

Moving Freely in Long- Term Care Settings (The Environment: a Barrier or Enabler?)

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Session Objectives

- Describe environmental components of 3 national research projects
- Describe attributes found in LTC settings that enhance mobility
- Describe attributes that inhibit mobility
- Discuss policy decisions in LTC settings that impact mobility (unintended consequences)

Definition of Physical Environment

Objective, measurable characteristics of indoor & outdoor spaces including light levels, furnishings, equipment, fixtures, interior decorations, noise, distances, odors, room arrangements & room configuration

Ecological Theory (Lawton & Nahemow)

- Behaviors (mobility) a function of interaction of resident's physical/mental condition & features in physical environment
- Environment has potential to assist mobility or create obstacles to mobility
- Docility hypothesis-the lower the level of functioning, the greater the influence of environment on behavior (mobility)

Ecological Theory (continued)

- Environment makes certain functions impossible (stairs) while encouraging others (automatic door opener)
- Excessive demand and low competence lead to negative outcomes & disuse
- Dynamic not static -- changing levels of functioning lead to changing environmental demands (hip fracture)

Assisted Living Home Care Connection Funded by RWJ Foundation

- Study of apartment style AL & AL services
- 6 states, 10 facilities/state, 10 residents/facility – 600 total residents
- Data collection checklist for environment
 - Facility level 112 items (shared space)
 - Apartment level 87 items (private)
- Home-like & function enhancing features
- Possibility to age-in-place

Resident Characteristics with Environmental Implications (N=600)

Cane	25%
Walker	45%
Wheel chair	28%
Electric cart	03%
Continence products	49%
Mechanical lift	02%
Blind or great difficulty seeing	16%

Assisted Living Facilities - 24 to 267 Units

Studio 57% 1 Bedroom 36%

2 Bedrooms 03% 2+ Bedrooms 04%



Kitchen Characteristics

Overhead light	85%
Lever faucet	81%
Storage 3-4' floor	80%
Microwave	74%
Microwave counter height	39%
Micro work space	35%
Clearance below sink	15%



Bedroom & Bathroom Characteristics

Bath

- Shower grab bars 98%
- Mn 5' turn radius 84%
- 3' adjacent toilet 84%
- Pull cord 83%
- Sink clearance 40%
- Roll in shower 32%

Bedroom

- Night light/switch 66%
- Adjustable rods 53%

