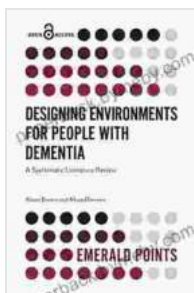


# Designing Environments for People with Dementia: Enhancing Well-being and Quality of Life



## Designing Environments for People with Dementia: A Systematic Literature Review (Emerald Points)

by Lazarus Lynch

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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Dementia is a complex and progressive condition that affects millions of people worldwide. As the population ages, the number of individuals living with dementia is expected to rise significantly. Creating supportive environments that meet the unique needs of people with dementia is crucial for enhancing their well-being and quality of life.

This comprehensive guide provides evidence-based design principles and practical strategies for designing environments that promote orientation, reduce agitation, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose. With a focus on person-centered care and aging-in-place, this guide empowers healthcare professionals, architects, interior designers, and family caregivers to create environments that support the cognitive, emotional, and physical needs of individuals with dementia.

## **Evidence-Based Design Principles**

Evidence-based design (EBD) is a systematic approach to designing environments that improve health outcomes. In the context of dementia care, EBD involves incorporating research findings and best practices into the design process to create environments that enhance the well-being of individuals with dementia.

Key EBD principles for designing environments for people with dementia include:

- **Orientation:** Providing clear and consistent cues to help individuals with dementia find their way around and understand their

surroundings.

- **Wayfinding:** Designing spaces that are easy to navigate, with clear signage and landmarks that promote orientation and wayfinding.
- **Cognitive Stimulation:** Creating environments that stimulate cognitive function and support memory, attention, and problem-solving abilities.
- **Sensory Stimulation:** Incorporating elements that stimulate the senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) to enhance well-being and reduce agitation.
- **Safety:** Designing spaces that are safe and secure, reducing the risk of falls, wandering, and other accidents.
- **Dignity:** Creating environments that respect the dignity and individuality of people with dementia, promoting a sense of belonging and purpose.

## **Practical Strategies for Design**

Based on the EBD principles outlined above, here are some practical strategies for designing environments for people with dementia:

### **Color and Lighting**

- Use high-contrast colors to differentiate between spaces and objects, making them easier to see and identify.
- Avoid using overly bright or flickering lights, which can cause discomfort and agitation.
- Provide natural light whenever possible, as it helps regulate sleep-wake cycles and improves mood.

## **Layout and Floor Plan**

- Create simple and easy-to-navigate floor plans, reducing the risk of confusion and disorientation.
- Use clear and consistent signage to help individuals find their way around.
- Provide multiple paths and landmarks to promote wayfinding and reduce the likelihood of getting lost.

## **Furnishings and Equipment**

- Choose furniture that is comfortable, supportive, and easy to move around.
- Use non-slip flooring and grab bars to reduce the risk of falls.
- Provide assistive technology, such as wander alarms and medication reminders, to support safety and independence.

## **Sensory Stimulation**

- Incorporate sensory elements, such as music, scents, and tactile surfaces, to stimulate the senses and reduce agitation.
- Create sensory gardens or indoor spaces with plants, water features, and natural elements to provide soothing and calming experiences.
- Use aromatherapy and light therapy to enhance mood and promote relaxation.

## **Dignity and Belonging**

- Involve people with dementia in the design process, respecting their preferences and experiences.

- Create spaces that are familiar and meaningful, triggering positive memories and a sense of belonging.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction and community involvement, fostering a sense of purpose and well-being.

Designing environments for people with dementia requires a holistic approach that incorporates evidence-based principles and practical strategies. By creating supportive spaces that promote orientation, reduce agitation, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose, we can significantly enhance the well-being and quality of life for individuals living with dementia.

This comprehensive guide provides a wealth of knowledge and resources for healthcare professionals, architects, interior designers, and family caregivers who are involved in the design of dementia care environments. By working together, we can create environments that support the cognitive, emotional, and physical needs of people with dementia, enabling them to live with dignity and respect.

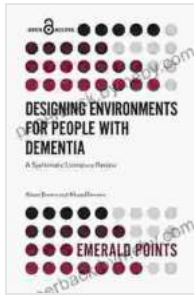
Remember, a well-designed environment can make a world of difference in the lives of people with dementia and their families. By embracing the principles and strategies outlined in this guide, we can create environments that support their well-being and help them thrive in the face of this challenging condition.

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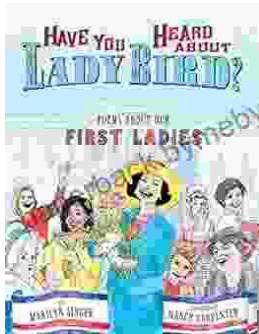
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