

Health and wellbeing in homes

“A comfortable house is a great source of happiness. It ranks immediately after health and a good conscience” are the clever words of Sydney Smith. This quote has come evident post the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fulham Community centre is at the forefront of encouraging connectivity in the community by organising a plethora of interactive classes.

It is a rarely acknowledged that the house type (e.g., high-rise), floor level, and housing quality (e.g., structural problems) have all been linked to mental health (Robinson and Williams, 2008).

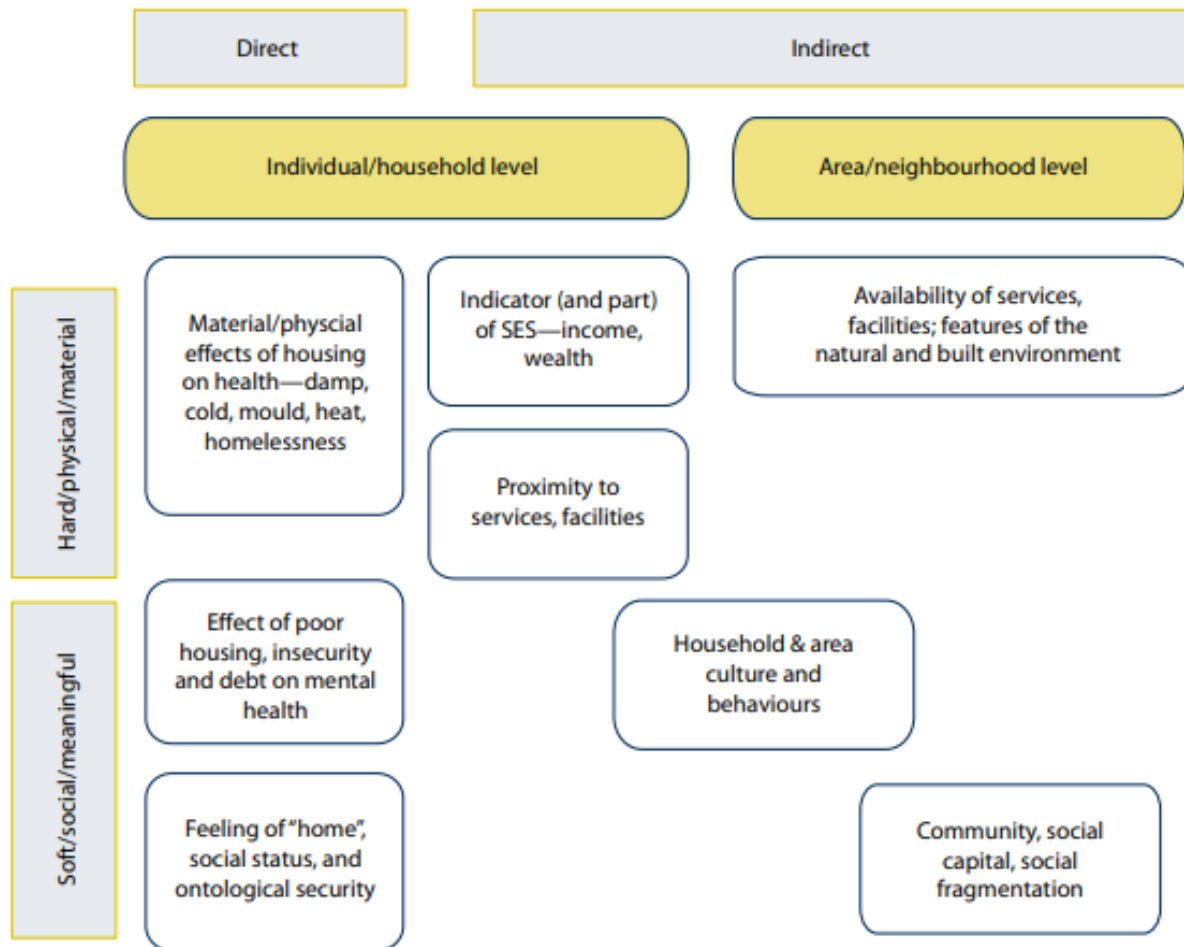


Figure 1: Direct and indirect (hard and soft) ways in which housing can affect health (Adapted from Robinson and Williams, 2008)

The issues highlighted for the building envelope include mold growth, quality, design, and noise exposure. The definition of "home" as a protective, safe and intimate refuge where one develops a sense of identity and attachment. Also, the immediate housing environment encompasses the quality of urban design (e.g., public services, playgrounds, green space, parks, places to socialize). The community, that is, the quality of the neighborhood and its relation to social cohesion, sense of trust and collective efficacy.

Mold in homes is the next challenge the author would like to address. Mold is a type of fungi which belongs to a group of organisms including mushrooms and yeasts (SA

health, 2023). The mold can be identified by being black, grey, green or white or mold often looks like a stain or smudge, and may smell musty (SA health, 2023). It is common in the kitchen, bathroom, laundries and in corners. The growth of this fungi can be restricted by heat, insulation, and ventilation. Firstly, implementation of exhaust fans or simply opening the window is one remedy. Secondly, ensuring the temperature remains 5 degrees Celsius higher than outdoor temperature on a chilly day can discourage the growth of mold. Lastly, Insulation in the walls and ceiling can help minimize the mold growth. On the other hand, existing mold can be vacuumed using a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter vacuum and is preferred to other vacuum cleaners which expel the mold particles into the air.

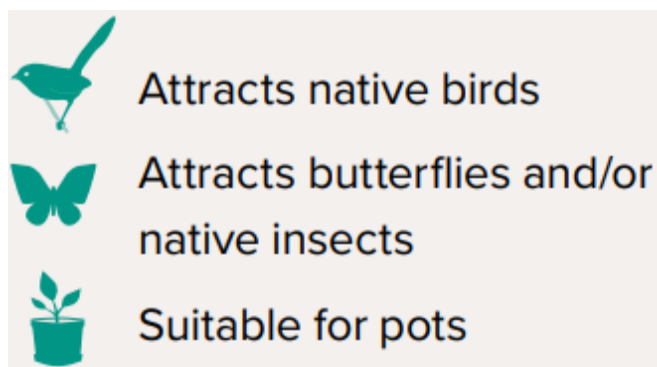


Figure 2 Benefits of gardens in homes

Nothing beats sitting in the garden for achieving a state of tranquillity. Here is a checklist for you to get started:

- Check the soil of the garden! It could be clay, sandy, silty or good loam mix. Too much sand will drain well but not hold on to nutrients, too much clay will not drain well and too much silt will make it prone to erosion.
- The soil needs to be conditioned with gypsum and/or organic matter or removed and replaced with good quality garden soil for your trees and plants to thrive.
- Additional sumps, trench grates and drainage solutions may be required for clay soils.

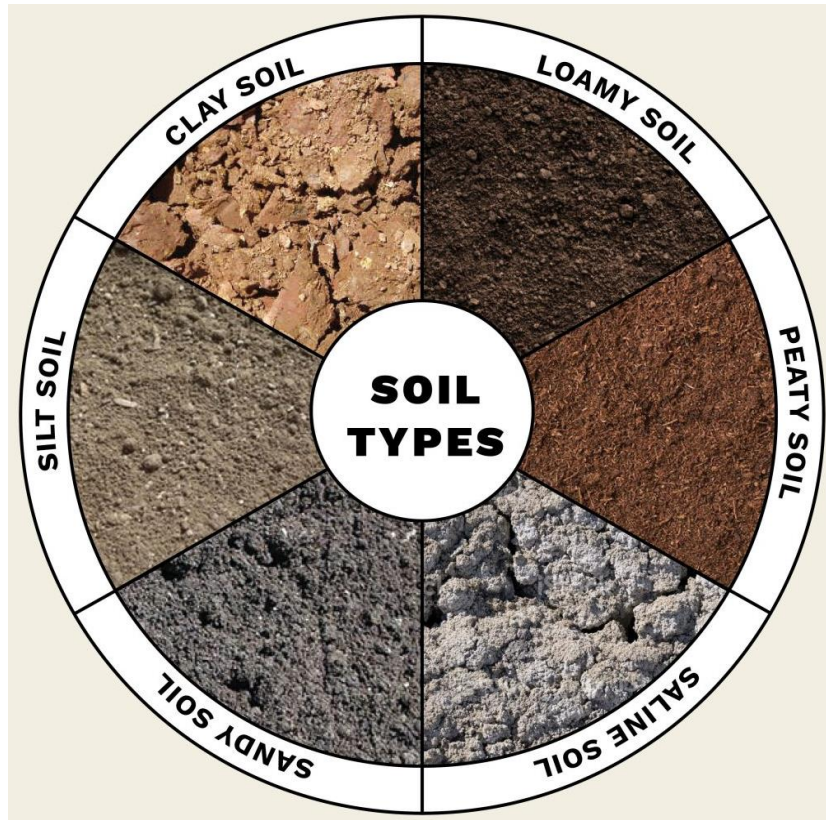


Figure 3 Types of soil in Adelaide

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The Fulham community centre is along Fitch Road offers a garden with chillies, capsicum, beans, tomatoes, herbs, cucumber, zucchini, squash, eggplants. Pumpkin and passion fruits. The garden is open to the public from 9am to 1pm on weekdays except public holidays and free for use.



Figure 4 Fulham community centre

The last tip from the author is decluttering your home once every 6 months not only makes cleaning up easy but also helps create wellbeing in homes. Let the light in! Studies show that ingress of light in homes encourages the generation of a hormone called serotonin which uplifts mood (Tania, 2021).

The Fulham community centre would like to encourage “happy living” by encouraging connectivity in the community through interactive classes.

References

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