



# Designing Dignity

Self-Advocates on Successful  
Housing for Adults with FASD

10<sup>th</sup> International Research Conference on Adolescents and Adults with FASD  
April 18 – 21, 2026  
Seattle, WA

Kathryn Meinhardt, LBSW  
Olga “Alex” Nussbaum

# Session Goals

1

Understand  
housing  
challenges

2

Learn brain-  
informed  
strategies

3

Hear self-  
advocate  
voices

4

Apply ideas to  
practice

# Why This Matters

High housing instability

Executive functioning challenges

Systems not designed for neurodiversity

# Housing Mismatch



Traditional expectations vs  
brain-based needs



Mismatch leads to housing  
breakdown

# Brain-Based Principles



PREDICTABILITY  
REDUCES OVERWHELM



STRUCTURE SUPPORTS  
INDEPENDENCE



ENVIRONMENT  
SHAPES BEHAVIOR

# From Compliance to Accommodation

Shift from rules to supports

Design systems that fit the person

# Environmental Supports



LOW  
STIMULATION



VISUAL CUES



ORGANIZED  
SPACES



CONSISTENT  
ROUTINES

# Support Strategies



Life-skills coaching



Budgeting help

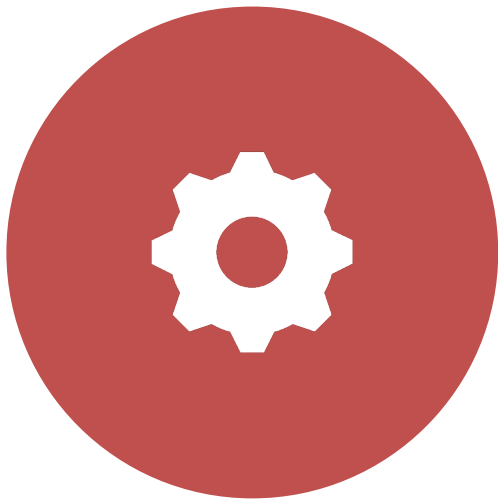


Reminder systems



Transportation  
support

# Case Example



BEFORE/AFTER SETUP



SIMPLIFIED LAYOUTS  
IMPROVE SUCCESS

# Routine Supports



VISUAL  
SCHEDULES



CONSISTENT  
ROUTINES



REDUCE STRESS  
AND CONFUSION

# Communication Supports



CLEAR LANGUAGE



CUE CARDS



REDUCE  
MISUNDERSTANDINGS

# Panel Introduction

Self-advocates share lived experience



# Reflection



1 change in environment

1 support change

1 relationship shift

# Key Takeaways



PREDICTABILITY  
MATTERS



DESIGN SUPPORTS  
DIGNITY



RELATIONSHIPS  
BUILD SUCCESS