



CREATING A HOME FOR A LIFETIME



Kansas State University
Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service

Leader's Guide

This lesson is about how to make a home convenient and accessible as people age or become disabled. It will focus on things to take into consideration when building or remodeling a home so that expensive alterations will not have to be made if the user develops a disability later in life. Support materials have been developed for use with the lesson.

*Prepared by Marilyn Bode,
Extension Housing Specialist,
Department of Apparel,
Textiles and Interior Design,
Kansas State University.*

Introduction

How can we help people to plan their housing decisions so they have safe and supportive environments throughout their lives? Demographic and lifestyle changes are affecting housing needs, but design can be adapted to varying needs. A few of the major demographic and social trends that influence housing needs are:

- Americans over 65 outnumber teen-agers and are the fastest growing segment of our population.
- Only about 5 percent of older Americans require specialized care, with the other 95 percent living independently.
- Nearly 50 million Americans have a disability—however, less than 1 percent of those with a disability use a wheelchair.
- One in four U.S. households is composed of a single person, many of them elderly.

This packet of materials presents some ideas that are applicable to all age groups, but specific suggestions are given for individuals who have special needs due to aging, illness, or disability. The packet is appropriate for use with a variety of audiences but may be of most interest to people making housing decisions for retirement: FCE groups, senior citizen groups, individuals planning to remodel their homes, and adult children seeking ideas to make their parents more comfortable in their homes.

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

1. Become aware of sensory losses and physiological changes that often occur during the aging process.
2. Learn how to adapt the home to compensate for changes and make it accessible throughout life.

Leader Materials: A flip chart called "Creating Homes for A Lifetime," available from county extension offices.

Participant Materials: Publication MF-2418 "Creating A Home for A Lifetime," and a checklist in MF-2213, "Creating Accessible Homes."

How to Use These Resources

- Talk about the situation of Mr. and Mrs. March in the participant publication, MF-2418. Does this case study ring true for the participants?
- Give participants the short quiz "Myth or Fact?" (pages 1 through 6 of the flip chart). For each statement, ask the group whether it is a myth or a fact; then give the answers to introduce the topic.
- Have participants turn to the section "When Are We Old?" in the participant publication. Talk about problems with activities listed there. Discuss with the group the housing challenges older residents may have. They may be familiar with the problems their aging parents have experienced or be willing to share their own problems.
- Have participants turn to the section "Age-Related Changes" in the participant publication. Use the flip chart (pages 7 through 20) to present information on how the sensory and physiological changes that occur as we age present challenges in doing household tasks. We can compensate for some of these physiological changes with adaptations.

- Have participants use the checklist in “Creating Accessible Homes” (MF-2213) to evaluate their own living environments. Suggest that when making alterations to their homes or adding on a room, people should use the checklist as a guide to making their homes accessible throughout their lives.
- Follow the program with the evaluation. Ask participants to respond to the questions on the form and record the number in each category. Send the form back to the county extension office.

Other Ideas:

- A videotape on universal design, “Design for a Lifetime” SV444, is available from K-State Distribution, (785) 532-5830.
- Members of the Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) can request a copy of a video, “Home Sweet Home: How to Help Older Adults Live Independently,” from AAL at (414) 734-5721.
- Take a tour of a senior housing project, and use the checklist in MF-2213, “Creating Accessible Homes,” to evaluate the accessibility of the apartments.
- Arrange for a group to visit the Universal Design Facility in the Department of Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design at Kansas State University. Call Marilyn Bode at (785) 532-1305 to make arrangements.
- Put up a display on accessible housing at a senior fair. The display panels can be borrowed from area extension offices.

End of Program Evaluation

At the end of the program, ask participants to raise their hands if they agree or disagree with the following statements. Record the number who raise their hands for each response category.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I learned something I can use in my home.				
I have the information I need to make some home modifications.				
I plan to use the information in my own home.				
I will recommend this information to someone I know.				

County Extension Agents: Please send this form to Marilyn Bode, Housing Specialist, 215 Justin, ATID, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506.

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