

# THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF NATURE & GARDENS THAT PROMOTE USE

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## THE THERAPEUTIC GARDEN DEFINED

*A therapeutic space intentionally designed for a specific population, place, and for positive health outcomes; one that is informed by research, has multiple uses, and goes beyond pure aesthetics and active gardening.*

### Health Benefits of Therapeutic Gardens:

- Reduces stress and depression, improves mood. (Barton & de Kort, 2014)
- Reduces agitation and aggression among those with Alzheimer's (Murphy, Miyazaki, Detweiler, & Kim, 2010)
- Restores concentration/focused attention. (Berman, Jonides & Kaplan, 2008)
- Lowers heart rate and blood pressure (Brown, Barton, & Gladwell, 2013)
- In healthcare settings: less pain meds and shorter lengths of stay (Park & Mattson, 2009)
- Sunlight balances circadian rhythms and promotes vitamin D synthesis (Beute & de Kort, 2014)

### Therapeutic Principles

- Variety of greenery, flowers, and scents
- More greenscape than hardscape
- Water feature (appropriate to population)
- Places for socialization and for solitude
- Areas for active and passive enjoyment
- Attracts animals

## THE ISSUES:

# 01

### Low Use but High Perceived Value

- Among all ages, research shows that individuals **prefer nature scenes** vs. built ones (Hartig, et. al., 2003; Van Den Berg, Hartig, & Staats, 2007)
- 100% of older adults say **nature is important**—Among 4 senior living facilities in Midwest, South, and Southwest, both urban and suburban located (Reynolds, 2011 & Reynolds, 2016).
- **Affinity for life:** "Nature is alive and offers a kinship to living creatures and plants that is not possible with inanimate objects."
- **Plants as people:** "It's like taking care of babies...they're my babies!"
- **Plants as legacy:** Plants kept in remembrance of residents who have died, or of past life events (Reynolds, 2011)

# 02

### Construction Cost vs. Benefits

- Increase resident **satisfaction:** *Most satisfied when ample seating, variety of nature elements, walking path & adequate shade*
- **Connection** with life & living things; "There's a world beyond the walls!"
- Nearly 50% of residents reported **availability of gardens** influenced facility choice (Reynolds 2011)
- Outdoor activity space ranked among **top desired features** by Mathers Lifeways' Study (Keane, Cislo, & Fulton, 2003)
- The **quality** of an outdoor space is the second most important feature to that of community location (Wylde, 2009)
- Among independent living, the **availability of walking trails and outdoor spaces** rank in top 5 of most desired features

*Even in facilities that intentionally seek to provide a supportive environment, an essential, but often overlooked need, is the opportunity for residents to spend time outdoors in safety and comfort.*

(Rodiek, et. al., 2013)

# 03

### Factors Influencing Use

- **Design** of the garden space
- The relationship individuals have with nature: **active vs. passive** ("I enjoy nature; I just don't do much with it")
- Trajectory of change in active relationship



# 04

### Current State of Garden Design

- Focus on interior environment with resort-style designs and hospitality services
- **Emerging importance** of outdoor environments: Among over 100 ALF providers, 82% reported: "The design of outdoor space should be one of the most important considerations in the design of new residential care facilities" (Rodiek, 2005)
- Despite **acknowledged value**, "many facilities tend to concentrate their landscape efforts on ornamental landscaping, rather than developing functional spaces residents can actually use." (Rodiek, Boggess, Lee, Booth, & Morris, 2013, pg 23)
- To get the most benefit vs. cost, **intentionally-designed therapeutic outdoor spaces** are needed
- – Designed to **properly encourage use**, and promote the many **health benefits** afforded by nature.

*"Our interaction with nature does not end just because we age"*

(Carman, 2011)

## A NEW PARADIGM IN FACILITY DESIGN

**Therapeutically-designed garden spaces tailored to a specific level of care and flexible to varied types of use:**

- Improves emotional and physical health of residents
- In memory care, reduces behaviors that are difficult for staff to manage
- Improves satisfaction with the senior community

### •Therapeutically-designed garden spaces:

- Provide a **marketing advantage**
- Provide a **revenue potential:**
- 97% of residents who are **VERY SATISFIED** with their community are willing and likely to refer to others through word of mouth
- Based upon a national average for rent in ALF of \$3520: A 4% increase in new residents could **increase annual revenue** to over \$170,000 per year for a 100-resident community (Rodiek, et. al., 2013)

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