

2017 SENIOR LIVING DESIGN

TREND WATCH

J+J FLOORING GROUP

As a manufacturing company, we are dedicated to providing quality floor coverings to our customers – and so much more.

We are equally committed to providing the resources, knowledge, and solutions that help design professionals and senior living owners/operators make the most informed design and product decisions to achieve their goals and desired outcomes.

For the past three years, we've assembled together a group of senior living design experts from around North America to share and learn from one another. By serving as a catalyst for this discussion, we are able to identify and track emerging trends that are shaping the entire spectrum of senior living, as well as inspiring new developments in flooring for these spaces.

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From luxury living to affordable housing, senior living serves a broad and diverse population. Today's seniors are living longer, often with chronic conditions. Many want to age in place and remain physically active, but at some point may need caregiving help. Making the transition from a single family home to a senior living residence or community is one of the biggest choices they'll make in their lifetime.

Tracking and observing these trends gives us the opportunity to bring new thinking to our product designs, as well as a new level of knowledge to the discussion with our clients. Through research and gatherings, which include a robust exchange of ideas and experiences, we've identified some key driving trends that are influencing the design of today's senior living residences and communities.

This year, our leading four trends are:

1. DEFINING HOME
2. CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY
3. SUPPORT FOR STAFF
4. DETAILS MATTER

DEFINING “home”

As senior living continues to evolve, there is an increasing emphasis on creating places that are less institutional and feel like home. This is not new, but efforts to define what home means to different senior populations and translate that to design are taking it to a new level. Each individual has a different meaning of home, and that meaning is driven by regional considerations, socio-economic status, and personality. For most people, however, possessions make a space feel like home and create an emotional connection.

But how to integrate those possessions into a more compact senior living residence is always challenging. Some owners and operators are offering design services to help seniors move into their new place, assisting with the placement of furniture and artwork. Customization, with choices of colors, finishes, and materials provide a sense of control that is so important for many seniors, especially those in the Baby Boom generation.

While some wonder if we aren't better off admitting that some aspects of senior living, such as memory care and assisted living, aren't home, most agree that everyone – no matter what their physical state – relates to home.

Elements of home that resonate with people include fireplaces, intimate seating areas, live plants, windows, and high ceilings. Area rugs and wood floors have appeal, but might not always be the best choices due to concerns about tripping and slipping. Access to the outdoors, something most everyone has in their homes throughout their lives, is also essential.

This also speaks to Biophilic Design, a growing trend in healthcare to connect people with nature. Regardless of individual interior aesthetic, nature is something that everyone can embrace, no matter where they live.

Some seniors still prefer a traditional design aesthetic and some operators continue to follow the resort/hospitality model. But many are coming

from homes that are more transitional in their design approach. And their younger family members find contemporary/modern styles appealing, so they in turn prefer their loved ones choose a similar environment.

When it comes to defining home, senior living communities are going to have to continually adapt to a changing design aesthetic.

“Consumers are very savvy as far as understanding senior living design and the features and principles that need to be applied to create a safe, user-friendly environment.”

– Kelley Hoffman, SPELLMAN BRADY





CONNECTION TO *community*

One of the most common complaints of people in senior living communities is isolation — from each other, from their extended families, and from the community at large.

Breaking down the isolation barrier is perhaps one of the biggest challenges for senior living owners and operators. Emerging models include repurposing older properties that are more centrally located within communities, where senior living is just one component of the greater campus.

Events and activities, such as farmers' markets, festivals, yoga, wine tasting, art shows attract people of all ages. Artisan food venues, brew pubs, and specialty shops provide revenue to the owner/operator and help bring the community in.

Active seniors want pedestrian-friendly senior living communities, which not only provide physical exercise, but also encourage social contact with others. Walking

paths with places to sit and gather are becoming more common, as are outdoor gardens and landscaping.

Design is being used in common spaces within senior living communities to encourage interaction, support family/friend relationships, promote involvement in daily activities, and foster opportunities for multi-generational interaction. Programming is shifting from “what can we offer to seniors” to “what do seniors want to do?”

Co-housing and pod hotels – where people sleep in tiny pods but spend their days in common spaces are other models that show promise for creating community. But not every-

one wants social interaction all the time – or to participate in every activity that is offered. Design is a bridge to both. It helps people engage and it also helps them disengage.

“Isolation is a huge problem. Partly it’s a real estate problem – land is cheaper in the edge of town than in the center of town”

– Steve Moran, SENIOR HOUSING FORUM

SUPPORT FOR *staff*

Day in and day out, the staff is also part of a senior living community. They, too, need to feel supported and comfortable in their work environment, and be able to relieve stress when needed. The bottom line is if owners/operators take good care of their employees, those employees will be less likely to leave (reducing costly turnover) and tend to take good care of the residents and increase resident satisfaction levels.

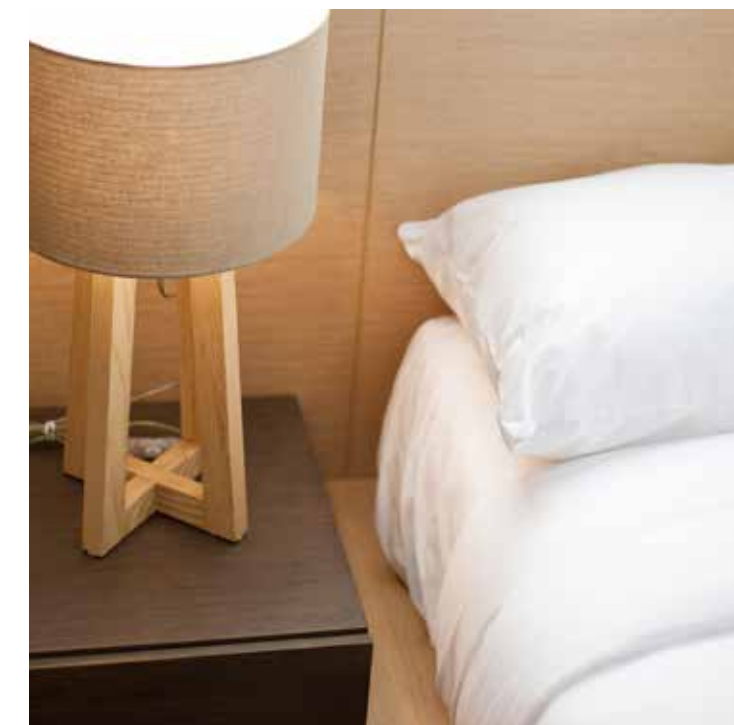
“Biophilic Design is a natural fit for senior living to enhance and support the human experience for both residents and staff”

– Hillary DeGroff, PERKINS EASTMAN

Progressive owners/operators are looking at the Google model of staff break rooms, providing lounge seating, ping pong tables, full kitchens with free food, and sleep rooms. Some are even designating a “captain’s table” in the main kitchen, where staff eats together prior to serving residents.

Access to the outdoors and connection to nature is also important for staff

– another way in which Biophilic Design can play an important role. This includes using natural materials and finishes, nature imagery, as well as incorporating windows with views, walking paths, gardens, etc.





DETAILS *matter*

Variety and an innate desire to explore and discover new things are essential to the human experience in all stages of life. This is where the details matter in senior living design. No matter what the size, scope, or budget of the project, paying attention to the design details is what will make it feel like home, foster community, and support staff.

Resident directed/ person centered care, an ongoing interactive process between residents, caregivers, and others, speaks to this as well. It honors residents' dignity and choices, which can then be reinforced by design.

Design details also matter to seniors and their adult children who are looking for a senior living residence

or community – particularly at the mid- to high price range. Most of these prospects are design-savvy and well educated. They know what they like and what they don't like in terms of décor, materials, color/pattern,

lighting, flooring, and accessories. And many understand the basic principles of senior living design when it comes to contrast/color, slipping/falling, mobility, etc.

Also, the trend toward hospitality design, upscale senior living communities in particular, may make some residents feel like they are "checking in" to a fine hotel that really doesn't feel like

home. A senior living community is not a resort or hotel, nor should it be. Finding the right balance is a challenge that is being embraced by many senior living designers.

“On each project I incorporate “local color,” sometimes through a local artist’s paintings or working with the historical society to have historic photos printed and framed. When residents can reminisce there is a sense of pride in their community that is pure happiness. On a recent project in Minnesota I overheard residents talking about Al’s Café and getting ice cream there when they were teenagers”

–Jennifer E. Owens, CID, OWENS DESIGN GROUP, LLC

WHERE DOES *flooring* FIT IN?

Natural, tactile finishes that focus on organic patterns and soft neutral palettes provide a comforting environment that can easily evolve and adapt as the needs and functions of the residents change.

As flooring continues to be the canvas upon which a space is built, soft surface flooring such as carpet reflects the Biophilic Design trend with modern, abstract interpretations of natural elements. These provide visual warmth that is both elegant and unassuming.

Family members who are helping their loved ones make decisions about where they should live are also more aware of how these environments function in conjunction with their physical limitations. For example, flooring that has properties like minimal or no transitions, reduced glare from lighting, and patterns that don't create a visual movement can positively affect the amount of social interaction that a resident with mobility limitations will get each day.

No one wants their loved ones to be nervous about where they reside due to flooring or other finishes that compromise their safety.

In many senior living communities, fitness centers are becoming social spaces that not only promote physical wellness, but also emotional wellness. Bold, bright colors incorporated within the flooring, as well as the walls provide an energy that invites. In these areas where fitness equipment can sometimes hinder voice recognition, flooring with favorable acoustic ratings and wallcovering are key design elements.

Flooring can also help support interaction by using varying patterns and/or colors to create internal paths that function as subtle wayfinding directing residents to key social areas.

Where the right flooring choice is imperative for residents with shuffling feet, walkers, or canes, the same can be said for staff in senior living communities who are on their feet for most of the day. Flooring that has underfoot comfort as well as ease of roller mobility helps lessen the toll on legs, knees, and backs of staff providing care, services, and support to residents.



For more than 50 years, J+J Flooring Group has worked closely with building and design professionals to create the best floor coverings for all types of facilities. Combined with the practiced approach of evidence-based design, our products provide a solid foundation for enhanced living and healing environments.

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