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Coping with Change: Environment as Prosthetic [Abstract]

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Facility Types

Environments for Aging

Coping with Change: Environment as Prosthetic (paper)

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Projected demographic trends suggest the need for specialized housing for older adults will increase substantially in the future. Research shows humans seek to maintain a balance between their functional ability and the challenge of their living environment (Folts & Yeatts, 1994). New empirically based knowledge as a resource for the design of housing for the aging population is not keeping pace with the construction of facilities. The focus of this three-phased project is a comparison of the cognitive perceptions and adaptive behavior strategies of elderly people moving from their current homes into a supportive group living environment. The project included administration and analysis of a survey to gather data: 1) while participants are in their existing homes; 2) immediately after their move to the independent living facility; and 3) six months after their move. Documentation of each physical environment and collection of data was accomplished through personal interviews. This project facilitates a partnership with the architecture profession to gather data and directly apply research results to current and future development of such housing. Most importantly, this project takes a critical view of the role of the physical environment in affecting elderly person's adaptive behavior in times of transition.