

SENIORS' OUTDOOR SURVEY (SOS)

(blinded for review)



Your Name, Location _____

Which Outdoor space? _____ Date/ Time _____

PLEASE READ before using this tool:

STEP 1: Choose an outdoor area – First, decide on the boundaries of the outdoor space to be evaluated. (Features that are viewable should be included when appropriate, even if beyond the space itself.)

STEP 2: Walk and sit in the area - Imagine **YOU** are a senior resident with sensory and functional disabilities, using a walker or wheelchair. Walk around slowly, test the furniture, look at the area from different positions – including wheelchair height.) **ASK:** “How well does this space support the needs of frail older adults?”

STEP 3: Evaluate the area – Rate each item from 1 to 7 (1 = worst, 7 = best), based on the climate, context, and functional level of residents, considering what you could *reasonably expect* in this type of setting. Where multiple features exist, base your ratings on their relative importance in supporting outdoor usage.

OVERALL, how well does this outdoor area provide a real sense of escape and relief from being indoors? (a feeling of fresh air, views, sky, sunshine, lush plantings, other senses) **Very well** ____ **Fairly well** ____ **Not well** ____

1. ACCESS TO NATURE (14) Subtotal ____ ÷ 14 = ____ Score for this category

Abundant greenery - Does this area include or view a substantial quantity of healthy green plants ____; with a diverse mix of trees, vines, flowers and shrubs ____? (instead of all hard paving, or just a few types of plant)

Flowers and color - In season, would residents see an abundance of color, as flowers or bright foliage ____?

Reachable plants - Can residents in wheelchairs see, touch, or smell attractive plants at hand or eye level ____?

Viewscapes - Does seating have pleasant views ____, and are hard boundaries partly screened by plants ____?

Water and motion - Can residents see, hear, or interact with water, such as fountains, ponds, birdbaths, etc. ____? Do any features have movement ____? (e.g., wind chimes, waving banners, spraying fountains, grasses moving in the breeze)

Wildlife/ pets - Does this area provide amenities for pets ____; or to attract wildlife, such as squirrels, birds, and butterflies ____; or does it have views of domestic or farm animals ____? (such as rabbits, chickens, grazing cows or horses)

Private and quiet - Is the garden overall fairly quiet, and free from obnoxious noises ____; with privacy from nearby resident rooms ____; and at least one or more private outdoor places to sit ____?

2. OUTDOOR COMFORT AND SAFETY (15) Subtotal ____ ÷ 15 = ____ Score for this category

Available seating - Is there plenty of seating available ____; with at least a few different types of seating ____?

Sitting choices – Are there places to sit in sun or shade ____; with some seating easily movable by residents ____?

Safe seating - Is the seating stable so it will not tip over ____; with backs and arms to help residents get up safely ____?

Sitting comfort - Are chairs and benches comfortably shaped ____; made of materials that do not get too hot or cold ____; with at least some seat cushions ____?

Sitting amenities - Are there tables near some of the seating, to place a cup of coffee or food ____; and are there any rocking chairs, swings or gliders available ____?

Restroom/ drinking water - Is there a nearby restroom, with access to a drinking fountain or water cooler ____?

Maintenance/ air quality/ climate control - Is the outdoor area well-maintained ____; are any smoking areas well-separated from other areas ____; and is there any microclimate control ____? (e.g., outdoor fans, heaters, etc.)

3. WALKING AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES (14) Subtotal ____ ÷ 14 = ____ Score for this category

Looping walkways - Can residents choose from an abundance of walks of different lengths ____; with round-trip walks available ____; with interesting views ____?

Safe paving - Is paving level, smooth, no deep cracks, and easy for wheelchairs ____; with a non-skid, non-glare surface ____?

Comfortable safe walkways - Are walkways partly shaded from mid-day or hot afternoon sun ____; with handrails along at least a few parts of the walkways ____?

Walkway seating - Can residents find seating along walkways at frequent intervals (~50') ____; with some shaded seating ____?

Attractions/ destinations - In this outdoor area, can residents see interesting features to enjoy or walk toward ____? (such as a sundial, bird house, arbor, pergola, gazebo, fountain, fish pond, flower bed, etc.)

Social interaction/ children - Are there places that support social activities ____; (such as picnic tables, gathering spots, etc.) and play areas or other amenities for children, where residents can watch and/or interact with them ____?

Recreation/ exercise/ gardening - Does this area have amenities for residents to watch or engage in specific outdoor activities ____; (such as croquet, horseshoes, golf putting practice, swimming, an exercise station, etc.); are there places that encourage residents and staff to engage in gardening ____?

4. INDOOR-OUTDOOR CONNECTION (11) Subtotal ____ ÷ 11 = ____ Score for this category

Visibility - Can this outdoor space be easily viewed from well-used indoor areas ____; and is it easy to reach ____?

Alternate entrances - Are there multiple ways residents can reach this outdoor area from inside the building ____?

Transition zones - Are there comfortable places to linger next to the doorway, indoors ____; and outdoors ____?

Doors - Are doors unlocked during daytime ____; can residents easily open the door with little effort ____; and the door does not close too quickly ____; is there an automatic door available, that is easy to use ____?

Thresholds - Can residents in walkers or wheelchairs easily cross the door threshold without difficulty ____; and is there a wide paved landing outside the doorway ____?

5. CONNECTION TO THE WORLD (6) Subtotal ____ ÷ 6 = ____ Score for this category

Front porch - Is this space an "Entry Garden" or front porch, located at (or next to) a main entry of the building ____?

Watch visitors, deliveries - From this area, could residents watch vehicles arriving at the facility ____; or watch front-door activities, with a chance to greet people ____?

View landscape features - From this area, can residents see nearby landscape features such as trees, hills, etc. ____?

See nearby surroundings - From this area, can residents watch nearby streets and traffic ____; or human activities, buildings, and neighborhoods ____? (such as stores, houses, apartments, a bus stop, people walking, bicycling, etc.)

THANK YOU for using this tool – please feel free to contact us at (blinded for review) with any questions.

For each category in the SOS tool, you can add up the subtotal, and divide by the number of items to obtain the score for each category; the total will give you an overall score. Using the same process, you can compare different outdoor areas.

Weighting is being developed to generate scores that reflect the relative importance of the 60 different items. This will be based on the relevant literature, residents' surveyed preferences, outcome-based findings, and surveyed expert opinions. Weighting will be available as a formula embedded in an Excel spreadsheet, allowing you to enter your raw scores, and convert them into weighted scores.

Please see (blinded for review) for more copies of this evaluation tool, and to access an Excel spreadsheet, when available, for weighting your results.

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