Chapter Eleven:
Community Well-Being: Living Arrangements and Social Interactions

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Life Space

- Life space is central to the discussion of living arrangements and age-friendly neighborhoods and communities.

- It is defined as the distance a person travels to perform activities over a specified time.

- It can range from the immediate surroundings of one’s bedroom to the home, neighborhood, or be city wide.
How and Where Elders Live Affects Their Well-Being

- The graying of the suburbs
The Aging Experience in Rural Urban, and Suburban Areas

- The living arrangements of older adults are linked to income, health status, availability of caregivers, and urban/rural/suburban location.

- Despite their lower income and poorer health, older persons in small communities tend to interact more with neighbors and friends than do those in urban settings.
  - **Graying of the suburbs.** A greater proportion of people who moved into suburban developments in the 1960s and 1970s have raised their children and remained in these communities after retirement. Fewer younger families move into these areas.

- There are disadvantages to aging in the suburbs, which are often ill equipped to address the needs of older residents.
The Aging Experience in Rural Urban, and Suburban Areas: Relocation

• Older adults are less likely to change residence than other age groups.

• In general, older people are less likely to move to a new area than are younger families.

• Relocation is more difficult for elders with multiple or severe physical or cognitive disabilities.
The Aging Experience in Rural Urban, and Suburban Areas: Relocation

- Moving from one city or house to another can be difficult, even if the move is voluntary.

**Figure 11.3** Relocation Rates, 2009-10

Housing Patterns of Older People

- The most common residential arrangements of older persons are independent housing, planned housing, and residential long-term care.
Housing Patterns of Older People: Independent Housing

- Over 90% of those 65 and older live in independent housing.
- Of the over 23 million older households, 80% are homeowners and 20% renters.
- High maintenance and utility costs may explain why more older householders spend more of their income on housing costs than younger adults.
- Older homes often lack energy-saving improvements and are costly to maintain as well.
Housing Patterns of Older People: Aging in Place

- **Aging in place** means continuing to live in a private home, community, or neighborhood. If supportive services are accessible, people are more likely to remain there and to avoid or delay relocation to a long-term care facility.
  - Age-friendly/livable communities
    - **Elder-friendly communities/livable or lifelong communities**
  - **Flexible housing** and **universal design**
Housing Patterns of Older People: Aging in Place

- Additional innovations for aging in place
  - Asset mapping
  - Naturally occurring retirement communities (NORC)
  - Village
  - Cohousing
  - Intentional (or niche) communities
  - Elder cottages
  - Mother-in-law units
  - Home sharing
Housing Patterns of Older People: Planned “Retirement” Housing

- Planned housing specifically for older persons encompasses government-subsidized housing for low-income elders and age-segregated housing such as assisted living, often geared toward middle- and upper-income older persons.

- A planned residential setting may be the best option for some older adults.

- The number and variety of residential options have grown in the past decade.

- For those with financial resources, there are two types of adult residential facilities: active adult or lifestyle communities and service-enriched housing.
Housing Patterns of Older People: Planned “Retirement” Housing

- **Continuing care retirement communities**, also known as life-care communities and continuum of care facilities, are the broadest type of service-enriched housing that recognizes that residents may need increasing levels of care over time.

- **Assisted living facilities** are a model of group housing with additional services, such as one meal a day, basic healthcare, 24-hour security, and some personal assistance.

- Private homes that offer long-term support
  - Adult family homes
  - Skilled nursing facilities
Social and Health Services to Promote Aging in Place

**FIGURE 11.5** Services to Support Aging in Place
Housing Patterns of Older People: Planned “Retirement” Housing

- **Culture change in long-term care:** Since the 1990s, there has been a major culture change and an emphasis on person-centered care.

- **Eden alternative:** One of the first national efforts aimed at changing nursing home culture, it is characterized by involving elders in decision-making and engaging them in meaningful activities, including caring for plants and pets in the home or volunteering in a child care center if there is one on site.

- **Green house:** A set-up in which 8-10 residents share a small home that looks like a single-family dwelling and does not have nursing stations, unlike the typical nursing home design. Residents interact in a share living and dining area but have private rooms and bathrooms.
Home and community-based services (HCBS) is a general label for residential and community-based long-term care options other than nursing homes; includes adult foster care, adult family homes, assisted living, etc.
Social and Health Services to Promote Aging in Place: Home Care

- Costs concerns drive other changes in home care, and services have grown dramatically.

- **Home healthcare** includes a variety of nursing, rehabilitation, and other therapy services, as well as assistance with personal care and household maintenance, which are provided to people who are homebound and have difficulty performing multiple ADLs.
Social and Health Services to Promote Aging in Place: Adult Day Care and Adult Day Health Care

- **Adult day care** allows the older person to remain at home but receive some health and social services outside the home.

- **Adult day health care (ADHCs)** are similar to ADCs, but are based on health rehabilitative model of long-term care with individualized care.
Housing Policy and Growing Housing Needs

• The major housing programs that benefit older adults involve subsidies to suppliers of housing to enable them to sell or rent housing for less than the prevailing market price.
  – Section 202
  – Section 8

• Federal funding has been in decline since the mid 1990s
Housing Policy and Growing Housing Needs: Homelessness

- Aging in place on the streets
  - A growing segment of the older population is homeless.
  - Homeless elders are composed of two different groups:
    - The chronic homeless
    - Lower- and middle-income Americans
Housing Policy and Growing Housing Needs: Aging in Place among Older Prisoners

- The number of older adult inmates has quadrupled in the past 25 years; this is because large numbers have aged in prison with life or long terms.

- Prisoners 50 and older are classified as “old.”

- **Geriatric or compassionate release** is the somewhat controversial approach of releasing nonviolent, older inmates to improve prisoner health status and reduce health costs in correction systems.