

Women living in group homes need to learn to make decisions about leisure time to enrich their lives

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Most people don't think twice about the ability to choose the movie they want to watch, the book they want to read or with whom they will have coffee. But what if you didn't have the choice, or were never taught how to make decisions regarding leisure activities? That's the reality for some women living in group homes according to a new study from the University of Alberta.

Brenda Rossow-Kimball, who did post-graduate research with Donna Goodwin, in the Faculty of [Physical Education](#) and Recreation, investigated the leisure experiences of five [women](#) with intellectual disabilities in two group homes. They found major differences in how leisure was experienced in each group home. In one, the women were provided with support and encouraged to make their own decisions about how they used their leisure time; there was a genuine interest in the women engaging in independent spontaneous leisure, according to Rossow-Kimball. In the other home leisure was supervised by the staff, scheduled into the activities of the home, and managed by the staff, which, the researchers say, doesn't teach the women how to discover what they like to do for leisure.

The stark contrast of self-directed leisure against staff-directed leisure time concerned both researchers because the women in the study are approaching retirement and will soon have a lot of free time on their hands.

"If we don't provide people with the opportunity to experience choice and to learn [leisure](#) skills, their long-awaited [retirement](#) time could be quite empty," said Goodwin.

The findings are published in *Adapted [Physical Activity Quarterly](#)*.

Source: University of Alberta ([news](#) : [web](#))

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