

# Inadequate Support of the Expression of Needs for Long-Term Care

## Residents in Linguistically Incongruent Homes: Analyzing Next Steps Using an EDI Approach

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### Background

Numerous barriers to healthcare exist in today's system, one of them being linguistic incongruence. Our expression through language is paramount to the understanding and representation of one's needs, identity, and personhood, however, not everyone receives the resources and aids necessary to do so. One vulnerable group, older adults in long-term care, face a multitude of challenges in the expression of their needs in linguistically incongruent homes. By not having adequate support to bridge the language gap, the needs of residents are not being met, leading to diverse negative physiological, cultural, and social outcomes.

### Aim

This study explores the various impacts of linguistic incongruence, both on staff and residents in long-term care homes, by reviewing and consolidating literature and the lived experiences of residents and stakeholders, as well as analyzing the effectiveness of existing solutions.

### Current Issues

#### Language Barriers

- Compromised care delivery
- Jeopardized quality of communication
- Miscommunications between and amongst staff and residents
- Resident preferences and abilities

#### Culture

- Lack of meaningful social interaction
- Inadequate cross-cultural communication
- Lack of culturally-appropriate care, resulting in decreased engagement

#### Spirituality

- Lack of spiritually-competent care, impacting therapeutic relationships
- Residents' desire to remain connected to values and routines is hindered

#### Qualitative Experience

- Need for identity, attachment, and inclusion not addressed
- Residents from diverse backgrounds grouped with mainstream aging population

### Methods

Discussion with mentors and professionals

- Scheduled structured sessions
- Importance of holistic consideration surrounding linguistic incongruence and consideration of unmet needs

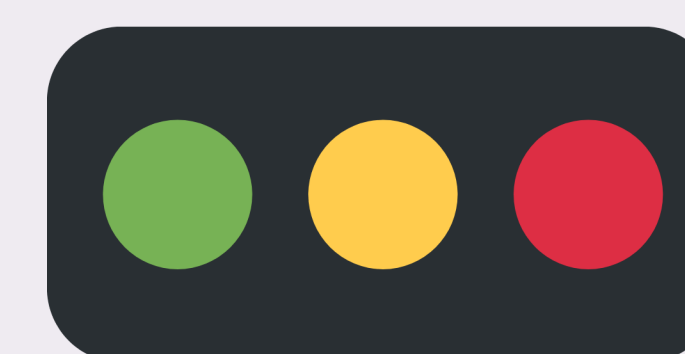
Interviewing residents

- Semi-structured interviews and discussions
- Emphasis on communication difficulties and lack of expression through culture, spirituality, and identity

Using empathy mapping

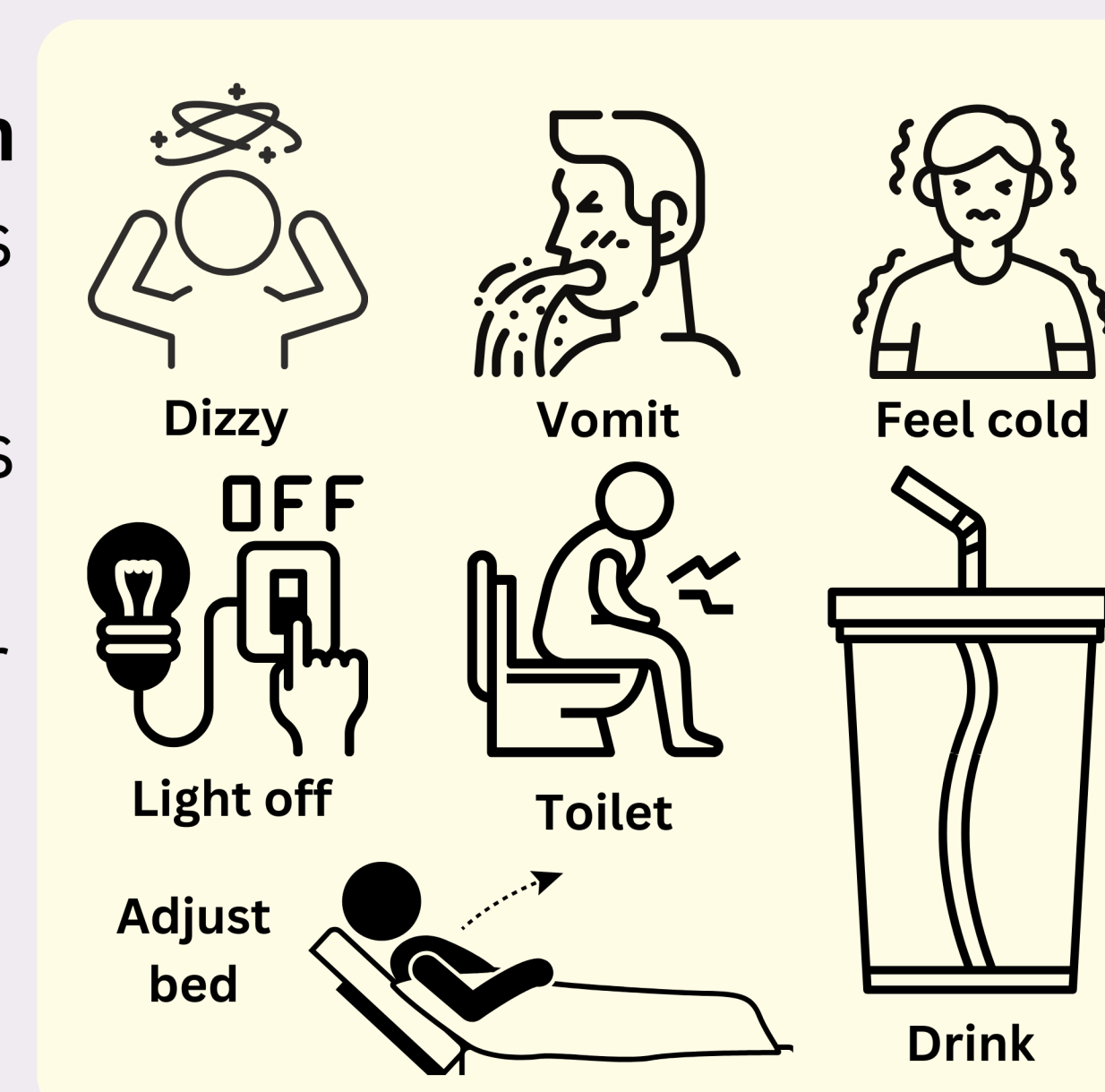
- Problem framing
- Expression of basic needs of comfort and safety

### Results: Language Tool-Kit



**Traffic Light System:** Utilizing system to compare symptom management needs and severity

**Pictogram Communication Board:** Utilizing pictograms to assess symptoms and comfort needs of residents receiving care, which can be edited to fit the state or needs of each individual



Where is the pain?  
Good-yeh Boh-leet?

Thank you

Spah-see-bah

Good

Kah-rah-shaw

**Phonetic Cards:** Creating phonetic cards to include words in both the English and native languages, as well as the phonetic pronunciation. This should be done in multiple languages

**Spirituality and cultural cards:**

Providing information regarding different cultural and spiritual needs to guide staff, based on resident intake assessments



### Discussion

It is important to note that this tool relies on staff continuing to utilize non-verbal communication and personal knowledge to get a more well-rounded picture of residents' state. This tool-kit can provide an easier method of communication and needs assessment that is available at any time to all staff. It attempts to encompass the many distinct languages that exist and the diversity of resident needs in long-term care settings. Implementation of this tool has interprofessional applicabilities. It could lessen the burden on foreign-born staff and advise staff to collaborate on its implementation. Residents would also appreciate communication attempts, increasing the opportunity for expression of needs. Ultimately, it can help foster connections and increase socialization.

### Future Development

Must develop a culturally diverse tool-kit and will need to assess for cross-cultural understanding to do so. Focus groups with stakeholders, residents, and staff involved will need to be held to highlight gaps. Implementing and studying the effectiveness of use will help provide feedback to further the resource. Creating templates for staff, family, and volunteers to fill out based on resident population needs will provide both a comprehensive database and a learning opportunity. Appropriating the tool-kit as a linguistic resource can be beneficial to other fields in healthcare.

### References and Contact

#### Contact Information

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#### References

