



The Role of the Outdoors in Residential Environments for Aging

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Discover the physical and mental benefits of outdoor spaces for the elderly

The Role of the Outdoors in Residential Environments for Aging presents new insights on the positive role nature and the outdoors can play in the lives of older adults, whether they live in the community, in an assisted-living environment, or in a skilled nursing facility. Current research suggests that increased contact and activity levels with the outdoors can be an important therapeutic resource for the elderly, with significant mental and physical health benefits. This unique book examines how to make the most of outdoor spaces in residential settings, exploring attitudes and patterns of use, the effect of plants, the physical environment, and health-related outcomes from contact with nature and enhanced physical activity.

The famous landscape architect Luis Barragan once said, “A garden must combine the poetic and the mysterious with serenity and joy.” The outdoors is a highly desired and potentially valuable resource for older people, making it essential for design practitioners, care providers, policy planners, and consumer advocates to target specific ways of planning communities and long-term care facilities, as well as activity programs, to maximize the use of outdoor spaces in residential settings. The benefits are many: increased well-being for residents, improved market appeal and stabilized occupancy levels for long-term care providers, increased market share for design practitioners, and a better understanding of this under-researched issue by academics. The book’s contributors provide perspectives from a variety of disciplines, including architecture and landscape architecture, gerontology, environmental psychology, and horticulture therapy.

The Role of the Outdoors in Residential Environments for Aging includes:

- interviews with residents living in three different long-term care facilities about the significance of outdoor green spaces in their environment
- reasons for underused spaces in housing projects and recommendations for site redesigns
- the features of outdoor environments that attract—and deter—usage
- specific recommendations for older adults of a particular culture
- the reasons older people engage in indoor and outdoor physical activities
- an environmental support model
- the effects of viewing natural landscapes on the blood pressures and heart rates of elderly women
- restorative experiences in natural and built environments
- design features, outdoor amenities, and green elements
- and much more

for long-term care providers, design practitioners, academics, and anyone else who provides mental and physical health care to older adults.

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