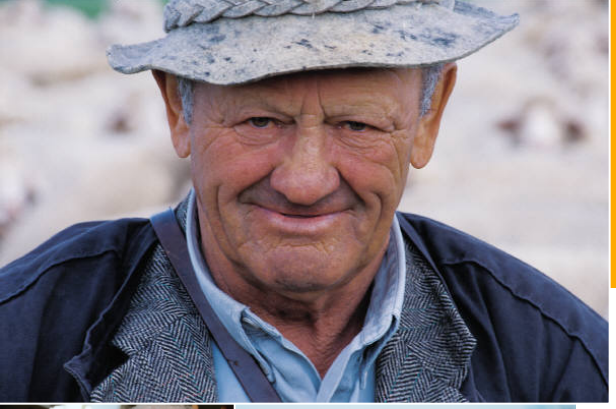

2014 Gero-Ed Track Kick-Off Panel:

Aging Your Way: Advancing Social Work Education and Practice

October 24, 2014

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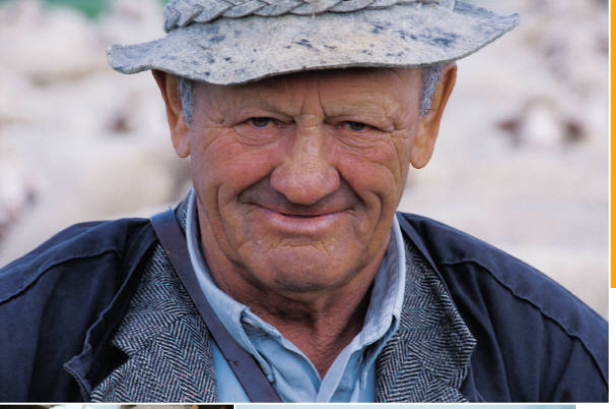

Self-Determination Among Older Adults With Chronic Conditions: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Workers and Social Work Education

Nicole Ruggiano, PhD, MSW
School of Social Work
Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work
Florida International University

October 24, 2014

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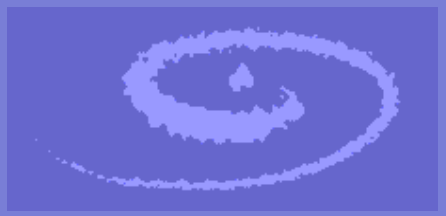
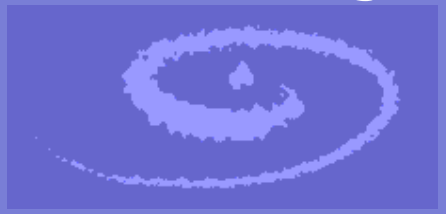
Context of Chronic Conditions in Later Life

- People are living longer but are likely to be living with chronic illnesses and disabilities later in life.
- Many older adults have co-occurring conditions.
- Chronic care often involves increased use of health and support services.



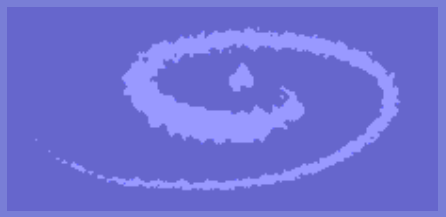
Self-Determination

- A concept reflecting the belief that all individuals have the right to direct their own lives.
- A philosophy within larger service systems that promotes service recipients as being active in the planning and management of their services.[1]
- Can be facilitated by family members and providers by encouraging older adults to be active participants in the planning and decision-making for their daily and chronic care needs.[2]



Threats to Older Adults' Self-Determination

- *Sources of Ethical Dilemmas for Social Workers*



Societal Beliefs and Myths

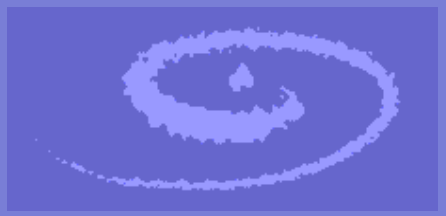
- Myth: Older adults are not able to make decisions about their lives and health/supportive needs.
- *Fact: Even older adults with cognitive decline can make consistent choices about their preferences.*[3]
- Myth: Older adults find decision-making to be overly burdensome.
- *Fact: Older adults want control over at least part of their lives and services, if not all.*[4]
- Myth: Older adults make poor decisions about their lives/ services.
- *Fact: Older adults may evaluate different information or values when making decisions.*[5]

Family Members and Caregivers May:

- Misperceive and disagree with older adults' care values.[6-7]
- Assess care recipients as being more disabled than the older adult's self-perception of disability might be.[8]
- Be gatekeepers to information regarding available services to older adults.[9]
- Have emotional or financial interests that manifest as over-protectiveness toward a loved one or as different goals and objectives for care provision.[10]

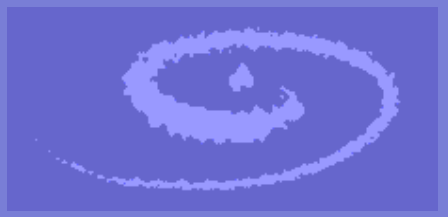
Health and Support Providers

- Age-based stereotypes are often used when formulating long-term care policies and goals.[11-12]
- Providers may view self-determination as offering a set of prescriptive choices based on professional opinion.[13]
- Providers may trivialize and be dismissive about older adults' complaints due to ageism.[14-15]



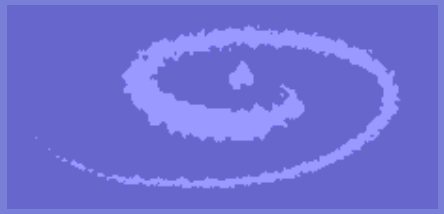
Opportunities for Social Work Education

- *Infusing Themes of Self-Determination Into Practice Courses and Field Practicum*

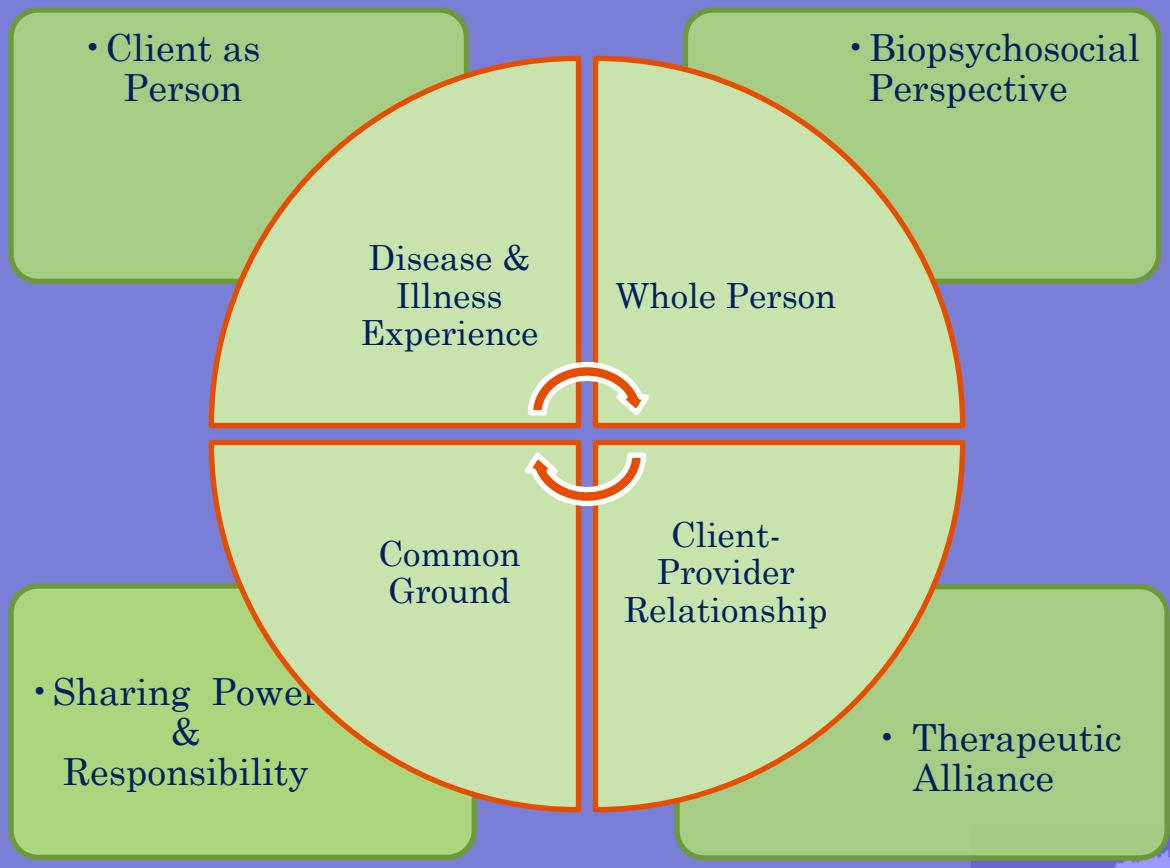


Moving Away from the Medical Model

- Expanding social workers' understanding of how to approach self-determination.
- Emphasis on older adults as expert collaborators.
- Recognizing cognitive capacity as being on a continuum.
- Valuing people and experience over illnesses and disabilities.



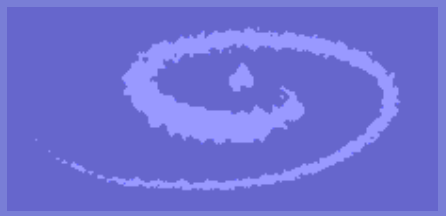
Toward a Person-Centered Model



Hudon et al., 2011

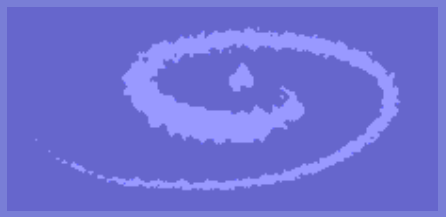
Practice Within the Family Context

- Helping older adults navigate family decision-making.
- Creating opportunities where the older adult's voice can be heard and incorporated into decision making.
- Education and creative problem solving to meet older adults' and caregivers' self-interests.



Opportunities for Social Work Education

Infusing Themes of Self-Determination Into Macro/Policy Courses



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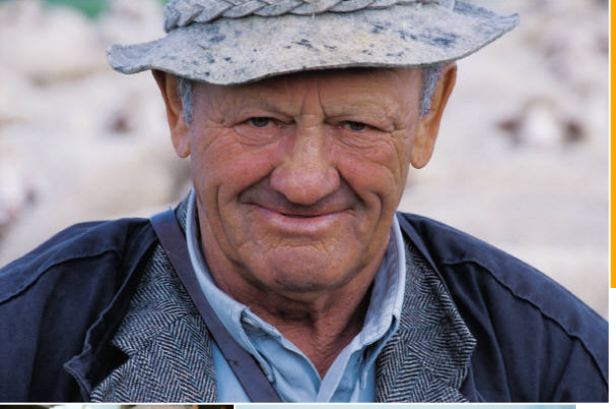

Aging-Friendly Community Initiatives: Challenges and Opportunities for Gerontological Social Work Research and Education

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University of Maryland School of Social Work

October 24, 2014

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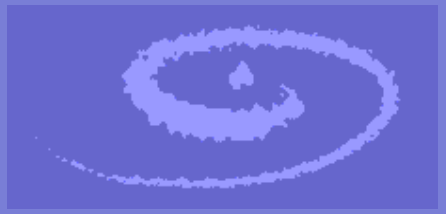
Acknowledgements

- Andy Scharlach
- Richard Smith
- Kyeongmo Kim

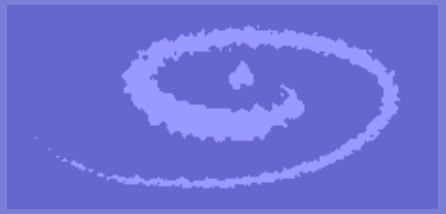


What is an Aging-Friendly Community (AFC)?

- City, town, or neighborhood where older adults are actively involved, valued, and supported in a way that reflects their unique needs and priorities.

Developmental Needs and Priorities

- Continuity
- Compensation
- Control
- Connection
- Contribution
- Challenge



Social Infrastructure

Social Cohesion/Social Capital

Community Engagement

Social Support

Safety

Physical Infrastructure

Affordable and Accessible Housing

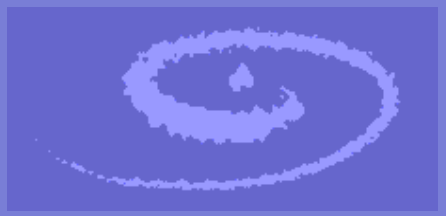
Walkable Neighborhoods

Transportation Options

Proximity to Stores, Services, and Amenities

Why Are Communities Becoming More Aging-Friendly?

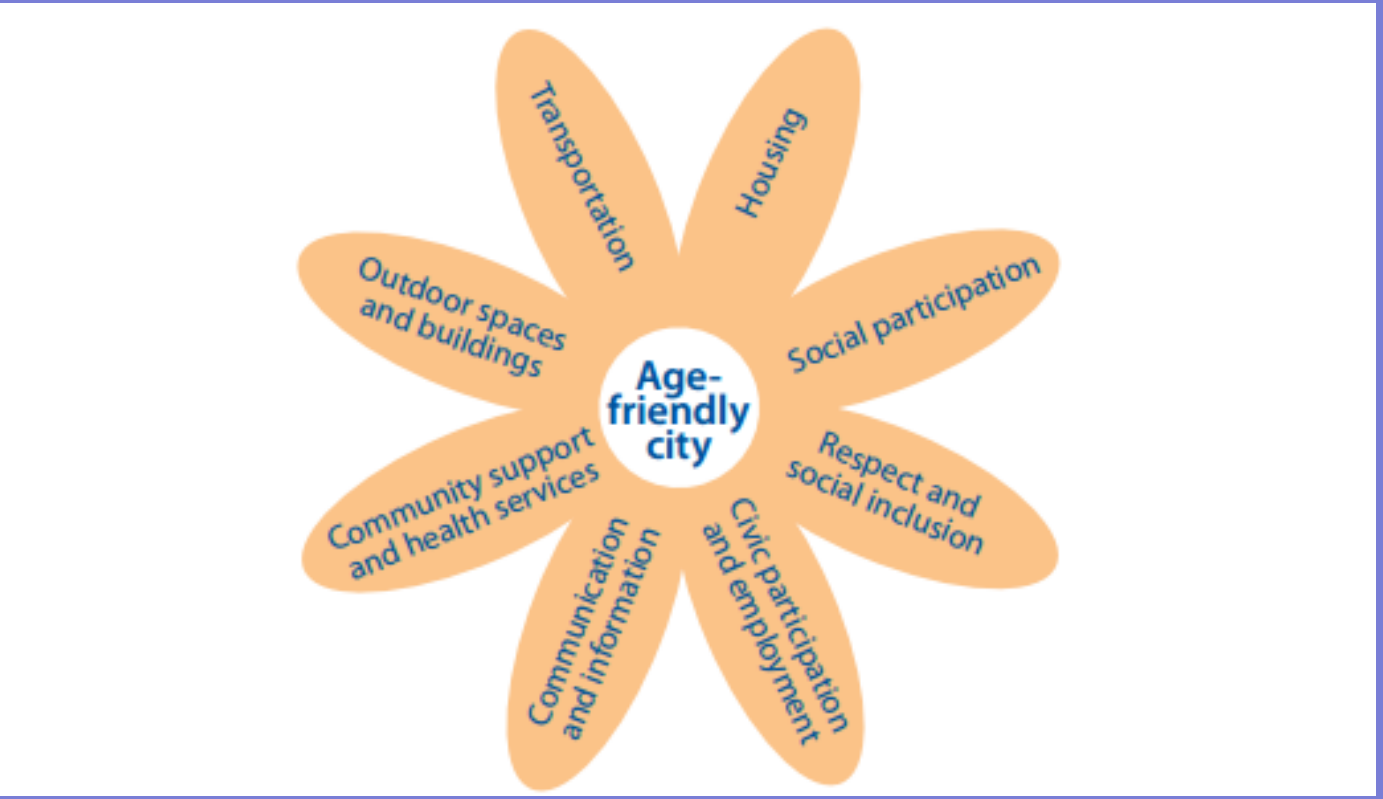
- Aging of the Baby Boomers
- Decline in family and social support systems
- Inadequate long-term care policies and services
- Decrease in relocation and increase in aging in place
- Mismatch between older adults and community infrastructure



Aging-Friendly Community Approach

- Top-down
- Community-wide needs assessment and strategic planning
- Requires involvement of a variety of stakeholders including local government
- More emphasis on physical infrastructure
- Funded through a combination of foundation, local government, and state government sources

WHO's Global Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Project



WHO global network of age-friendly cities and communities. (2014). Retrieved from http://www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities_network/en/

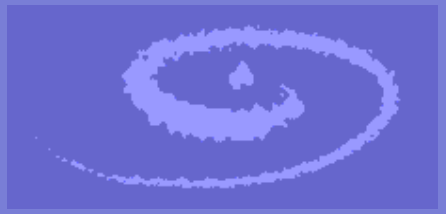
Age-Friendly Portland

- Partnership between city of Portland and the Institute on Aging at Portland State University
  - Older adults as key information sources and critical stakeholders to set priorities, propose solutions, and monitor progress
- 2013 Action Plan
  - Age-Friendly Business Certification Program
  - Accessible housing measures included in city's Comprehensive and Consolidated Plan
  - Education on transportation options
  - Directory of age-friendly activities

Neal, M. B., DeLaTorre, A. K., & Carder, P. C. (2014). Age-friendly Portland: A university-city-community partnership. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy, 26,* (1-2), 88–101.

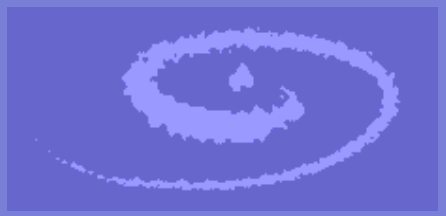
Challenges

- Fuzzy conceptualization and definitions
- Lack of methodologically rigorous evaluations
- Concerns about allocating financial and human resources in a time of fiscal constraint
- Concerns about equity and the potential to exacerbate disparities
- Ensuring the meaningful participation of older adults



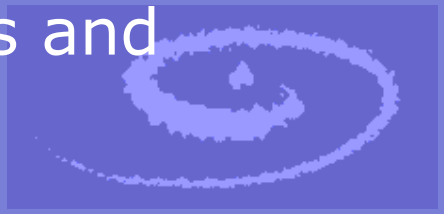
Opportunities for Social Work Practice and Research

- Call attention to the needs and contributions of the most economically, socially, and/or physically vulnerable elders
  - E.g., "stuck in place" vs. "aging in place"
- Encourage the participation of all stakeholders
- Interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration



MSW Curriculum

- Examples of incorporating/infusing AFC content in:
  - Foundation courses
  - Macro practice courses
  - Aging specialization courses
- Interdisciplinary and interprofessional education
- Increasing content on the importance of the physical environment for older adults and other marginalized populations



Resources

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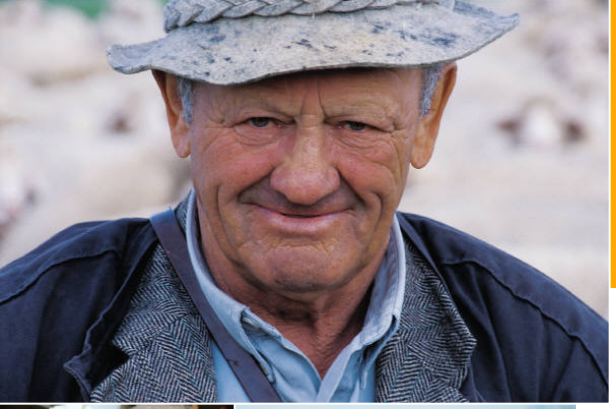

Beyond Updating and Toward Innovating: NORC Programs, Villages, and Social Work Education

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October 24, 2014

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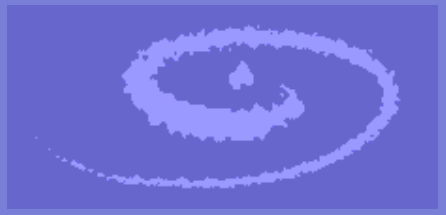
STORY OF NORC PROGRAMS

Altman, A. (2006). The New York NORC-Supportive Service Program. *Journal of Jewish Communal Services, 81*(3–4), 195–200.

STORY OF VILLAGES

McWhinney-Morse, S. (2009). Beacon Hill Village. *Generations, 33*(2), 85–86.



COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS CIAIP FOR AGING IN PLACE

Community Partnerships for Older Adults

AARP Real Possibilities LIVABLE COMMUNITIES Great Places for All Ages™

COMMUNITY AGING INITIATIVES

VILLAGE to village network

The ADVANTAGE® Initiative

NORCs An Aging in Place Initiative

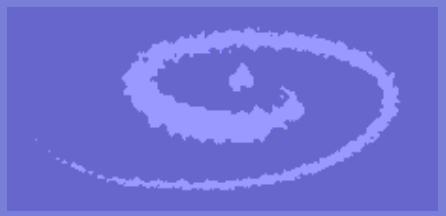
Community Aging Initiatives

- Deliberate and distinct efforts across stakeholders from multiple sectors within a defined and typically local geographic area to make social and physical environments more conducive to older adults' health, well-being, and ability to age in place/community.

Greenfield, E. A., Oberlink, M., Scharlach, A. E., Neal, M. B., & Stafford, P. B. (2014). Community aging initiatives: Conceptual issues and key questions for an emerging paradigm. Manuscript under review.

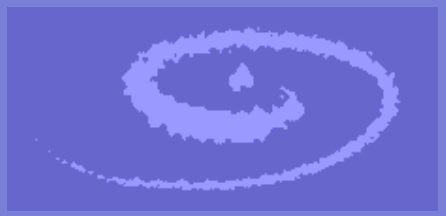
Three Primary "Flavors"

- Community planning approaches
- Support-focused approaches
- Cross-sector partnership approaches



Key Questions

- What are they?
- Where are they?
- What is their relevance for social work education?
- How to learn more?



What Are They?

Resources →	Activities and Services →	Initial Outcomes →	Intermediate Outcomes →	Long-Term Goal
Internal (e.g., staff, volunteers) and **external** (e.g., community partners)	Services to enhance access to resources Civic engagement activities Social relationship activities	Reduced unmet needs Greater efficacy and sense of community Greater social support and reduced isolation	Levels of Benefits - Individual - Organizational - Community	Aging in Place

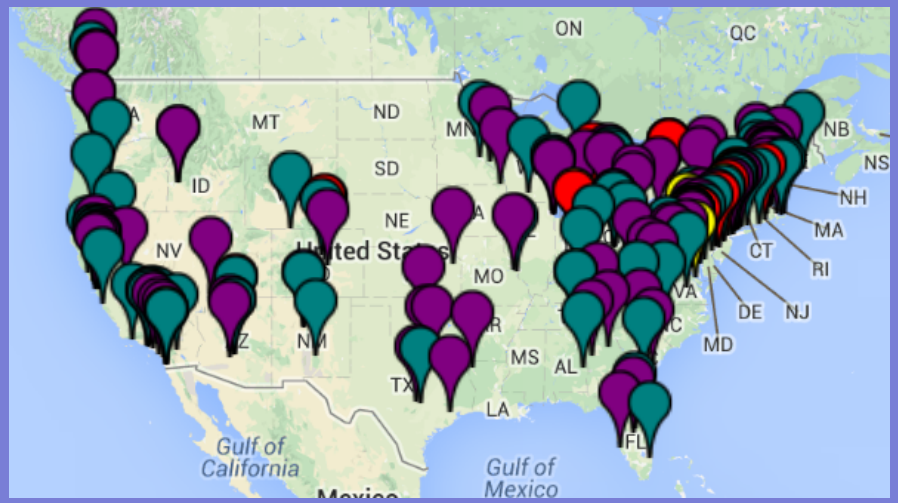
Greenfield, E.A., Scharlach, A., Lehning, A., & Davitt, J. (2012). A conceptual framework for examining the promise of the NORC Program and Village models to promote aging in place. *Journal of Aging Studies, 26*(3), 273–284.

Key Differences

- Type of organization
- Personnel
- Benefits
- Participants

Greenfield, E.A., Scharlach, A., Lehning, A., Davitt, J., & Graham, C. (2013). A tale of two community initiatives for promoting aging in place: Similarities and differences in the national implementation of NORC programs and Villages. *The Gerontologist, 53*, 928–938.

Where Are They?



Communities A-C

- Albany
- Albuquerque
- Atlanta
- Atlantic & Cape May
- Baltimore
- Boston
- Buffalo
- Central New Jersey
- Chicago
- Cincinnati
- Cleveland
- Clifton-Passaic

Communities D-N

- Denver
- Des Moines
- Greater Washington DC
- Indianapolis
- Las Vegas
- Los Angeles
- MetroWest
- Minneapolis
- New York
- Northern New Jersey

Communities O-R

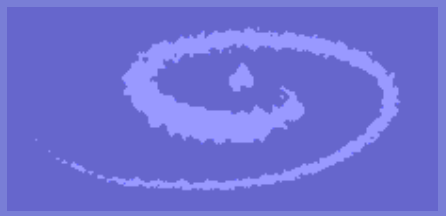
- Ocean County
- Philadelphia
- Pittsburgh
- Portland
- Princeton Mercer
- Rhode Island
- Richmond
- Rochester

Communities S-T

- Sacramento
- Salt Lake City
- San Diego
- Sarasota-Manatee
- Seattle
- Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties (NJ)
- Southeast Florida
- Southern New Jersey
- St Louis
- St. Paul
- Tidewater
- Tucson
- Wilmington

Curricular Updates

- Advanced curriculum
  - Community practice
  - Aging services
  - Direct practice with older adults



Opportunities for Innovation in Foundation Content

- Practice: Program processes and core social work values
- Research: Complexities around evaluation
- Diversity and Oppression: Which communities benefit?
- Human Behavior: Program outcomes and adult development
- Policy: Role of government at local, state, and federal levels

Teaching Resources

- Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lD97w-O7Lhs.

- Greenfield, E.A., Scharlach, A., Lehning, A., & Davitt, J. (2012). A conceptual framework for examining the promise of the NORC Program and Village models to promote aging in place. *Journal of Aging Studies, 26(3*), 273–284.

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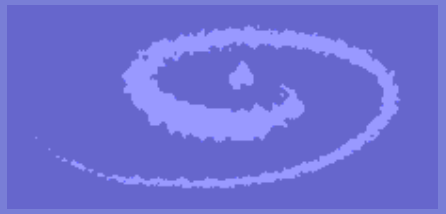
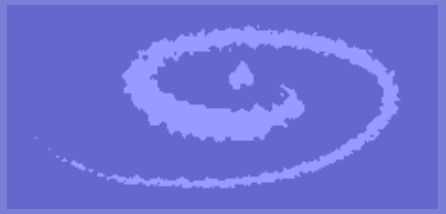
Questions?