

Elizabeth Carlson

PhD

Department of Educational Psychology,
Faculty of Education

Image created in Edmonton

Collaborators:

Jacqueline Pei, Cheryl Poth, Vannesa Joly, Nicol
Patricny, Danielle Mattson, Maryse Beauregard, & the
Canada FASD Research Network

Images of Research Competition

University of Alberta

What Do You Call Home?

Semi-finalist (2020)

What is a home? Many unhoused individuals are described as homeless; however, they may not view themselves that way. We took great care to be intentional with our use of language when developing our community-led housing framework for individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Consider the use of the word unhoused, an experience of being without a house, versus homeless, deficit-based language describing a personal trait. If we begin by negating people's experiences of home, we take our first steps on the pathway towards responsive housing service for some of society's most vulnerable citizens with a focus on their shortfalls rather than their strengths. As scholars, we have the ability to shift that language and imagery. We have powerful teachings and guiding forces that drive our work - our guiding lights. These lights, when focused on with intention, lead us to carefully consider how we share information and ideas with others. When we shift to a person-centred approach to research and communication, we evolve, we do things differently, and can take those first few steps off what may have been the wrong path toward housing: "I have a home...I'm unhoused" (Park, 2016).