

Conceptions of Social Frailty Within an Aging in Place Lens

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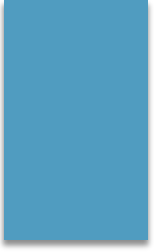
Objectives

- ▶ Gain an understanding of the complexities of aging in place
- ▶ Appreciate the social and environmental factors that place seniors at risk of vulnerability
- ▶ Reflect on the concept of social frailty related to the multiple dimensions of aging in place
- ▶ Discuss approaches to facilitate aging in place while addressing the risk for social frailty

Aging in Place

▶ Definition

- ▶ The ability of a person to stay, with or without help, in the community;
- ▶ The choice for a person to be secure, and to be in control of the residence of her choice.

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- ▶ In Canada, 92% of older adults over the age of 65 years live in the community (Stats Can, 2015)
 - ▶ Many live by themselves (Stats Can, 2014)
 - ▶ 37% of those 75 and older live alone
 - ▶ 49% of those 85 and older live alone
 - ▶ More women than men live alone
 - ▶ Where a person lives at age 65 is most often where they are going to age in place.

The Challenges Aging in Place

- ▶ *Canada Health Act*
- ▶ 13 different provincial and territorial health systems
- ▶ No public policy on long term care or services
- ▶ Health system is not coordinated
 - ▶ The system is built for acute illness, not efficient for chronic care or for long term integrated care.
- ▶ Failure to recognize that housing is a social determinant of health

Aging in Place – NB Context

- ▶ 19% of the population is now aged 65 and over in NB
 - ▶ There are currently more older adults than young adults under the age of 15 (Stats Can, 2015)
- ▶ In NB, 49% of the population lives in rural areas
- ▶ In NB, 33% of the population has French as their first language
 - ▶ As we age, especially if dementia is present, we lose our ability to speak our second language

Experiences of Aging in Place - Individual

- ▶ 8 strategies to successfully aging in place (older adults over 75 yrs)
 - ▶ Attitude and determination
 - ▶ Self-perceived health
 - ▶ Choice of home
 - ▶ Access to transportation
 - ▶ Available support
 - ▶ Age-friendly community
 - ▶ Access to home maintenance services
 - ▶ Adequate income and educational level



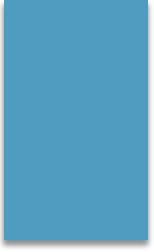
▶ Seniors specific needs

- ▶ Services currently received
 - ▶ Housekeeping
 - ▶ Lawn/snow
- ▶ Service providers
 - ▶ Family ++
 - ▶ Private services (paid personaly)



▶ Services needed but not being received

- ▶ Groceries / Meals
- ▶ Health advice and regular monitoring
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Information on programs, services, activities
- ▶ Outdoor maintenance (plant flowers, paint fence)
- ▶ 'Presence' at night

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- ▶ « *All services are available in English but few are offered in French* »

 - ▶ Experience of asking/receiving services in French
 - ▶ Long wait
 - ▶ Few choices in worker (competency)
 - ▶ Worker difficult to understand or speaks few words in French

 - ▶ Consequences of not receiving services in French
 - ▶ Communication difficulties
 - ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Frustration
 - ▶ Quality of services



- ▶ Reasons given for refusing services

- ▶ Stranger
- ▶ Difficult to accept services
 - ▶ Realities of loss of independence
- ▶ Past negative experiences
 - ▶ Self
 - ▶ Others
- ▶ Cost / Revenue

Aging in Place – Service Agencies

- ▶ Participants of this mixed methods descriptive study:
 - ▶ N=47 administrators
 - ▶ 11 males
 - ▶ 36 females
 - ▶ 32 (68%) are over 50 years of age
 - ▶ Spoken language
 - ▶ 53% anglophone
 - ▶ 6% francophone
 - ▶ 40% bilingual
 - ▶ 94% had a post secondary education
 - ▶ 67% had over 15 years of experience working with seniors



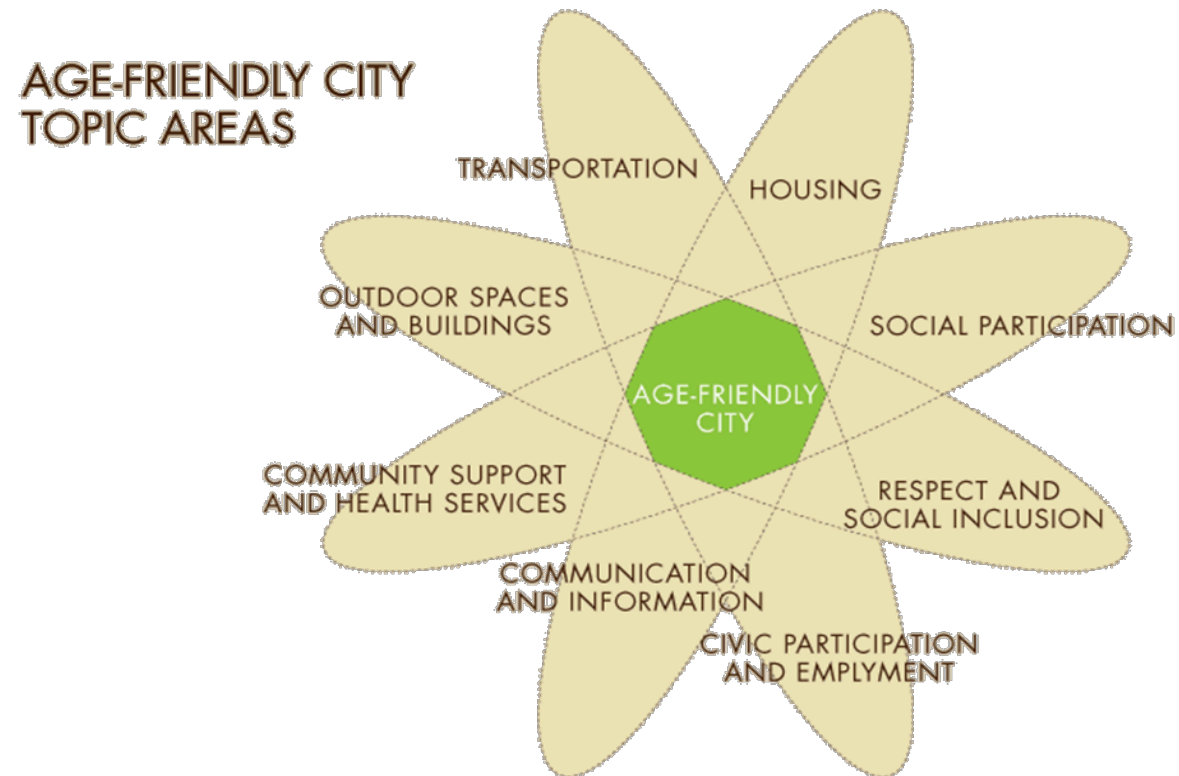
▶ Home Services Employees

- ▶ 73% are over the age of 41 years
- ▶ 89% are women
- ▶ On average, 44% are able to offer services in French

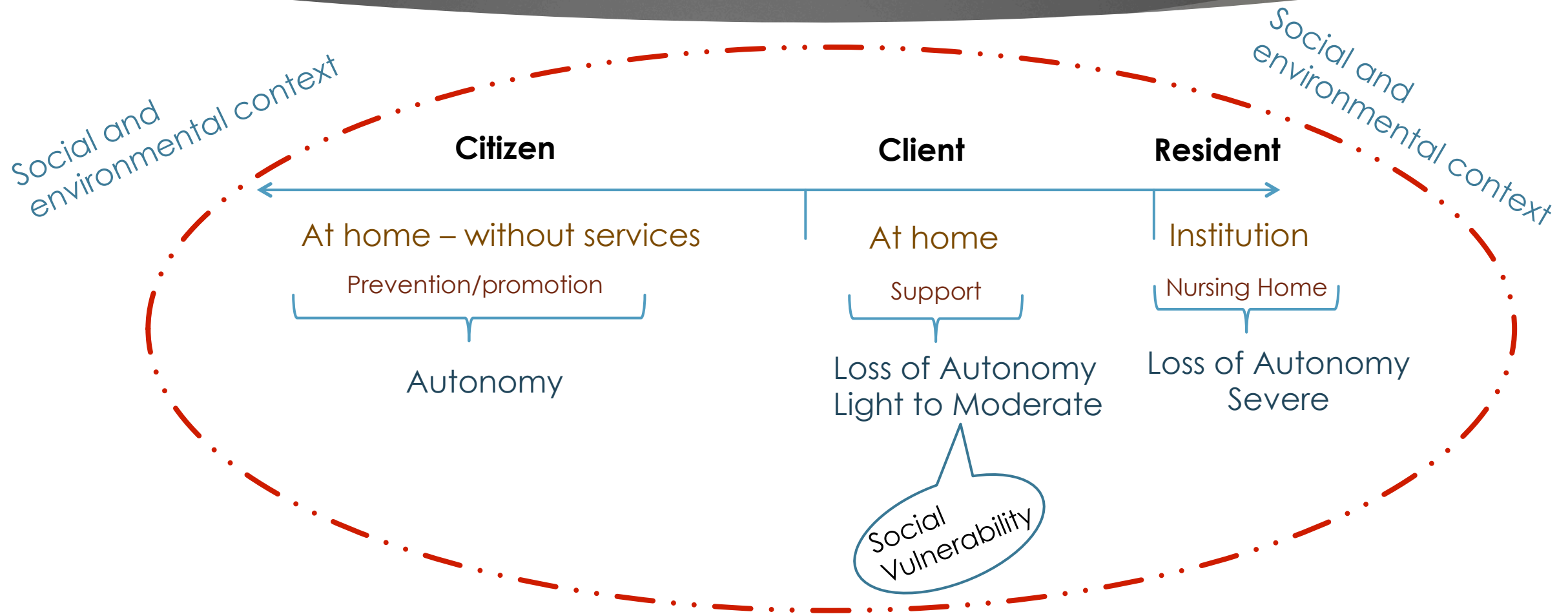
▶ Work conditions

- ▶ 69% are paid 10.31\$-15\$
- ▶ 61% are reimbursement for mileage (km)
- ▶ 71% use their personal vehicle

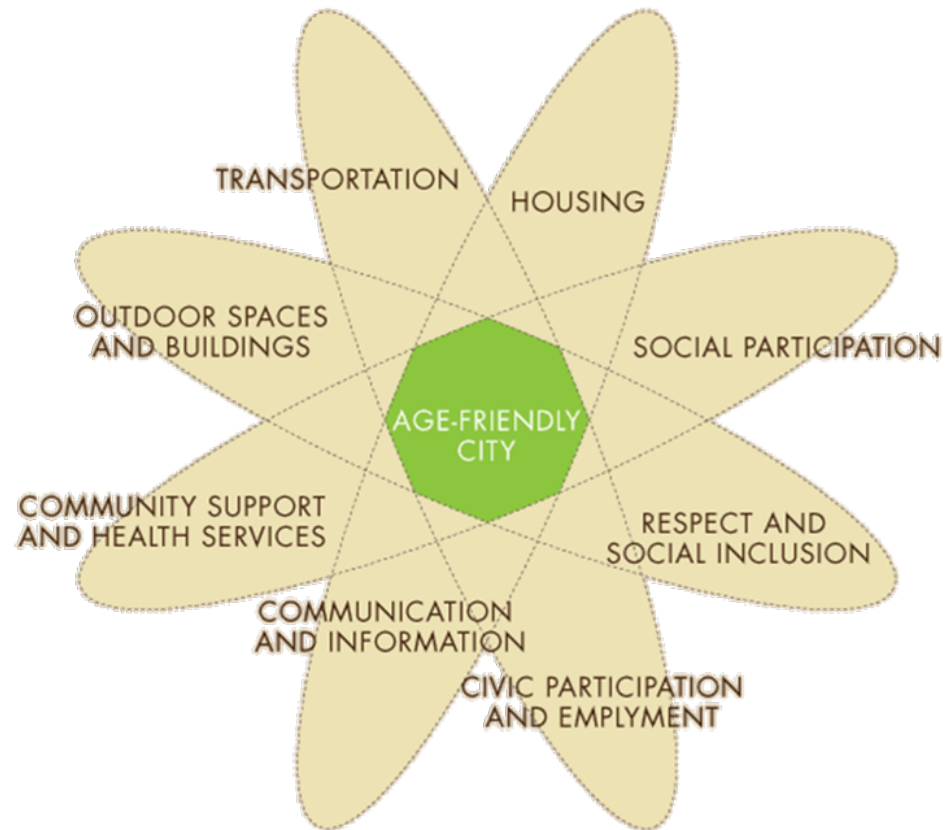
Aging in Place – Community (WHO, 2007)



Continuum of autonomy/care



Social and Environmental Factors : Risks





- ▶ Speaking a minority language

- ▶ OLMC – Official language minority communities

- ▶ French outside Quebec

- ▶ English in Quebec

- ▶ Low income (socioeconomic status)

- ▶ Less than a high school education

} Strong association with frailty (St John & Montgomery, 2013)

- ▶ No or few family members in close proximity (Woo et al., 2005)

- ▶ No car or limited transportation

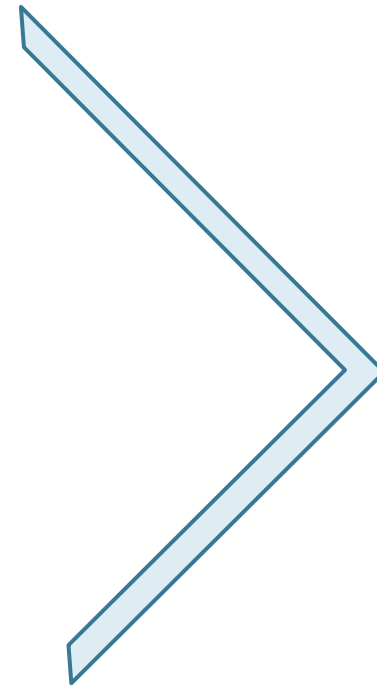
- ▶ Living in a rural community (Simard et al., 2015)

What is Social Vulnerability? (Andrew & Keefe, 2014)

- ▶ *"I can still drive, which is the biggest access we have because my wife doesn't drive, so everything depends on me to get around for shopping and just normal everyday living. // Then the challenge for them will be, how to get out and to get the groceries, to get to the bank, to get to the drug store and so forth. Again, there are neighbors in the building who would be happy to help out. But that increases their sense of depending on someone else's schedule and they don't want to ask for help"* (Dupuis-Blanchard et al)
- ▶ Lack of support
- ▶ Living conditions
- ▶ Withdrawal from the community

Social Vulnerability as Social Frailty

- ▶ Aging in place
 - ▶ Multiple social and environmental challenges
 - ▶ Loneliness
 - ▶ Isolation
 - ▶ Access to services
 - ▶ Support
 - ▶ Social engagement
 - ▶ Rural communities



Risk of social frailty

Examples – Social Frailty

- ▶ Woman, divorced, apartment, urban, age 65-70 years
 - ▶ *Transportation is a major issue for me. Some months, it cost me \$150 for cabs to run to the hospital and to the doctor. It's grocery money and power bill money and everything else. I can't get on the bus by myself, and the drivers aren't allowed to help you, and I understand that because then it becomes a liability issue for the city*
 - ▶ *In the summer, I go out and walk all I can and I do in the winter too until there's snow on the sidewalk and then I can't cause walkers don't work in snow. It's just that simple. I have a really hard time... for example, for groceries...the bigger the spaces, the more I don't know where I am in that space. My depth perception was affected and I have trouble processing information, so to go to the grocery stores is a very stressful thing to do because I get in there, and it doesn't matter that I have a list, it doesn't mean anything. I can't process it. The noise, the people moving, the colors, everything. And I can only bring a few bags at a time with my walker.*
 - ▶ *So I don't go to the mall a lot. Maybe twice a year only because I have to. It's horrible. I go to the mall and I get so confused that sometimes I don't know how to get out because I can't remember where I am.*
 - ▶ *I can't move because I can't afford to move. To move you have to have 2 months rent, I don't have 2 months rent. I do well to get 1 month's rent.*



▶ Man, widower, house, 75+

- ▶ *Well, my life his certainly not the same since my wife died. She was a great woman. It's been all downhill since then. But I'm well and I keep going.*
- ▶ *But it's difficult and it's getting more difficult all the time to stay here. You know my age now, I don't know how long I can carry on. I have some friends(silence) and my son and my daughter, I go to their home at least once a week for dinner.*
- ▶ *Cathy's (daughter) usually here pretty well at least every couple of days or maybe every day. She does my shopping for me now. I used to do it. I don't have a car anymore. I sold my car and I let my license expire this year, it ran out last month, so I didn't bother getting a new one. No point, I probably won't have a car anymore now. I didn't like that because you loose your independence.*
- ▶ *I have washer and dryer, they're fairly new machines too. I can get down and use it, but my daughter is doing my laundry pretty well now for me. She takes care of my groceries and shopping, oh, and my pills from the pharmacy. Sometimes I'll go with her but she takes care of everything.*
 - ▶ *Interview with daughter*
 - ▶ *Dad cannot be alone, that's the first thing. We agree, Dad cannot be alone this winter. How we're going to handle it? What we're going to do? We don't know... When you refused to use the walker, when you won't use a cane, when you refuse to let people come in and clean your house, you refuse to get Meals-on-Wheels, you refuse to take a taxi, you refuse to go out and socialize, you can't live in a house on your own, end of story.*

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- ▶ Rural community, pop. 750 (28% less than 30 years ago), majority French speaking older adults
 - ▶ During our study period,
 - ▶ Local bank branch – closed
 - ▶ Gas bar and convenience store – closed
 - ▶ Canada Post outlet
 - ▶ Golden Age Club – closed (amalgamated)
 - ▶ Participants in our study very vulnerable:
 - ▶ Did not feel comfortable driving past the local village limits
 - ▶ Caregivers to a child with a disability/mental health
 - ▶ No transportation system
 - ▶ Medical clinic/family doctor/specialists – outside the community

Discussion and Conclusion

- ▶ Comments, thoughts, reflections, questions...
 - ▶ How can we facilitate aging in place while addressing social frailty?

- ▶ Frailty
 - ▶ Physical
 - ▶ **Social**
 - ▶ Aging in place as an example

Thank you / Merci

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