

COMMUNITY  
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS  
SUPPORTING HEALTH AGING:  
FACING THE CHALLENGES

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# So far we have:

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- ❖ Defined healthy aging
- ❖ Identified community characteristics relevant to healthy aging
- ❖ Identified particular, interrelated areas of concern
  - ❖ Mobility
  - ❖ Physical and mental health
  - ❖ Social engagement
- ❖ Discovered some resources

# And so, we know a lot about the environment and healthy aging

- ❖ Safe environment encourages and facilitates mobility
- ❖ Social and physical environmental disruption correlates with mental ill health such as depression
- ❖ A healthy, safe environment encourages social engagement

# But there's also a lot we don't know

- ❖ There's been a lot of environmental research concerning children, but little about older adults
- ❖ There's been a lot of research about urban environments, but little focused on rural
- ❖ There's a lot of exciting research about creating new communities with attractive , friendly environments, but not about retrofitting older communities

# And there are many of us who know something

- ❖ Aging in place
- ❖ Senior-friendly communities
- ❖ Universal design
- ❖ Livable communities
- ❖ Smart growth
- ❖ Multi-generational
- ❖ Naturally occurring retirement communities

BUT DO WE TALK TO EACH  
OTHER?



# On balance, we do know enough to act, working together

- ❖ Primary immediate goals
  - ❖ Develop a common vision
  - ❖ Share ideas
  - ❖ Focus on the possible

# Next steps

- ❖ Increase awareness
- ❖ Supplement what we know
  - ❖ Research focused on older adults
  - ❖ Research in non-metropolitan settings
- ❖ Consider the resources Dr. Kruger suggested
- ❖ Share, listen, learn, collaborate, build relationships, create interdisciplinary partnerships, plan for the future, beginning today and tomorrow

IT'S TIME TO GET STARTED!

