that behaviour change is more successful when it is supported by peer-to-peer interaction and social learning. CBSM offers a pragmatic approach to designing behaviour change interventions based on five main steps. Learn more at [CBSM](#).

**Community Development:** *Community development* focuses on the empowerment of individuals and groups of people by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources that they need to effect change in their own communities.

**Engagement:** *Engagement* means people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.<sup>6</sup> Development of social norms within a community is an important aspect of engagement as well. Social norms are the explicit or implicit ‘rules’ specifying what behaviours are desirable and acceptable within a community and this is described in more detail in Section 3.2 of the [Tenant Engagement on Sustainability Guide For Social Housing Providers](#)

**livegreen TES:** *The livegreen Tenant Engagement on Sustainability (TES)* is the name of the social housing tenant engagement program developed by BC Housing that focuses on sustainability issues, such as energy conservation.

**Seniors:** According to the Oxford Canadian Dictionary, a senior citizen is “an elderly person, especially a person over 65”. And an elderly is, according to the same reference source, “rather old; past middle age”. These definitions, not so precise but often taken for granted, can naturally be contested. Some authors argue that since life expectancy is now about 80 years and that many persons outlive that age, 65 years old cannot be considered as “old” anymore<sup>7</sup>.

**Sustainability:** *Sustainability* integrates environmental, economic, social, and health considerations into how we live and make decisions. ‘*Sustainability activities require the balanced use of resources within budget parameters, while making positive contributions to the lives of our tenants and employees, local communities, and the environment*’ (BC Housing, Housing Sustainability Plan, 2011 / 2012).

**Youth:** means a person who is 16 years of age or older but is under 19 years of age.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Representative For Children And Youth Act Accessed on 2014 from [http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00\\_06029\\_01#section1](http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_06029_01#section1)

<sup>6</sup> Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement.

<sup>7</sup> Statistic Canada Accessed on Feb. 4, 2013 from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-519-x/89-519-x2006001-eng.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Representative For Children And Youth Act Accessed on 2014 from [http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00\\_06029\\_01#section1](http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_06029_01#section1)

# APPENDIX A-RESOURCE LIST



## ENERGY SAVING MATERIALS AND TIPS

### AVAILABLE FROM FORTIS BC

- [Hot tips brochure- Energy saving ideas and resources.](#)
- [Energy Saving Kits and Custom Kits for Apartments are available from Fortis BC](#) (The kit includes: a low-flow showerhead, faucet aerators, weather stripping, window film, pipe insulation, outlet and switch gaskets, hot water gauge, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), a fridge and freezer thermometer, and efficient night light, \$25.00 furnace filter coupon.)

### WASTE /RECYCLING

Find places to donate or recycle just about anything at [Metro Vancouver Recycles](#)

### LIGHT RECYCLES

Wondering where to take [CFL's](#)?

### RECYCLING COUNCIL OF BC

- [Tip of the Month](#)
- [Zero Waste Event Planning](#)
- [Toxic Toolkit](#) (on household hazardous waste)
- [Retailer Take Back Programs](#)
- [City of Burnaby Take Back Programs](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Recycling](#)

### WORLD CAR FREE NETWORK

[Car Free Day](#)

### CANADA POST

[Stop receiving junk mail](#)

### MOVIES

[North Columbia Environmental Society](#) is a non-profit organization based in Revelstoke, BC that promotes sustainable living and protection of the natural environment. They offer events, resources and have ongoing projects linked to sustainability.

Public Libraries-locations in each community

Check to see if your community has an online community resource directory. This is the [Burnaby Community Resource Guide](#).

## SHORT FILMS

- [Be Efficient, Save Energy](#)
- [Save Energy](#)
- [Save Energy, Be Creative](#)
- [Be Energy Efficient](#)

## OTHER TOOLS

[The David Suzuki Foundation](#) offers green tips. Small steps can make a big difference on the path to living more sustainably. The site shows you how to transform your home, office and community into a healthy and sustainable one.

[FortisBC offers a home energy use calculator.](#)

[National Geographic offers a Light Bulb Savings Calculator and an energy diet](#) that helps you reduce your carbon footprint.

## FOR CHILDREN-GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

FOR CHILDREN	FOR PRE-TEENS	FOR ALL AUDIENCES
<a href="#">Water Wiz- Puzzles and Games</a>	<a href="#">Monster High: Recycle Song</a>	<a href="#">Upcycling-Earth Day Crafts</a>
<a href="#">My Shot Minutes</a>	<a href="#">Play, Learn and Have fun</a>	<a href="#">Earthpeace -Games and Activities</a>
<a href="#">Sneaker Challenge</a>	<a href="#">Wilderdome-Environmental Games and Activities</a>	<a href="#">Litter Educational Activities</a>

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES -Burnaby and Vancouver

[BC 211](#)-Information and Referral Services

[City Services](#)- Community Centres, Arts etc.

[Seniors Information Services online](#) or call 411 for telephone referral

[Burnaby Community Connections](#)- Seniors, Families, Information and Volunteer Opportunities

[Family Services of Greater Vancouver](#)-Counselling, Employment, Family and Parenting Supports

[Service Canada Centre](#)- CPP, OAS, Record of Employment

[Mental Health Services](#) – Fraser Health

[Burnaby Family Life](#)- counselling, parenting, pregnancy, English language skills, childhood literacy, childcare and life skills classes for people without a home.

[Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion](#) – Supports for people with disabilities

[Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation](#)- Income Assistance

[Burnaby Community and Continuing Education](#)

[Burnaby Social Services](#)

[School District 41](#)-Continuing Education

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)

[Volunteer Burnaby](#)

[Immigrant Settlement Services](#)

[Literacy Now](#)

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES-Metro Vancouver**

[BC 211](#)-Information and Referral Services

Vancouver Police Department-[Community Services Directory](#)

[411 Seniors Centre](#)-Information, Resources and Services

[Vancouver Community Network](#)-Directory and Events

[Multicultural Health Programs and Resources](#)- AMSSA

[PovNet](#)- An antipoverty resource list

[Disability Alliance BC](#)

[Homelessness Services Association of BC](#)

## **SINGLE PARENT RESOURCES**

[YWCA](#)- Resources for single moms and their children

[Single Mothers Guide](#) to Resources

[Early Childhood Programs](#)

[Child Care and Referral Services](#) Vancouver

## **COMMUNITY MEALS**

[Free and low cost meals](#)-Vancouver Coastal Health

[Free Food](#)-Carnegie Centre

[A Loving Spoonful](#)- Free meals for people living with AIDS

## **HEALTH RELATED**

[Mental Health Resources](#)- Vancouver Coastal Health

[Addiction Services](#) -Vancouver Coastal Health

[Child and Youth Mental Health Resources](#)- Kelty

[Vancouver Coastal Health](#)-Home and Community Care Resources

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)-Vancouver Burnaby

[City of Vancouver](#) -Health Resources

[Child and Youth Mental Health](#)-Vancouver Coastal Health