

# Dementia-*Friendly* Design Considerations

Knowledge to Practice Recommendations:

## DOORWAYS

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# DOORWAYS, a Design Intervention



*The Willowgrove LTC, Ancaster*

# Design and Dementia CoP

- **WHAT:** Sharing, promoting and facilitating the integration of evidence-informed dementia friendly design to improve care for persons with dementia
- **HOW:** Series of webinars to share collective wisdom, insight, and effort in brainstorming, researching, and/or creating practical dementia friendly knowledge to practice resources to aid in the adoption best practice
- **WHY:** To improve quality of life and dementia care through improved environmental design of care settings (including physical, social, and emotional design components)

# Learning Objectives

- Highlight how exit seeking and other responsive behaviours of persons with dementia can be decreased by drawing attention away from doorways
- Outline a set of ‘knowledge to practice’ recommendations based on quality literature and practice knowledge
- Learn from one another about the trials and successes of implementing doorway interventions

# Research and Evidence

- A supportive environment (both physical and social) are key social determinants of health and identified as a key component to full engagement in community<sup>1</sup>
- Changes related to aging and cognition
- Importance of “Place” and “Familiar”

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<sup>1</sup> WHO, 2002; Health Canada, 2006; Roundtable for Future Planning, 2006

## It's Important and It's Complex...

- There is a continual balance between many factors related to design considerations and implementation:
  - Individual needs for the resident
  - Compliance and legislated standards
  - Time and resources
  - Established design of buildings



So, now that we know this...

How do we develop constructive strategies to assist persons with dementia to make sense of their environment and improve their sense of well-being?

# Dementia-*Friendly* Design Considerations

- series of ‘Knowledge to Practice Recommendations’
- important physical design elements to facilitate persons with dementia and their caregivers to make sense of their environment and improve well-being
- living or dynamic documents (continually edited and updated) by the AKE Design and Dementia Community of Practice
- emerging quality evidence and the integration of both practice-based and experiential knowledge of those caring for persons with dementia



# Why Doorways?

- People have a natural interest to go in and out of doors.
- Persons with dementia (PWDs) do not lose this interest, however may lack judgment as to what will happen if they do enter or exit from one area to another.
- The inability to go out a door can cause a person with dementia great anxiety and frustration.
- Ideal environments will be designed to avoid bringing attention to exits.
- Where high traffic exits exist, whenever/wherever possible it is best to lead PWDs attention away from doors using positive cueing or redirection with other interesting stimuli.

# Dementia-Friendly Design Recommendations


1. Camouflage Restricted Areas
2. Therapeutic Redirection
3. Enhanced Access to Safe Areas
4. Positioning of Prompts
5. Doorway Entrance Seating
6. Limitations to Doorway/Elevator Traffic
7. Door Code Redirection
8. Enhanced Privacy

Alzheimer Knowledge Exchange

## Doorways

The following recommendations are intended to promote individual will being and address one's natural interest in going in and out of doors. Persons with dementia (PWDs) do not lose this interest, however may lack judgment as to what will happen if they do enter or exit from one area to another. [See Appendix 6, Appendix 7](#). If a PWD is prone to look or go outside, one must first assess their safety and determine if they are able to satisfy this need. Please reference the Fire Code and Long-Term Care Home regulations for requirements.

Ideally environments will be designed to avoid bringing attention to exits, however, where high traffic exits exist, whenever/whenever possible in a best to lead PWDs away from doors using positive cueing or redirection with other interesting stimuli (eg. aquarium, life skills station).



To lead PWDs to, and engage them with another area, redirection can be as simple as

- > having an open door to a safe area beside secured door, or
- > offering sensory cues like the smell of freshly baked bread, vanilla, or coffee to draw people away to a safe area

DEMENTIA-Friendly Design Considerations

### Camouflage Restricted Areas

**Recommendation:** Do not design or restrict areas (e.g. staff/maintenance doors), co-resident rooms and exit doors from dementia units for visual redirection/blending.

**Strategy for camouflage/restriction include:**

- paint/wallpaper from the same shade/pattern as the surrounding walls
- cover handrails/pushbars with a cloth agreed to the same color/pattern(s)
- place large bold grid lines, a large STOP sign, or sign that states "Some of residents like to see your room" in front of doors (8.8)
- add blinds, or other window coverings, to doorway windows (consider translucent film/placing shutters that do not seal)
- place a STOP sign, Vision / Magnify fabric ribbon, or signpost (please refer to way-finding/signage recommendations) in front of doors (8.8)

### Therapeutic Redirection

**Recommendation:** Use pleasant seating / social interest areas available in areas away from exit doors and promote their use.

**Strategy:**

- provide, guide and assist residents in reading areas with books
- bird watching areas with binoculars and directional signs for staff to reference (i.e. "Look for the robin")
- aquarium

### Enhanced Access to Safe Areas

**Recommendation:** Use doorway design that enhances access to safe wandering areas.

**Strategy:**

- doorway lead to secure outdoor areas and / or safe wandering paths
- doorway use low handles for independent use

### Positioning of Prompts

**Recommendation:** Place sign instructions above or at eye level.

### Doorway Entrance Seating

**Recommendation:** Provide seating just inside building entrances to allow vision time to adjust. Avoid seating areas near dementia unit entrances.

**Strategy:**

- provide dementia appropriate seating area (eg. bench, chairs, etc) close to building entrance
- use therapeutic redirection strategies for strategies regarding dementia unit doors

### Limitations to Doorway/Elevator Traffic

**Recommendation:** Ensure exits from dementia units are low-traffic areas.

**Strategy:**

- encourage staff and visitors to use stairwells and alternative entrances as much as possible
- have services staff use alternative entrance to the unit and/or consider timing of service/traffic
- when possible, have showers outside of secure area

### Door Code Redirection

**Recommendation:** Incorporate door / elevator code pads into visual redirection adaptations.

**Strategy:**

- keypad as part of focal shelf design or wall painting
- incorporate up/down code pad

### Enhanced Privacy

**Recommendation:** Consider Double Doors to enhance privacy and offer opportunities for engagement.

**Strategy:**

- install for individual rooms or activity areas to limit/unlimited entry to bedrooms

Do you have design considerations to suggest? Please send us your feedback by visiting the Alzheimer Knowledge Exchange and submitting your questions, and / or comments to the Design and Dementia Knowledge to Practice Recommendations Online Feedback Form located in the Design and Dementia Community of Practice website: [www.alzcan.ca/communities/design](http://www.alzcan.ca/communities/design)

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### Acknowledgements

Alzheimer Knowledge Exchange Design and Dementia Community of Practice is pleased to thank the following Dementia-Friendly Design document authors on DOORS. This is the second in a series of dementia-friendly design considerations documents with permission have been adapted and build upon both the foundational work and dementia-friendly hospital and/or regional services programs of various designs.

ALZ KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

DEMENTIA-Friendly Design Considerations is a series of Knowledge to Practice Recommendations for dementia-friendly design practices to follow the needs of people with dementia and caregivers in the same or other environments and improve the quality of life for people with dementia and caregivers. The Knowledge to Practice Recommendations are for people with dementia who will be affected by the design and construction of their living and care environments. The design and construction of their living and care environments are a part of the design and construction of their living and care environments.

Do you have design considerations to suggest? Please send us your feedback by visiting the Alzheimer Knowledge Exchange and submitting your questions, and / or comments to the Design and Dementia Knowledge to Practice Recommendations Online Feedback Form located in the Design and Dementia Community of Practice website: [www.alzcan.ca/communities/design](http://www.alzcan.ca/communities/design)

DEMENTIA-Friendly Design Considerations

# CAMOUFLAGE RESTRICTED AREAS

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Adapt doorways to restricted areas (e.g. staff/ maintenance doors), co-resident rooms and exit doors from dementia units for visual redirection / blending
- *Strategies include:*
  - ✓ paint/wallpaper doors the same shade/pattern as the surrounding walls
  - ✓ cover handles/panic bars with a cloth apron of the same colour/pattern
  - ✓ place large bold grid lines, a large STOP sign, or sign that states "[name of resident] this is not your room" in front of doors
  - ✓ add blinds, or other window coverings to doorway windows (consider translucent film /glazing that shows shadows but not details)
  - ✓ place a STOP sign, Velcro / magnet fabric ribbon, or signage (please refer to way-finding section of signage recommendations) in front of doors



*Grace Villa, Hamilton*



*Pine Villa, Stoney Creek*

# THERAPEUTIC REDIRECTION

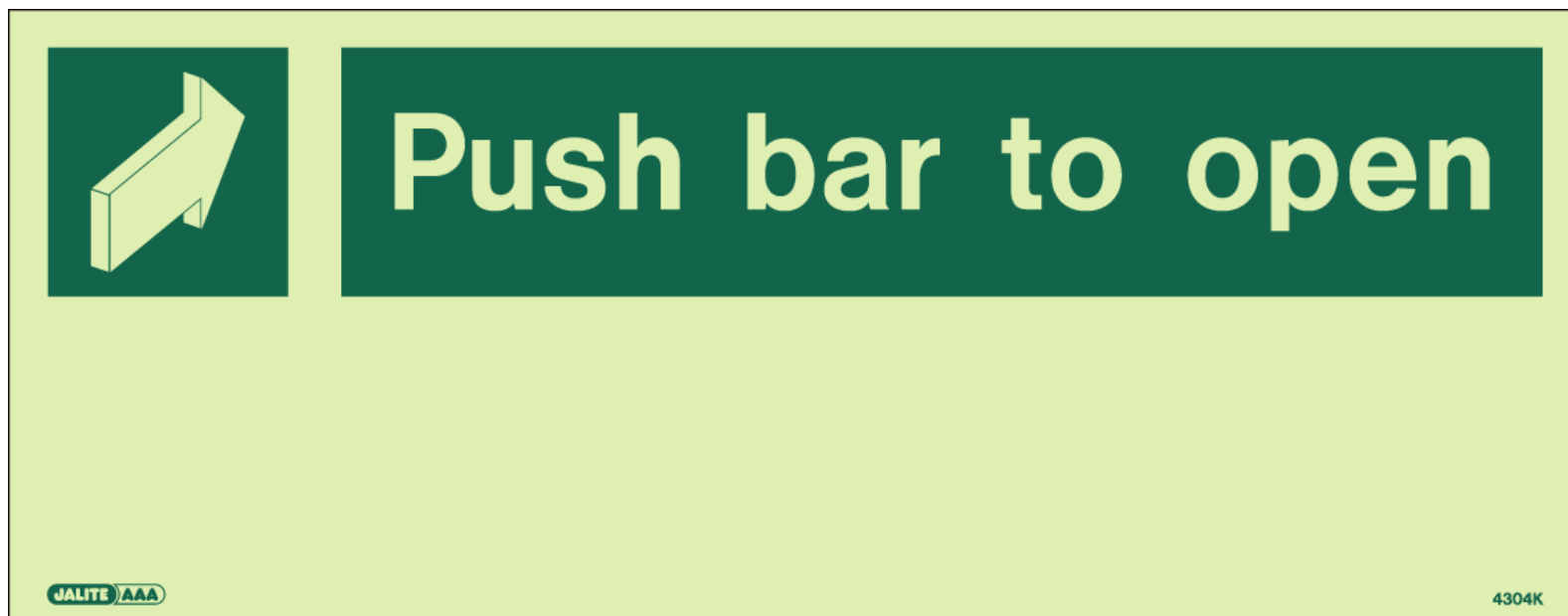
- RECOMMENDATION: Make pleasant seating / special interest areas available in areas away from exit doors and promote their use
- *Strategies include:*
  - ✓ provide, guide and settle residents in reading areas with books
  - ✓ bird watching areas with binoculars and directive signage for staff to reference (i.e. "Look for the robins")
  - ✓ aquariums

## ENHANCED ACCESS TO SAFE AREAS

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Provide doorway design that enhances access to safe wandering areas
- *Strategies include:*
  - ✓ doorways lead to secure outdoor areas and / or safe wandering paths
  - ✓ doorways are visually distinctive from the wall
  - ✓ doorways use lever handles for independent

## POSITIONING OF PROMPTS

- RECOMMENDATION: Post Fire Exit instructions above or at eye level



# DOORWAY ENTRANCE SEATING

- **RECOMMENDATION:** Provide seating just inside building entrances to allow vision time to adjust. Avoid seating areas near dementia unit entrances
- *Strategies include:*
  - ✓ provide elder-appropriate seating area (e.g. bench, chairs, etc.) close to building entrance
  - ✓ see therapeutic redirection section for
  - ✓ strategies regarding dementia unit doors







# LIMITATIONS TO DOORWAY / ELEVATOR TRAFFIC

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Ensure exits from dementia units are low-traffic areas
- *Strategies include:*
  - ✓ encourage staff and visitors to use stairwells and alternative entrances as much as possible
  - ✓ have service staff use alternative entrance to the unit and/or consider timing of service traffic
  - ✓ when possible, locate elevators outside of secure area

# Elevator and Code Pad Redirection



*Hamilton Continuing Care, Hamilton*

# DOOR CODE REDIRECTION

- RECOMMENDATION:  
Incorporate door / elevator code pads into visual redirection adaptations
- *Strategies include:*
  - ✓ keypad as part of bookshelf design or wall painting
  - ✓ incorporate upside down code pads



## ENHANCED PRIVACY

- RECOMMENDATION: Consider Dutch Doors to enhance privacy and offer opportunities for engagement

- *Strategies include:*

✓ install for individual rooms or activity areas to limit uninvited entry to bedrooms



# Review

- Doorways are an important design feature to the quality of life for persons living with dementia. Redirecting attention away from doorways can:
  - reduce anxiety
  - reduce exit-seeking behaviour
  - promote feelings of freedom and control
  - promote exercise and restorative functions
  - decrease boredom
  - increase ability to both actively and passively engage in a safe manner

You are invited to get involved!!!  
AKE Resource Centre:  
[www.akeontario.org](http://www.akeontario.org)

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