

# **Dementia Day Care Design:** *Solutions from an Interprofessional Student Practicum*

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## **Abstract**

Increasingly, Adult Day Care (ADC) is serving those elderly individuals experiencing dementia of the Alzheimer's Type, yet design guidance specifically developed for this place type remains lacking. This monograph presents discrete design interventions developed by architecture, interior design and landscape architecture students in an interprofessional practicum. Working with both design and care professionals and engaged related design research literature, students developed an understanding of the convoluted context of adult day care and the environmental issues typically confronted in adult day care settings. These issues may be understood in terms of social legibility; the socio-physical aspects of group size; and universal design. Each student developed a discrete design intervention that could be utilized to enhance the therapeutic milieu of large open spaces endemic to adult day care. These interventions are categorized as being of three types: spatial organization; partitions; and activity-oriented furniture. Each design solution is described graphically and verbally; is analyzed in terms of the design issues mentioned above; and finally evaluated in terms of its likely impact upon participant control; social affordance; and adaptability of the place.

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What became evident through this endeavor is that adult day care is a very different type of place in which to care for the cognitively-impaired and merits critical inquiry in its own right. It is a mistake to simply appropriate design suggestions developed for long-term care and applies them in an adult day care setting. The experiential quality and meaning of the two places is quite different. All of us involved in this project hope that this pilot study kindled interest in future students and design professionals to critically explore this place type and ask themselves "what kind of place should this be?"