

# York students apply critical race theory to the need for accessible housing

## Individuals with disabilities Issue: Housing

**Able Bodied Privilege:** Housing is built with able-bodied people in mind - they do not consider the impacts of having stairs or other structural aspects of housing that makes it inaccessible to people. When the government participates in building housing there are few considerations made to making housing as accessible as possible and accessible units are in high demand for more vulnerable populations.

**Discrimination:** Inaccessible and inadequate accommodations are often the only options available to persons with different abilities, resulting in living situations in which individuals must alter themselves to fit the housing unit versus the unit accommodating to fit their needs. The financial aspect that comes with the accommodation becomes burdensome to the individual. This form of discrimination is hidden and goes unnoticed.

**Prejudice:** People with disabilities are invisibilized and dehumanized so their needs are not considered when creating housing or housing programs. They are seen as being dependent and therefore, not prioritized for needed suitable independent housing. The efforts of the state to institutionalize people with disabilities reinforces the prejudice that they cannot live on their own.

**Powerlessness:** Dis/differently abled individuals are subject to the historical practice of institutionalization and prevention of individuals from living independently - there is often legal powerlessness as there is significant legislation both sanctioning their institutionalization, but also any potential recourse through courts to obtain independent and accessible/accommodated living is oppressive and restrictive. There is also the very physical aspect of powerlessness, inability to change the discriminatory practices in society that privilege able-bodied people,

e.g. being in a wheelchair and all houses in desired neighbourhood have stairs, being blind and housing notices not provided in braille

**Poverty:** Folx may not be able to afford housing due to lack of work or accessible work. Less than livable wages both working and subsidies, doesn't allow for easy payment of bills and housing all at the same time. Depending on the type of disability someone has, it can affect the ways you can access money. For example, folx with invisible disabilities may find it difficult to be approved for subsidies or housing and may be left to fend for themselves.

**Outcomes:** People with disabilities are unable to access housing that is suitable for their needs and often must live in housing that is unsafe or be institutionalized. People with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by poverty and housing that is available for people with lower incomes tends to be apartments or basement units. These types of housing are often inaccessible and tend to be rental housing. This means that people with disabilities are forced to make choices between finding suitable housing, living in an institution, or making their housing accessible on their own. Structural governments have not done enough to support the rights of people with disabilities to access housing