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## **Adjusting to 'the home': dialectical dilemmas and personal relationships in a retirement community**

**Author:** Williams, Angie; Guendouzi, Jacqui

**Publication info:** Journal of communication 50. 3 (Jul 2000): 65-82.

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**Abstract:** None available.

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**Subject:** Interpersonal relations; Human relations; Retirement; Family; Community; Social networks; Way of life; Independence; Communication

**Subject discipline:** Sociology

**Supplemental data:** This paper reports and discusses a study undertaken at a West Coast U.S. retirement community. Fifteen able elderly residents were interviewed about their personal relationships and communication; with peers, family, and younger people. The paper examines how the residents' discourse reveals a number of dialectical contradictions that elders who choose the retirement community lifestyle may need; to manage in order to facilitate adjustment. Among the dialectical contradictions discussed here is the difficulty of managing issues of autonomy versus connection with the family network on the one; hand and the retirement community on the other. This is a particularly salient issue, given the dominance of dependency-related stereotypes associated with such communities and those who choose to; reside in them. This paper also looks at the contradictory dialectical pushes and pulls of connection and autonomy with respect to peer and friendship networks within the community. In this regard, our; data illustrate residents' attempts to manage stresses that ill health and frailty place on relationships. In some senses, the elders interviewed, especially frail elders, positively disassociated; themselves from some peers, while seeking to form and maintain satisfactory relationships with other peers, some of whom were in ill health. These issues are discussed with respect to retirement; community living as a lifestyle choice.

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