

# MENTALLY DISABLED ASSISTED LIVING: POTENTIAL DESIGN OPPORTUNITY

Peyton Wallace





## ADEQUATE HOUSING/RESOURCES FOR MENTALLY DISABLED ADULTS IS AN UNMET NEED.

Andrew is a 28 y/o adult suffering from severe autism and epilepsy. Unlike most adults his age, he is unable to support himself because of his neurological disabilities.

His parents act as caregivers, and are unable to retire because of their responsibilities to their son. State provided resources do not meet Andrew's needs.

Both Andrew and his parents are concerned about his future.

# ANDREW IS NOT UNLIKE MOST MENTALLY DISABLED ADULTS.

01

Assisted living for mentally disabled adults is very unaccessible to most families. Most are expensive, and often times have waiting lists exceeding decades.

02

Many times these homes are unsafe, discriminatory, and unfulfilling. Cases of abuse are common. Patients are often patronized and neglected.



# PROBLEM STATEMENT

How can group/assisted living for disabled adults be more accessible to their families and more self sufficient?



# WHO & WHY?

- 01 WHO should we talk to – caregivers, families, and (paramountly) the adults who need these services.
- 02 WHY are we doing this – the inadequate services for special needs adult is a burden on the adults, the caregivers, and the general public.

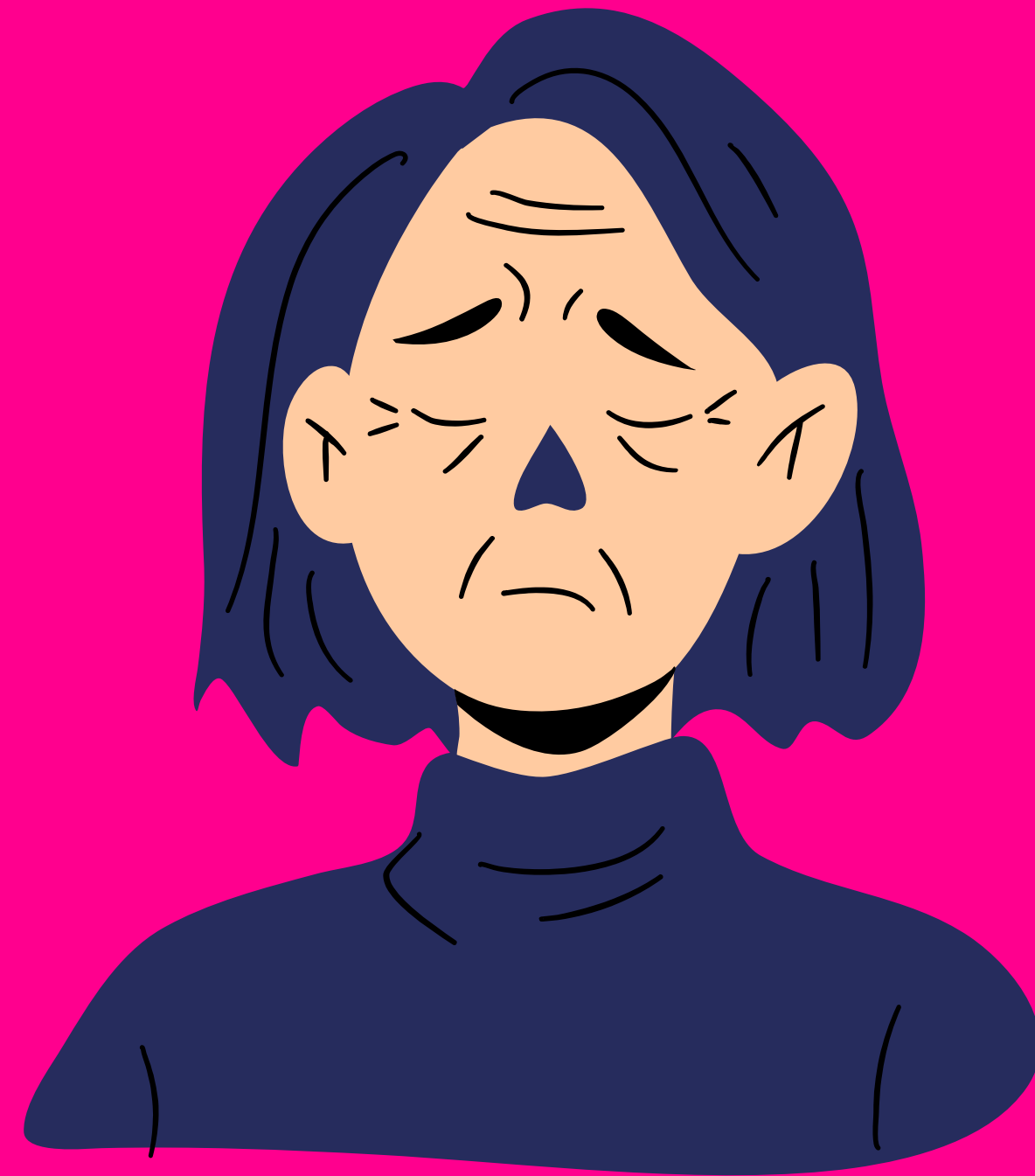




## INTERVIEW

I interviewed a mother of a severely autistic 19 year old. She shared her concerns for her sons future.

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# INTERVIEW INSIGHTS

The caregiver/mother who we'll call 'Jane' described her stresses with being a caregiver for a mentally disabled adult and her concerns for the future.

"[Son] will never be able to live by himself. He won't be able to drive, feed himself, he'll need someone to do all that for him."

She described her son working with a job coach for less than minimum wage, doing work like moving boxes or stocking shelves. "Someone has to be there right beside him guiding him along".

She expressed her anxieties about where her son will live in future when she can no longer provide for him. She has researched local assisted living facilities.

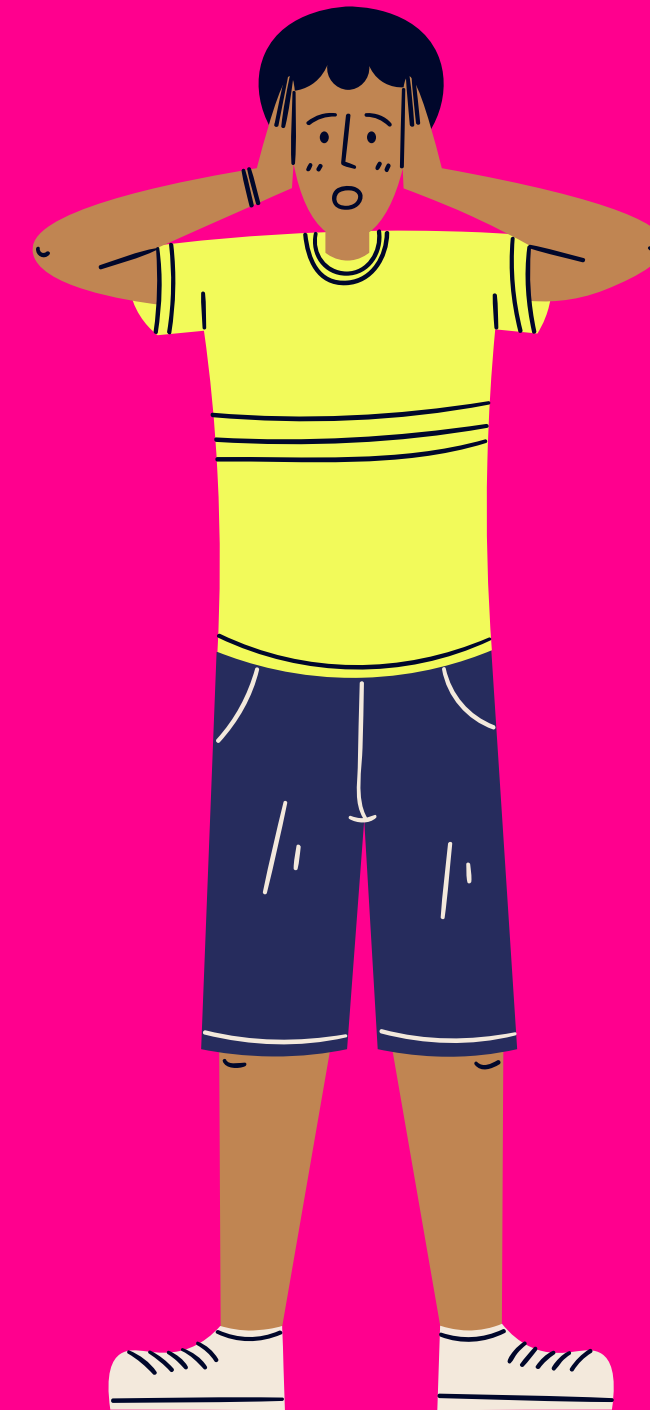
"Most of those homes have year long waiting lists. There's a lot of abuse, neglect ... you hear horror stories about kids being over-medicated, or [S.A-ed]"

"As a mom, it keeps me up at night."

# OUTSOURCED INTERVIEWS

The following are quotes taken from caregivers of mentally disabled adults, published in a scientific journal titled "The Family Challenge of Caring for the Chronically Mentally Ill: A Phenomenological Study".

- "The participants were asked a common question: 'What is your experience in caring for your mentally ill relatives?' "
- "I have felt excessive stress and sadness from all of this. It's just always on your mind—wondering what's going to happen next, what will happen when we're not around, or when we're not able to care for [son]"
- "I don't know what this illness really is. What worries me most is that I don't know if my behavior toward my brother is good."
- "The family needs to be educated about the illness, and educated about what services are out there. Mental health professionals need to become partners with us in care. The help needs to be offered to families, not asking them to seek out all the help on their own".





## Integrated Res. & Dev. Research Plan

What do we need to know | How will we learn it?

- |                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Patients struggles with ass. living | • interview w/ mentally disabled |
| • Shortcomings in homes               | • fly-on-the-wall observation    |
| • finances for these places           | • online research, call houses   |
| • Research & homing process           | • discuss w/ caregivers          |

## Questions

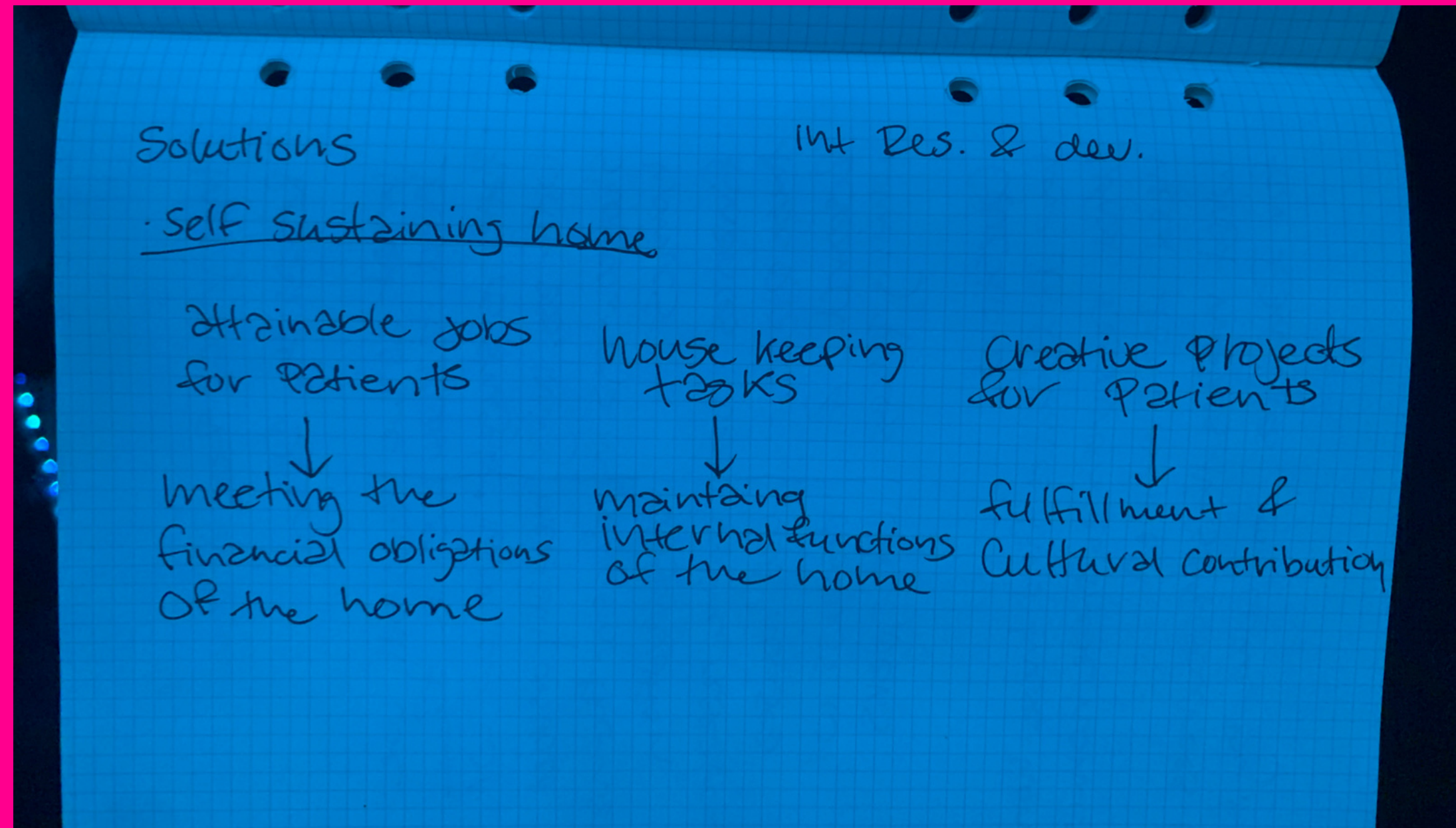
- how do families find these homes?
- What resources do these homes need to provide?
- What makes these resources hard for families to come by?

# RESEARCH PLAN

What do we need to know and how will we learn it?

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# POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS





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## CONCLUSION

A self-sufficient, sustainable assisted living home is attainable.

Creating a better program for mentally disabled adults benefits them, their families, and the public. Through interviewing and interacting with the plethora of adults and families who face this plight, I fully believe a better system can be implemented.