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## Environment

### PC P.E.A.R.L.S.™

The Alzheimer Society of Canada has identified the following 7 key elements of person-centred care:

- 1 Person and Family Engagement
- 2 Care
- 3 Processes
- 4 Environment
- 5 Activity & Recreation
- 6 Leadership
- 7 Staffing

There is an information sheet on each of these elements to help long-term care homes begin and sustain a “culture change” to provide a person-centred approach to care.

**Working within current regulations and legislation, promote a physical and social environment that supports the resident’s abilities, strengths and personal interests and enhances the daily life of people with dementia.** A person-centred long-term care home provides a social and physical environment that is as much like a home and as comfortable as possible for the people living there. This requires eliminating institutional features and practices, to make the residence feel like a home both physically and in how things get done.

### Key principles and some innovative strategies from Canadian long-term care homes

Core principle	Strategies
<p><b>Identify and eliminate institutional features and practices.</b> The physical space should be designed like a home rather than a hospital in order to make people feel more comfortable. Medical care and practices should support the person in going about her day, rather than being the centre of the day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize living spaces into smaller, autonomous communities of separate neighbourhoods<sup>1</sup> within a home. The close and consistent contact between residents and staff builds relationships and trust, and makes it possible for staff to get to know the residents and their histories, personalities, needs and preferences.</li> <li>• Consider removing bumpers from hallways and barrier-like counters from nursing stations. Make entrances to residents’ rooms look more like the front door of a home than a hospital room. Paint rooms in softer, warmer and less institutional colours. Update fixtures and bathrooms to look more like hotel rooms, and change lighting to be more natural.</li> <li>• Put mailboxes at the front door of all the neighbourhood houses within a home. The mail carrier can be a resident who comes every morning to deliver the mail.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> A neighbourhood is a small and autonomous living space within a home. It is staffed by a permanent team who is able to get to know the residents and their families, thus meeting their unique needs.

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**“We make things small, like the size of our houses and neighbourhoods, so that people (staff and residents) are well known and important to each other.”**

– Leader, resident care services

Core principle	Strategies
<p><b>Create an accessible environment that promotes residents’ enjoyment of each moment and each day.</b> Make opportunities possible for spontaneity, flexibility and choices in how a resident’s day unfolds. Encourage residents to participate fully in their environment by providing a range of diverse recreational and social activities that meet individual interests and needs. Incorporate familiar sights, routines and rituals that reflect individual habits and preferences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure staff respect personal privacy by knocking on doors before entering residents’ rooms. They respect personal preferences by letting residents sleep in and providing a light breakfast when they are ready. Residents help set the table, make breakfast and wash dishes if they wish.</li><li>• Encourage families and friends to purchase a meal voucher to dine with the resident in her home. Small groups of residents and their families are invited to participate in a meal organized by recreation staff in a special room in the home so that it feels like a social brunch, luncheon or dinner party.</li><li>• Offer smaller scale communities within a home, along with consistent staffing, to empower residents to make decisions about how they want their day to unfold. Staff know the residents well enough to help them make choices and be as independent as possible.</li><li>• Set up a computer room in the home, with devices adapted to residents’ different needs. This makes it possible for them to enjoy games and photography, and maintain relationships with family who live far away. Making computers easily accessible is practical and natural since computers are part of most people’s lives and this helps residents connect with their respective communities.</li><li>• Make it possible for residents to maintain their familiar individual habits and preferences. For example, a resident used to enjoying a glass of wine at 4 p.m. continues this ritual at her new home.</li></ul>

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**“This is a pleasant environment to visit. I feel good when I visit Mom. I feel very comfortable with the care. I feel she is in good hands here. Since she came here, I want to visit my Mom, instead of feeling like I have to.”**

– Family member

Core principle	Strategies
<p><b>Create and commit to a restraint-free environment.</b></p> <p>All resident actions are personal expressions and ways of communicating. Invest the time needed to identify what the resident is trying to express and the root causes of her actions. Eliminate the need for restraints by actively listening, understanding the meaning behind the action, and using alternative approaches and responses. Clear procedures and controls should be established for the rare occasion when restraints might be necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the root causes of actions that led to restraint use. Talk with family members of residents to decide the level of “acceptable” risk in implementing alternative approaches. Training programs – such as “Hugs, Not drugs”, Gentlecare®, P.I.E.C.E. S.™ – can teach staff how to do this.</li><li>• Customize physiotherapy plans and therapeutic activities for each resident to maintain and/or improve their physical, mental and emotional well-being, thus reducing the likelihood of needing restraint use. Outline clear procedures and controls regarding the use of restraints, and provide related training and education to staff throughout the organization. Put in place fall-prevention programs.</li><li>• Create a “least restraint” assessment tool with detailed information about possible contributing factors and alternative interventions. Occupational therapy staff developed a problem-solving tool that rapidly reduced the overall use of physical restraints among agitated residents by half.</li></ul>