

Key Factors Involved in Connection to Nature for People with Dementia

- Nature was identified as enjoyable to the people with dementia participating in the study, both from self report and proxy report
 - Enjoyment was gained from both nature-based activities and sensory stimulation
 - Enjoyment recounted may have been actual, remembered or imagined
 - The residential care environment is complex and multiple factors challenge nature-related activities and the residents' abilities to receive sensory stimuli
 - A person's connection to nature was enabled or challenged by aspects of the person, formal care, social network, spirituality and culture & aspiration
 - A person with dementia may have a 'time frame identity' (for instance that they are in school) which seems to be reinforced by the physical/social environment
 - Human factors such as involvement from family and professional carers and the abilities of the person with dementia themselves play a critical role
 - The presence of other people or of pets and animals affords and often prolongs contact with natural elements
 - Going outdoors and participating in outdoor activities such as gardening or pottering which were enjoyed regularly in the person's own home were largely no longer possible in the care home
 - Nature was valued but lacking in the day to day lives of residents according to carers, but some residents felt they were still participating and enjoying it
 - Family and professional carers play an important role in enabling a person with dementia to maintain a connection to nature by overcoming obstacles
- (Findings from Study One appear in Chalfont, 2006, pp. 121-122)

FIVE FACTORS

impacting connection to nature for people with dementia
in residential dementia care environments:

- imagined, continued participation
- not home ('only visiting')
- 'time frame identity'
- places seem far away
- places become reassuring, then preferable (explained in Chalfont, 2006, p. 87)

Chalfont, G. E. (2006). *Connection to Nature at the Building Edge: Towards a Therapeutic Architecture for Dementia Care Environments*. PhD Thesis. University of Sheffield, Sheffield.