



Canadian Academy of Health Sciences
Académie canadienne des sciences de la santé

Dementia-Friendly Communities

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Why dementia-friendly communities?

Most people with dementia live in the community, supported by informal caregivers

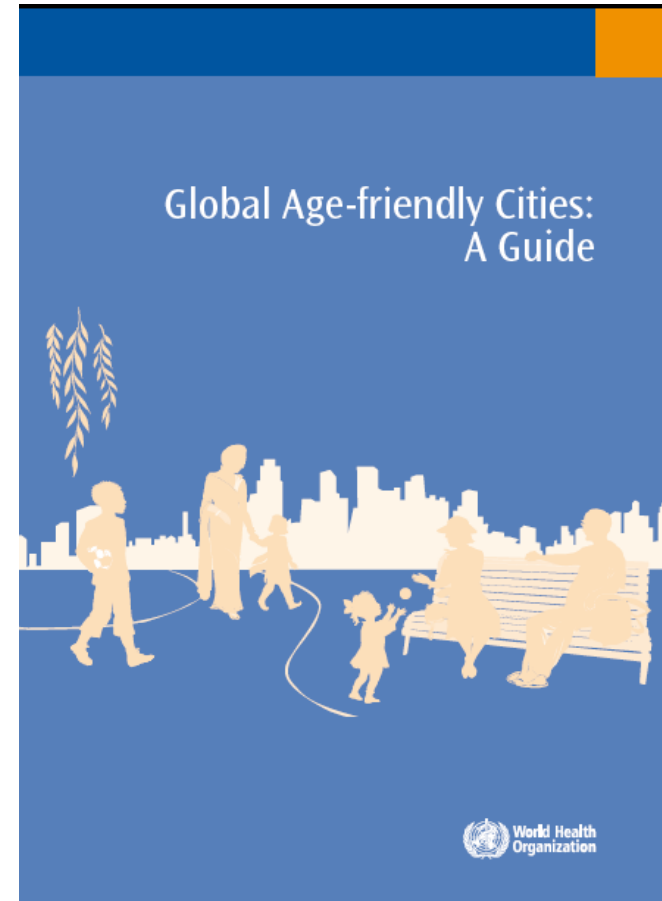




The broader context – age-friendly communities

“In an age-friendly community, policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to age actively.”

World Health Organization (2007)





Transportation



Outdoor spaces and
buildings



Housing



Respect and social
inclusion



Social participation

World Health Organization's eight age-friendly domains



Communication and
information



Civic participation and
employment



Community support and
health services

WHO, 2007



Simplify



“When we were crossing the street we only made it halfway across and then there’s dividers, so I wanted her to stand on the dividers and wait where we had to, and she got very, very upset because, she said, you can’t stop there. And I could just see her anxiety increasing because we were now in the middle of the road; traffic going both ways, and her anxiety was escalating.”

(Caregiver of person with dementia)

Source: L. Rempel, Masters thesis



Simplify





Enhance accessibility



“1 section of a 2 section stairway to a doctor’s appointment.”
(Participant journal)



“If someone decided to get off at this stop - they would have to walk approximately 3 blocks to get to Hospital entrance.”
(Participant journal)

Source: V. Menec et al.



Enhance accessibility



"[The store] has a number of chairs available for customers to rest if needed."

(Participant journal)



"This van provides transportation to our elders and others. Our driver is excellent and the fares are very affordable."

(Participant journal)

Source: V. Menec et al.



Assist with wayfinding



- Bigger signs
- More distinct and consistent signage
- Landmarks
- Colors (e.g., curbs)
- Etc.



Include

- To keep mentally and physically active
- To feel valued and respected



Photo of participant: L.
Rempel, Masters thesis



Making it happen

Lessons learned from the age-friendly movement

- Build awareness
- Have strong leadership and champions
- Create partnerships – interdisciplinary, intersectoral, interdepartmental
- Use a grassroots (bottom up) and top down approach
- Link to other initiatives - age-friendly, disability, pedestrian-friendly, child-friendly, etc.
- Be aware of local contexts - general principles vs. local implementation

- Independence
- Participation
- Care
- Self-fulfillment
- Dignity

United Nations Principles for Older People

