

Memory of Self & Place

DEMENTIA CARE AT LOUIS BRIER HOME & HOSPITAL

The ISSUES

215
RESIDENTS
50 YEAR
OLD BUILDING

Aging Long Term Care Facilities

Dementia

A usually progressive condition (such as Alzheimer's disease) marked by the development of multiple cognitive deficits (such as memory impairment, aphasia, and the inability to plan and initiate complex behavior).

Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary

In 1945, 14 friends known as the Hebrew Men's Cultural Club shared a vision to create a home for Jewish seniors in Vancouver. That home, initially built to accommodate 13 residents, was established in 1946. The current Louis Brier Home and Hospital was built at 41st and Oak in 1968; and today, we are home to 215 residents in a 50-year-old building.

In the 1960 and 70s across Canada, long term care facilities were built for residents requiring care at the time, and those residents were far younger, more mobile and living with less acute care needs. These long term care facilities were built like hospitals: one storey buildings with long hallways to large, multiple-bed resident rooms, centralized activity and dining spaces, focused on safety and security for residents.

Research reveals that this older building design does not meet the needs of residents with dementia. The BC Ministry of Health's Residential Care Staffing Review (2017) states, while addressing a shortage of long term care beds must be a priority, so too must be the renovation or placement of older bed stock with improved facility design, including single rooms with a private washroom and shower, walking loops and smaller dining areas.

The physical environment is a critical component for a therapeutic setting

- ✓ Reduces Agitation
- ✓ Increases Social Contact
- ✓ Allows for Independence

In particular, care homes are generally poorly equipped to meet the care needs of their residents, which are more complex now than when these facilities were originally built. For example, many care homes do not meet current building safety standards and the limited provincial and municipal funding available is usually insufficient to bring them up to code. (Bedlam in BC's Continuing Care Sector, 2019)

The physical environment is a critical component of a therapeutic setting for people with dementia. Over the last three decades, there has been a growing body of literature that has recognized and provided evidence on the effect of unsupportive physical environments. A well-designed supportive physical environment has been shown to foster positive behaviours, such as reduced agitation, increased social contact, and less dependence in conducting activities of daily living (Chaudhury and Cooke: Design Matters in Dementia Care, 2014)

Growing Complexity of Care Needs in Long Term Care

A look at Canadian demographics suggests that by the year 2036, 25% of the population in Canada will be aged 65 and older, and within that number, the proportion of older seniors (aged 75+) is also growing (Bedlam in BC's Continuing Care Sector, 2019). With the number of seniors growing, so too does the complexity of their care needs.

In BC, the average age for a long term care home resident is 85 years old, with 63% of these residents diagnosed with some level of dementia, and one-third of those living with severe cognitive impairments. At Louis Brier, our numbers are more profound. The average age of our resident is 85 years (with residents ages ranging from 51 to 108 years) yet 81% of our residents have been diagnosed on the dementia spectrum.

Louis Brier is faced with an overwhelming number of residents living with dementia and an aging building that does not support their needs.

AVERAGE AGE of long term care home residents

85

% OF RESIDENTS DIAGNOSED on the dementia spectrum

AVERAGE CARE HOME

63%

LOUIS BRIER HOME & HOSPITAL

81%

The QUESTION

How to Support Residents in Aging Facilities?

Vancouver Coastal Health latest update on the Facility Condition Index marks Louis Brier as a building in 'fair' condition and mark a replacement timeline in another eight to ten years. While Louis Brier plans its future with Vancouver Coastal Health, our immediate question becomes how to best support and enhance the lives of our residents living here today. Specifically, how do we update the building to enhance life for our current residents without spending a significant amount on capital expenses?

What changes can aging care facilities undertake on a limited budget to make a significant impact on our residents?

Louis Brier's Facility Condition Index



NOW
= fair condition

8 to 10 YEARS
= replacement timeline

The SOLUTION



Research
Environmental
Upgrades with
Limited Financial
Resources

Louis Brier is partnering with Dr. Habib Chaudhury, Chair and Professor in the Department of Gerontology at Simon Fraser University to develop a project that supports the needs of our current residents with relatively modest environmental interventions in the existing facility to create less institutional environment. An evaluation of the intervention could be shared with other long-term care facilities across Canada.

Dr. Habib Chaudhury has extensive research experience in the field of Environmental Gerontology with a specific focus on the importance of the built environment on residents' quality of life and wellbeing in residential care homes. He conducts research and consulting work in the following areas: physical environment for people with dementia in long-term care facilities, memories of home and personhood in dementia, community planning and urban design for active aging, and dementia-friendly communities.

“Person-centred care, a movement that started twenty-five years ago, looks at a person in a more holistic way, not only the physical and biological needs but also the psychosocial and spiritual care needs,” says Chaudhury. “The care model talks about the importance of personal dignity, choice, preference and life history. These are considerations that need to be taken into account.”

**“Person-centred
care looks at a
person in a more
holistic way...”**

Chaudhury's book, *Remembering Home*, emphasizes the importance of home in the lives of memory-challenged adults, offers insight into the richness and variety of life experiences associated with the idea of home, and suggests ways in which caregivers can encourage reminiscences to improve the quality of life for those with dementia or associated diseases.

The PROJECT



Pre and Post Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Small Scale Environmental Changes to support Person Centred Care for Persons with Dementia

The Special Care Unit at Louis Brier is a 17-bed secured unit for the Brier's residents living with the most severe dementia. Like the rest of the facility, the space design and layout reflects the institutional style of the rest of the facility – long hallways, centralized dining. There is a great deal of artwork in the Unit (donated by the community) to make the space more family-like, yet every resident's door is painted the same colour and there are no visual wayfinding clues.

Under the leadership of Dr. Chaudhury, an SFU graduate student in the gerontology program will conduct an environmental assessment of this special unit through use of assessment tools, discussions with the care team and observing the residents' behaviours. Based on this evaluation, recommendations would be made for modest physical environmental modifications to promote residents' quality of life. All of the suggestions would be developed and implemented on a modest budget without capital expenditures.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUGGESTIONS

- Modifying artwork displayed in the Unit to include artwork with appropriate content, such as landscape scenery and abstract art
- Adding memory boxes outside resident's room to support orientation and wayfinding
- Personalization of door designs
- Wayfinding cues in the hallways
- Opportunities for positive stimulation and engagement activities on the interior walking paths



For more information, please contact:

Sheila Kern
Executive Director

Phone: (604) 261-5550
Email: sheila@louisbrier.com

www.thelouisbrierfoundation.com