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CREATING A HEALTHY HOME ENVIRONMENT USING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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The CDC (2013) defines aging in place as “the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level” (Healthy places terminology). The idea of aging in place has received growing attention from many entities over the past decade. According to AARP (2014), one in three Americans are now 50 or older, and by 2030, one in five Americans will be 65 and older. Moreover, evidence exists that home evaluation and home modification interventions are effective in promoting home safety, positively influencing task performance, and reducing falls in the older adult population. Regarding health care practitioners and older adults, a variety of major public health problems exist in our country today. The first health problem involving older adults that will be discussed is falls, which account for over 700,000 hospitalizations per year for injuries such as head injury or hip fracture (CDC, 2013). These concerns only validate the further need for practitioners to address home modifications and the client’s ability to function safely in their natural environment to prevent functional decline and risk for injury. Occupational therapy (OT) practitioners are well positioned to help older adults age in place as functional challenges associated with chronic disease (s) and the aging process become prevalent. This presentation will discuss the importance of home evaluations and modifications for enabling aging in place and the role and need of practitioners across the interdisciplinary team in this valuable process.

Biography

Linda Frasier is an assistant professor of occupational therapy at Touro University Nevada and has 13 years of experience working with older adults in inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation settings. Linda Frasier is a Certified Aging in Place Specialist as a Certified Ergonomic Assessment Specialist.

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