

The Resident's Experience of Home in Long-term Care Environments

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Long-term care is provided in the home, community, adult day health centers, assisted living environments and nursing homes. Transitions within and between these environments are common as individuals age, and their health and personal needs change. Molony identified the concept of "home" as critical to understanding wellbeing within and across diverse residential settings. Home has been associated with individual strength and resilience. Molony's study of philosophical, theoretical and empirical sources led her to an understanding of home as not simply as a building or physical structure, but rather as an *experience* of meaningful relationship with self, dwelling and world (*at-homeness*). Molony believes that a deep understanding of *at-homeness* would illuminate possibilities for environmental planning and therapeutic intervention in all residential LTC settings.

With the postdoctoral funding provided by the John A. Hartford Foundation Claire M. Fagin fellowship, Molony studied the contributions of small meaningful experiences to the overall gestalt of at-homeness, and extended her research program. Molony hopes to identify opportunities to potentiate individual, social and residential contributions to at-homeness in all settings, and to incorporate this into transitional care. Molony worked with geriatric mental health expert and faculty mentor Dr. Lois K. Evans at the University of Pennsylvania (UPENN) School of Nursing, to complete two studies during her postdoctoral work. These studies compared and contrasted at-homeness in the context of both residential stability and residential transition. The first study, entitled "The Resident's Experience of Home over Time in Two Long-term Care Environments," examined the transition from a traditional model nursing home to a new model "small house" (small group living environments within a de-institutionalized care philosophy; similar to Green Houses in Tupelo, MS). The second study was supported by the UPENN School of Nursing, Office of Practice and Community Affairs, and focused on the transition from a community or nursing home dwelling to a new type of supportive living environment within a PACE-community collaborative program. Molony is building evidence to recommend the best designs, methods and measures to understand and study at-homeness, and to design tailored interventions that foster at-homeness, resilience and thriving in residential and transitional contexts.

Molony is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at Yale University School of Nursing, where she continues her research, teaches and mentors students in the gerontological specialty, master's and doctoral programs.