

## REDEFINING HOME VISITABILITY

by

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## Overview

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*Photo: Ellen's visitable home*

## Rationale

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- Invitation to collaborate with B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) on pre-existing visitability project
- Reports and literature review justified the need for research in community accessibility, a major literature gap in F.N. context despite disproportioned numbers of people with restricted mobility
- Personal experience and observation of need in community

## Objective

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- To do a in depth home and community assessment in two communities to better understand how their design impact the health and quality of life of those living with mobility challenges.

## Research Questions

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- 1) How does the presence of lack of the three structural visitability features impact First Nations people with disabilities?
- 2) What barriers and supports most impact the quality of life of those living with disabilities?
- 3) How does reserve community infrastructure influence individual home visitability?

## Methods

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- Community scan
- Photovoice
- 9 individual interviews
- Thematic Analysis



# Communities

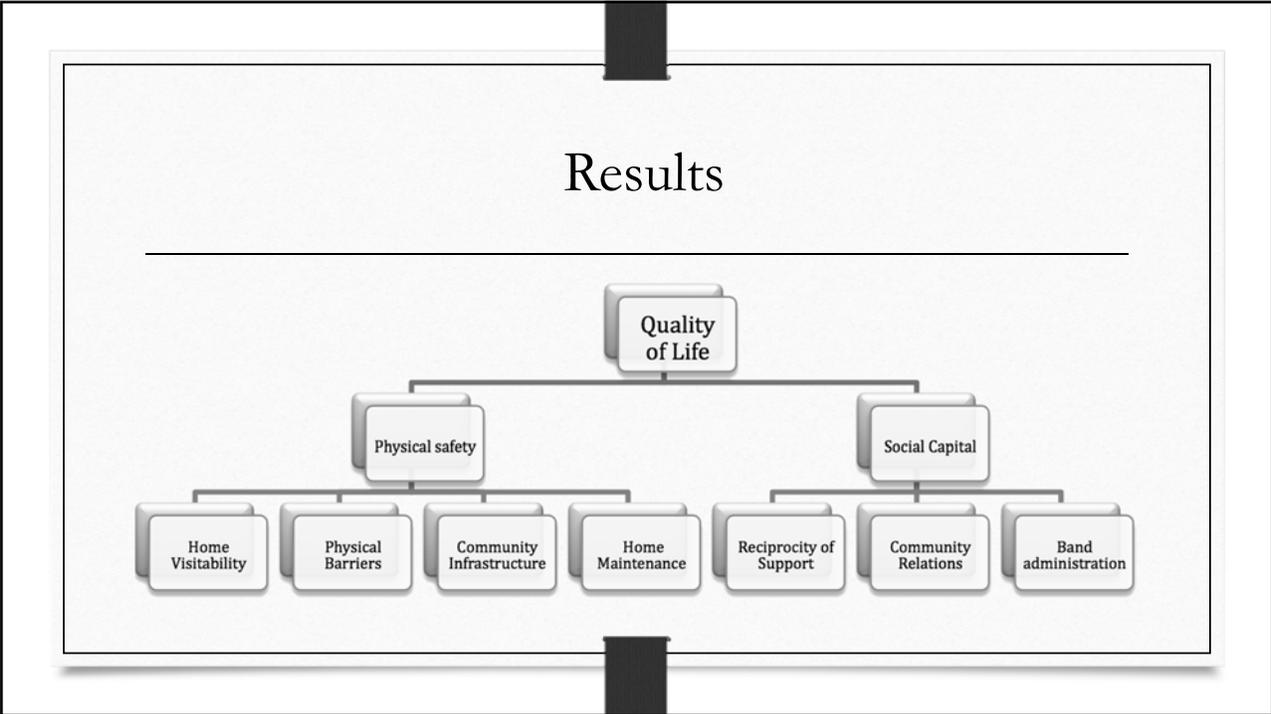
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Esquimalt Reserve



Beecher Bay Reserve





## Physical Safety



- Home Visitability needed redefining for relevance
- Physical barriers captured barriers beyond the visitable features
- Home maintenance a major priority for participants
- Community Infrastructure impacted all other themes

“I just have problems carrying them upstairs, so I usually just put them in a bag and I can drag the bag downstairs. Like I leave my walker down below and I walk up the stairs.”

(PAR 2, Sheila, Interview, community A)

“I won’t let her go out there right now anyways because of the porch, but the back porch is falling apart.”

(PAR 1, Ken Interview community B)



*Colin and Jen's side entrance*

# Social Capital

- Reciprocity of support
- Community Relations
- Band Administration



“I don’t have-it’s not a big struggle for me considering I have a husband with lots of sons and a sister-in-law that is willing to do stuff for me. It is not a big issue for me to get to and from appointments.” (PAR 3, Jen, Community A)

“Oh god. Well for instance , before I started looking after her, she was very sick, she wasn’t eating properly, she forgot when to take her pills. She always forgot about her appointments and it was hard to get somebody to take her because everybody would charge her \$40 for gas, and then they would make her take them for lunch and everything.”  
(PAR 3, Interview, Community B.)



Maria’s photo of Amy’s gifted wood

## Key findings:

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- Most participants did not feel safe in their home and community
- Degree of social capital was a major protective factor
- Visitability needed redefining in context
- Home tenure restricted home visitability



## Limitations

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- Major gap in Canadian literature on First Nations experience of disablement, yet ample information on housing and infrastructure crisis-disconnect on real impact on lives
- Sampling technique may have excluded those most isolated, or those less able to participate, Band involvement may have encouraged or discouraged community member to participate
- Pre-existing mainstream definition of visitability, imposed individualistic western assumptions around definition of family, hospitality norms and home sharing
- Small sample size is not generalizable to all communities
- Promotion and work needs to come from Indigenous led research and from community interest and expressed needs



## Recommendations

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1. Large collaborative study that would provide the communities the opportunity to voluntarily conduct their own home and community assessments
2. All CMHC social housing should plan in and implement the three basic visitability features in all newly built homes on reserves
3. The major gap in Canadian literature about First Nations and disabilities needs to be closed
4. Cost benefit analysis needed to specifically reveal the cost saving on health care from the establishment of visitable building standards that could prevent injuries and unnecessary out of residential care
5. On-going promotion of findings and networking with other communities, organizations and individuals that are prioritizing work on improving the safety and quality of life in community

## Summary

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- Reserve housing is a politicised topic and physical accessibility remains excluded from important health care policy discussion
- While physical environment poses risks the social capital in families and communities mitigates this, but not all community members have equal access to social capital
- Good home and community design makes safer communities for all, improving collective quality of life economic development

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Thank you!



Ellen's visitable entrance