

Bedroom



Personal space is a place of sanctuary, a place where sleep and relaxation are encouraged, this is especially important for those with cognitive and sensory impairments. Warm temperature should be maintained in the bedroom and efforts should be made to make the environment as hazard free as possible. Furthermore, if the person suffering from the cognitive/sensory impairment can feel well rested then it will benefit the family and carers' in the long run.

- Has it been difficult to locate this space?

Both direct and indirect cues should be implemented to lead the individual to their personal space. The door should be highlighted with appropriate levels of illumination (see 'circulation' for more information).

- Could you recognise it if you were unable to remember where it was?



As mentioned previously the doorway to the bedroom is best highlighted with personal identification. This may be achieved through recessing the door and positioning a combination of personal objects and memorabilia such as familiar photographs with signage that includes both text and pictorial representation of the space.

- What are the things you remember about your personal space? Is it the décor, family photos, ornaments or pieces of furniture?



Orientation problems can affect perception of time, place or person, this can be a major source of anxiety and confusion, therefore it is essential that methods of way-finding do not compete, creating an over stimulated environment, which may lead to a navigation failure. A selection of personal objects such as quilts, photographs, pictures, ornaments etc. can make the decision making process easier and more achievable.

Furniture such as dresser with mirror and brush/comb may stimulate memories and encourage self-grooming. Decorating in warmer colours can

create a cosier atmosphere that stimulates a sense of security whilst providing maximum colour distinction should the individual develop Colour Agnosia.

- How private is this space?
- Is this important to you?

The bedroom is a personal space for private and intimate activity, 'sharing one's private space with another (by default not by choice) thoroughly undermines many of the conceptual notions of home, and is in complete opposition to many of the therapeutic goals of Assisted Living, and is therefore completely unacceptable¹.

- What are your first impressions of its purpose?
- Where is the bed positioned?

It is preferable to have a bedroom that enables several positions for the bed. It is pleasant to have the bed positioned in a way that receives views with space so that it can be accessed from both sides, should a hoist or wheelchair need to be implemented.

- Can you see a toilet from your bed?



If there is an en-suite to the bedroom it is advisable to distinguish the door in a vivid colour with clear signage and to layout the bedroom to have at least one bed position with a line of vision to the toilet. Often if a person can see a toilet they will use it, thus improving continence.

- Can you differentiate between the duvet and the bed sheets?



The colours of the bed cover and sheet should be carefully considered to contrast appropriately. This should be implemented through the use of bright strong colours.

Bed making skills may be encouraged with the use of step-by-step instructions located adjacent to the bed.

- Is the floor area/shape important?
- If you wanted could you change the positioning of the furniture?



The shape of the room will affect the possible layouts achievable. It is also important to create enough space for the use of a wheelchair and/or hoist, with the help of two people.

Furniture should contrast to the walls and floors and should be sturdy as illustrated in the photograph adjacent taken at the Iris Murdoch Centre, Stirling.

- What can you see?
- How high are the windowsills?

It is advisable to have the windowsills in the bedroom in higher than 600mm; this allows views from the position of the bed or chair.

- Do the windows open?

It is important for the user of the bedroom to feel in control of their environment, this includes ventilation, views, privacy and levels of light.

- Do you know how to change your clothes?
- Can you see where your clothes are kept?
- Do you know what order to take them on and off?

Furniture such as the wardrobe should be in a familiar style with handles that are easily seen and used, signage should reinforce identification of objects. When individuals have problems with memory, problem solving, attention and visual comprehension, it is important to make purpose obvious. This can be applied when it comes to the task of dressing. It is essential that an individuals skills are maintained and practiced as often as possible, to assist in dressing it can for some, be advantageous to have an open clothing rail for easy identification of clothes. Particular clothes could be laid out to assist the user, as too many choices may present over-stimulation. A dirty laundry basket labeled for identification would be useful.

- Can you get up at night safely?

Light at night may not always be conducive in creating calming environments for sleep. A soft night-light might be appropriate from some, whilst the use of automatic light sensors others may find them disturbing.

Sharp corners may need to be addressed with padding. Extra local lighting is also important in the bedroom as various tasks may be undertaken in this private space.

■ What is the flooring made from?

All loose mats should be removed. A clear walking path should be made from the bed to the toilet, in case the individual gets up during the night.

ⁱ Brummett, W. (1997). *The Essence of Home*: design solutions for assisted living housing. P61