

Brief – Major studio project, Assessment 1

Introduction

To create a space that can provide meaningful activities for the elderly, that enhancing their well-being and quality of life. A goal is to understand the needs and desires of the elderly and their caregivers, as well as leveraging previous research in the field, I aim to develop a space that meets the expectations of those who will utilize it.

Stakeholders

Key Stakeholders:

Care organizations: Nursing homes such as Bærum Nursing Home, Furutun Elder Center, and Solgløtt Care Center (Oslo Kommune, n.d.). They're responsible for creating enriching and engaging environments for elderly residents. Their main goal is to offer activities that contribute to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the elderly.

Healthcare professionals: Doctors, nurses, and therapists responsible for providing holistic care to elderly patients. Their main interest is to ensure that the elderly receive care tailored to their individual needs and desires, promoting health and well-being through participation in meaningful activities.

Family and caregivers: Family members and caregivers of elderly individuals who want to see their loved ones leading fulfilling lives. They are focused on supporting the elderly and ensuring they have access to activities that bring joy and satisfaction.

Researchers and experts in gerontology and eldercare: Researchers and experts focusing on understanding the complex needs of the elderly and identifying effective strategies to improve their quality of life. Through research and studies, they seek to develop interventions that can enhance well-being among the elderly.

Primary stakeholders:

Elderly individuals: The elderly are the primary stakeholders in this project, aimed at enhancing their quality of life. In Norway, there are about 38,000 people in nursing homes, with three-quarters aged 80 or older. Additionally, nearly 70,000 people over 80 receive home care, and another 70,000 use activation and service services. While nursing homes may not have the largest user base, they cater to those with the most significant care needs, with three-quarters on long-term stays (Hoen & Abrahamsen, 2023).

Secondary stakeholders:

Politicians: Politicians, while indirectly influenced by the project, may not have decisive control over it. They often rely on input from other stakeholders like healthcare professionals and researchers to shape policies and resource allocation. The Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services oversees healthcare policies and resource distribution, ensuring quality and equitable services for the population (Kjerkol, n.d).

Background

Well-being and quality of life.

Approximately 1.2 million Norwegians today are 60 years old or older, that is 2 out of 10 individuals. The number and proportion of those over 80 will double by 2040. All municipalities are experiencing an increase in elderly residents, particularly the larger ones (Regjeringen, n.d). Well-being is crucial for the elderly, especially those in nursing homes or assisted living facilities. It involves health, function, and social participation as one ages. It's a dynamic process affecting satisfaction and overall wellness, addressing physical, psychological, and social aspects, as well as coping with challenges and finding meaning in life (Kirkevold, 2021).

Meaningful activities

Elderly health and well-being can be enhanced through meaningful activities (Elkind, 2015). Research indicates that when seniors find purpose or meaning in their activities, they enjoy better physical and mental health. Despite age-related limitations, engaging in societal roles can improve their well-being and quality of life (Owen et al., 2022). Healthcare professionals

and caregivers play a crucial role in helping seniors find activities that suit them, contributing to their happiness and overall health.

In a Norwegian study on mentally alert elderly in nursing homes, well-being was found to have multiple dimensions. Key factors included the individual's attitude towards nursing home living, maintaining family contact, positive relationships with peers, meaningful activities, and experiencing new things. Physical environment was also noted (Kirkevold, 2021).

Creativity

Creativity plays a significant role in promoting the well-being and happiness of elderly individuals. Through creativity, the elderly can cope with daily challenges and adapt to the changes that come with aging, contributing to personal well-being (Fisher & Specht, 1999). Creativity also provides an avenue to express thoughts and feelings, which can enhance quality of life. Elderly individuals demonstrate their creativity in various ways, whether by finding new and innovative solutions to practical problems in daily life or by adjusting attitudes and habits (Cristini et al., 2024).

Activities involving learning, such as exploring other cultures, can also stimulate creativity among the elderly. This can be beneficial for both personal development and the social environment, as it can help break down prejudices and promote tolerance and understanding among elderly individuals from different cultural backgrounds, such as those in a nursing home.

Shanghai's civic centers

In Shanghai, community centers provide valuable activities for the elderly. For instance, 85-year-old Xia Juanjuan enjoys art classes there, expressing the joy of engaging in various activities like painting and calligraphy. These centers offer not only meals and education but also essential social connections. Established to meet the needs of an aging population, they provide opportunities for seniors to learn new skills, make friends, and relive lost experiences. Through various activities like smartphone courses and handicrafts, seniors also stay engaged and feel included. Local authorities highlight the importance of these centers in providing care and support to the elderly, with volunteers enhancing the experience. For many like Xia, these

centers are not just places to learn but also to feel youthful and belong to a vibrant community (Xinhua, 2021).



[Foto av Zhu Xingxin/chinadaily.com.cn]

Goals and objectives

Based on current knowledge, my aim is to enhance research efforts for optimal outcomes. This involves conducting in-depth interviews with experienced nurses to uncover insights, challenges, and solutions regarding the well-being of the elderly. Additionally, I'll assess the effectiveness of current activities in nursing homes and study their design and compare various floor plans.

I'll also observe activity centers on the Gold Coast and observe them by studying movement patterns and how the space is utilized. I also want to understand the accessibility for the elderly, considering factors like universal design.

Purpose and Function

In my effort to enhance elderly well-being and quality of life, I aim to address specific needs through a comprehensive approach.

Meaningful Activities:

Tailoring activities to the elderly's interests and abilities promotes well-being by improving physical and mental health and fostering satisfaction and joy.

Inspiration from Previous Studies:

By leveraging previous research among mentally alert elderly individuals in Norwegian nursing homes, we understand the various aspects of well-being. Factors such as maintaining family ties, positive relationships with peers, and engagement in meaningful activities were identified as significant contributors to well-being. Therefore, my goal is to prioritize designing spaces that foster social interaction, encourage positive relationships, and offer a variety of activities to cater to diverse preferences.

Creativity and Personal Expression:

Recognizing the significant role creativity plays in promoting happiness and well-being, my design will incorporate elements that encourage creative expression among the elderly. Whether through art workshops, gardening projects, or music sessions, our goal is to provide opportunities for personal expression and exploration. By nurturing creativity, we not only equip the elderly with the tools they need to cope with life's challenges but also enhance their overall quality of life.

Cultural Engagement:

Furthermore, my design will emphasize activities that promote cultural exploration and understanding. By encouraging interaction with different cultures, my aim is to stimulate creativity and foster a sense of openness and tolerance among residents. This can be achieved through cultural events, language courses, or culinary experiences, providing opportunities for personal growth and social enrichment.

Measure of success

To monitor the progress of the project, key stakeholders will be involved. Since the elderly may have limited understanding, nurses and family members will help measure success. Surveys and interviews with these stakeholders will gather insights to enhance well-being for the elderly. The experience of nurses and the perspectives of family members will be valuable in the process. This collaboration between me and the stakeholders ensures that the design

meets the users' needs, increasing the likelihood of success through early stakeholder engagement.

Possible outcomes

Based on the secondary research I have conducted, it appears that several potential outcomes could significantly improve the well-being and quality of life for the elderly residing in nursing homes or senior centers. Some examples of possible outcomes may include:

- **Establishment of a creative corner at the senior center:** This initiative would provide an inspiring space where the elderly can engage in various creative activities, thereby promoting personal well-being.
- **Creation of cultural learning areas:** Introducing areas where seniors can learn about new cultures, including food, traditions, etc., could help break down cultural biases and foster a better social environment among residents.
- **Establishment of a large greenhouse:** Creating a greenhouse would provide the elderly with access to natural daylight and fresh air, known to be beneficial for mental health. This area could offer activities such as gardening and meaningful conversations, potentially integrated with other facilities.
- **Promoting community engagement through meaningful activities:** Activities such as vegetable gardening for the community and creative handicrafts could be undertaken. These activities could involve creating items such as blankets for the maternity ward or repairing damaged clothing, thereby positively contributing to the environment and the local community.

Next step

I will expand the project by conducting deeper research. This includes conducting a longer interview with an experienced nurse to better understand the needs of the elderly. I will also examine the activities used in nursing homes and evaluate their effectiveness, as well as analyze various floor plans. Furthermore, I plan to visit existing activity centers on the Gold Coast to observe usage patterns and gain more insights that will help shape the final project.

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