

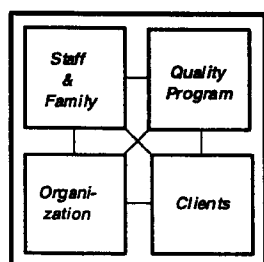


Introduction

Designing a Better Day

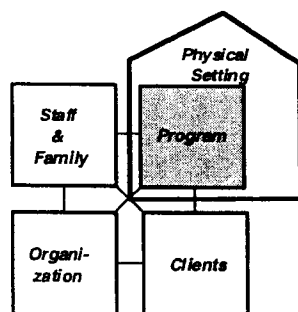
Introduction

What do we mean by "designing a better day" for adult and dementia day care clients and how can we most effectively meet this goal? Many of us are likely to think first of provision of a *quality program* with a rich range of activities and services. Program quality is surely central to our task; however we must also think of what is required to support such programs as well as their intentions and consequences.



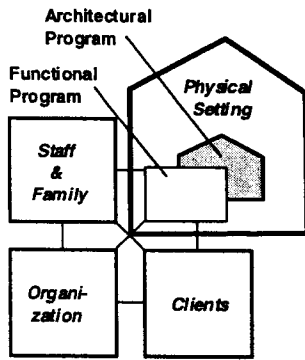
Human Resources

Provision of an effective program requires the marshaling of a range of human resources. First there must be a *knowledgeable and committed staff*, working within the context of a *supportive organization*. It is also essential to remember that "quality" is not an absolute; rather we must ensure that there is a match between that which a program offers and demands and the *desires and capabilities of the clients* that program is designed to serve. And quality care always requires the active involvement of informal as well as formal caregivers -- clients' *families* and friends. Organization, staff, families, and clients together form the human systems of day care.



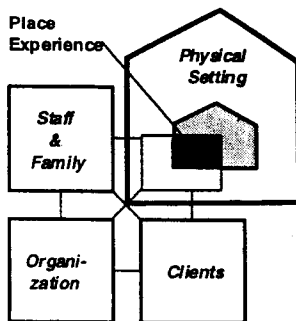
Less often recognized as a resource in our attempts at "designing a better day" is the *physical setting* within which adult and dementia day care services are provided. This omission likely reflects the current circumstances of day care and the necessity of "making do" in borrowed spaces in no way designed or redesigned in response to the needs of frail or cognitively impaired older persons or their caregivers.

It isn't easy for us to image the physical characteristics of a building for adult and dementia day care; we do not yet have a socially shared and sanctioned understanding of what this new place type is "supposed to be." Furthermore, the physical setting tends, for all of us, to be a "background" variable, not consciously considered until the heating fails or the roof leaks.



Thus we need to consciously "program" the spaces of an adult and dementia day care center much as we program the activities to be contained within those spaces. First we need to specify not only who will be doing what, when, and with whom; this is the **functional program**. We must also specify *where* these activities will be taking place and the desired characteristics of such places -- in terms of size, location, sensory properties, furnishings and equipment; this is the **architectural program**. When activity takes place within a physical setting, human experience is created. This makes it important in our planning stages to project the experiences we want to create. Should this place be a place of privacy? Of social interaction? These are attributes of experience and should be identified for each place -- this is the **experiential program**.

Indeed it is likely the case that the physical setting is even more important in adult and dementia day care centers than in most other place types. The physical setting has the potential of serving as a "mnemonic" for the cognitively impaired. This goes way beyond the simple naming of places, overstuffed furniture, personal momentos (so called "clutter"), TV, long curtains with a valence, table lamps, carpeting -- all go into shaping our experience of "Living Room." Clearly understood places -- "den," "dining room," "living room" - can serve to prompt those behaviors deemed appropriate and adaptive in each.



At the point of intersection of human and physical sub-systems -- at their vital center -- is the *experience of place* which they create. Place experience reflects but goes far beyond the program. People's experience of a place surely includes what they do within it-- the activities listed in a functional program -- but it is much more. What aspects of a day care center do its occupants perceive? What are their memories of this place? How do they feel about what they see, hear and do? Is it experienced as a place of privacy or sociability, tranquil or stimulating? What meaning do they attach to a day care center and the life which it engenders?

In short, meeting our overall goal of "designing a better day" requires that we understand and accommodate *all* of the essential sub-systems of day care centers. As we have seen, these sub-systems, or *components of place*, include organization, families, clients, and physical setting. The very term "day care center" -- like school, nursing home, and office -- connotes both people and the physical setting necessary to accommodate them. It is in terms of these multiple systems -- human and physical -- which collectively create adult and dementia day care centers that this annotated bibliography is organized. Each of the annotations in this bibliography is structured so as to highlight all of those components of place -- organization, staff, clients, families, physical setting, outcomes in terms of place experience -- considered in a specific article or book. In only a few instances, we shall discover, does an author deal with all of these sub-

systems in a comprehensive fashion. However, as the Annotated Bibliography reveals, each component of place is addressed somewhere in the Adult Day Care body of literature. Thus it falls to us to gain familiarity with this broad range of issues to ensure that they are fully integrated in the planning, programming and design of facilities. The following matrix provides a summary of all 56 citations included in the bibliography and specifies those components of place addressed in each.

It is our premise that by dealing with adult and dementia day care holistically -- in terms of its purposes, program, setting, and the positive experiences they will hopefully engender -- that we can "design a better day" for those in our care.

Sources consulted for the bibliography:

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