

Is this really home?

Ethical perspectives of what it means to create a "home" in long-term care



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Consider ...

➤ What home means to you ...

Historical Context 19th Century Poorhouses



Historical Context

- 1920s and 1930s seniors accounted for 5% of the population
- 1950s and 1960s they accounted for less than 8%
- High fertility rates
- Low life expectancy

Current Context

Different today...

- Low fertility rates
- Longer life expectancy
- Between 1981 and 2005, the number of seniors in Canada increased from 2.4 to 4.2 million and their share of the total population increased from 9.6% to 13.1%.

Current Context

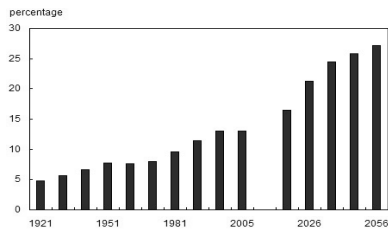
- For the first time in history, Canadian adults have more parents than children.
- 60% of those over the age of 50 have a surviving parent versus only 16% in 1960.
- Seniors currently make up 13% of our population yet account for 44% of our health costs.

Future Context

- By 2056 the proportion of Canadians over 65 years and older will more than double to over 1 in 4.
- The proportion of older seniors 80 years and over will triple to about 1 in 10, compared with about 1 in 30 in 2005.

Cranswick, K. & Dosman, D. (2008). *Elder care: What we know today*. Statistics Canada.

Percentage of Canadian population comprised of persons aged 65 or older, 1921 to 2005 and projections to 2056



Sources: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Canada; populations projections for Canada, provinces and territories, 2005.

Current Context in Nova Scotia

- In Canada, seniors' share of the population is largest in Saskatchewan (14.8%) and Nova Scotia (14.2%) and the smallest in Alberta (10.5%).
- Share of the population comprised of seniors in N.S. is projected to increase from 14.2% to 27.7% between 2005-2026 - an increase of 13.4 percentage points.
- Over 26% of seniors live in rural areas - 40% of which are characterized by limited proximity or integration with urban area services.
- Over last 20 years increase in aging immigrants and changes in source countries from which they have come. i.e. in past Western/Northern Europe and U.S. now increase Asia, Middle East

Sources: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Canada; populations projections for Canada, provinces and territories, 2005

Current Context in Nova Scotia

- Chronic health challenges - rise in diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, dementia
- Down-load services from acute care to community care
- Resource/funding issues
- Re-definition of "Senior" with baby boomers
- LTC Facility Requirements as recommended by the N.S. Government in July 2007 - each resident bedroom must be a minimum of 190 square feet.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Canada; populations projections for Canada, provinces and territories, 2005

"Having a sense of home is integral to the preservation of self-identity allowing for the confirmation of self-worth and the continuation of growth and vital involvement in life".

Hammer, R.M. (1999). *The lived experience of being at home: A phenomenological investigation*. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, Nov. 25.

"To have every Nova Scotian live well in a place they can call home"

Ethical features of home

Home is complex cultural construct embodying both material and ideological aspects.

Julia Twigg, 1990

Ethical features of home

➤ Ethics of Privacy

The absence of privacy is one of the most disliked aspects of living in hostels or residential homes

Allan and Crow 1989

Ethics of Privacy

- Ability to decide
- To be at ease
- Place of security
- Personal expression
- Spatial ordering

Ability to Decide

- Ability to reason and make choices (exercise autonomy and control. Independence)
- Capacity to exclude (shut the door to outside world, restrict access to certain people and times, etc.)

Association with Ease

- To 'be at home' is to 'be at ease'
- Don't have to be anyone or anything else
- Able to influence surroundings with little to no effort
- Conceal ways life falls short of social ideals

Place of Security

- Haven from the harsh world outside
- Respect
- Able to receive help
- Could also be place of restriction and possible abuse

Personal Expression

- Extension of self in material surroundings
- Objects can be links to past, people and events
- Closeness to loved ones and meaning
- Desire to be noticed

Spatial Ordering

- Pattern of public and private space
- Binary categories
- Social and individual

Framework

1. Identify and describe the situation
2. Identify and describe the different possible alternatives
3. Assess the different alternatives
4. Decide, implement and evaluate the chosen alternative

Mary is a woman aged 80. She is small and thin and is sitting in a wheelchair. In conversations with her it is noticeable that she suffers from forgetfulness to some extent but she is otherwise lucid. Mary has recently moved into a room of her own at the nursing home. Before that she lived and managed on her own. The living room at the nursing home is a large light room with a couch at one end and an eating area at the other. A large TV is on at a high volume at one end of the room, showing a foreign movie. Mary is sitting on her own with her hands on her knees, looking tired. She does not seem to care about the TV. After a while she tries to get up and says, half-way up, to no-one in particular: 'I want to have a nap in my room.' Staff members, Alice and Sara, are at the other end of the room, doing something at the kitchen counter. Mary repeats: 'I want to have a nap in my room.' Alice responds from where she is standing: 'No you can't, or you will not sleep at night.' Mary sits down with a sigh. The staff continue with their chores.

Ethics of Privacy

- > Ability to decide
- > To be at ease
- > Place of security
- > Personal expression
- > Spatial ordering

What kind of Rocker do you want to be?



Summing up...

“Is it better to burn out,
than to fade away?”



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