A Living Laboratory for Transforming Elder Care in America
The BIF Elder Experience Lab works with older Americans from all walks of life to create a real world laboratory for understanding and improving the elder experience.
The Business Innovation Factory created the Elder Experience Lab to create a platform for experimentation where partners can design and test new solutions to improve the elder experience. To build a living laboratory for transforming elder care in America, we began with one simple premise: put the elder experience at the center.

The BIF Elder Experience Lab works with elder volunteers to conduct deep research into elders every day experience. We use these insights to illuminate opportunities for transforming the elder care system, and with help from the Lab’s elder participants, put new ideas to the test in a real-world environment.

Beyond our observational work, the BIF team uses focus groups and workshops that directly engage elders in research and design activities.

The conversation about elder care takes on a new dimension when elders, in their own voices, share first person insights about what works and what doesn’t.

The BIF team uses a design research method to understand how elders interact with environments, utilize shared and private spaces, care for body and mind and stay connected to the world. We couple this approach with a robust storytelling capability to bring the elder experience to life in a new and exciting way. We then help our partners transfer these insights back into their organizations to accelerate their internal R&D and innovation efforts.
Today, we have within our reach hundreds of solutions that could help older Americans live fuller, more independent lives. But our current system for delivering care to elders is broken, and even after investing hundreds of billions of dollars, most elders do not enjoy the quality of life they deserve. If today’s approach for delivering care is in trouble, try to imagine this system as it stretches to accommodate the arrival of the baby boomers.

Working with elders who open their lives to us, the BIF team uses an observational and ethnographic approach to understand how elders interact with their environments, utilize shared and private spaces, care for body and mind, and stay connected with their friends and with the world.

From simple things like eating and dressing to the challenges elders face staying connected to the community, the BIF team captures the elder experience, using narrative, video and photography to reveal insights into the experience and illuminate opportunities for transformative innovation.

We believe that incremental changes will not be enough to “fix” the elder care system. When we launched the Elder Experience Lab we wanted to motivate more players to think about what the “nursing home of the future” should look like. In pursuit of this mission, we have created a map of the experience and identified a set of opportunities to improve it.

We use these insights to illuminate opportunities for transforming the elder care system, and with help from the Lab’s elder participants, put new ideas to the test in a real-world environment.
One of the most important lessons we have learned is that the nursing home of the future isn’t a nursing home at all. We will always need environments that offer clinical services for elders facing significant medical challenges, and those environments may share some characteristics with today’s nursing home model.

What we really need is a new elder care system—one that offers today and tomorrow’s elders access to a flexible, integrated network of health and wellness services.

The appetite for transformative, system-level change has been strengthened by the current economic crisis and the un-sustainability of the current cost model. Significant opportunities exist to design new systems that deliver health and wellness services to elders where and when they need them.

Incremental fixes will not create this kind of transformation. To generate new solutions, we need platforms for experimentation where partners can deeply understand the elder experience and design new solutions in a real world environment.

BIF’s non-profit status creates a unique platform for this work and our focus on transformative innovation—not incremental fixes—makes the lab complimentary to most organization’s current innovation and R&D programming.

Most importantly, collaboration between partners from across sectors and industries enables a flow of information and insights critical to developing networked business models that link capabilities across traditional boundaries.

**THE BIF ELDER EXPERIENCE LAB FOCUSES ON ENABLING:**

- New networked models and integrated health and wellness solutions
- Significant innovation in how services are delivered
- Intentional focus on what the individual (not the institutions) needs to age well
- Bold new business models for meeting elders unmet needs
- A neutral platform for experimenting that moves ideas from the whiteboard into the real world to accelerate the design and implementation of market making solutions
The BIF Elder Experience Lab focuses on the experiences of elders aging in skilled nursing care, elders aging in assisted living environments, elders aging in place, elder caregivers, and baby boomers living independently.
Get Involved

BIF was created as a not-for-profit organization with a mission to enable collaborative innovation. Central to this mission is our belief that the most transformative solutions are found in the gray areas between traditional sector and industry silos. The BIF Elder Experience Lab is optimized for collaborative work where insights are shared across these boundaries to produce transformative models for delivering value.

BIF launched the Elder Experience Lab to create a platform where **industry and public sector partners** can gather deep insights into the experience of older adults and leverage those insights to design, test and develop new products, services, and business models in a real-world laboratory. Partners that seek a deeper understanding of the elder experience can access the Lab and invest in deep dive research in areas of elder experience of high strategic value. Partners also can participate in Lab activity through design studios that directly engage the Lab’s elder participants in research and development work.

Beyond the benefits of accessing an ongoing and sustainable laboratory platform, BIF’s ability to facilitate collaboration between Lab partners enables a flow of information and insights that is critical to developing market-making opportunities that link capabilities across traditional industry and sector boundaries.

**Individuals** are invited to join the Business Innovation Factory’s Elder Experience Lab online forum (see our website to join). The Lab’s on-line forum offers opportunities for the community to participate in Lab activities and guided discussions. We invite you to get involved and share your ideas.

**VOLUNTEERS**
We are always looking to recruit new volunteers into the Elder Experience Lab. We seek to engage people who are over age 50 and willing to candidly share information about their day-to-day experiences with the Business Innovation Factory Elder Experience Lab team.

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To transform elder care, we need platforms for experimentation where partners can understand the elder experience and design new solutions in a real world environment. In the Lab, we challenge elders to share their experience, experiment with new ideas and help us think about a new system that delivers a better experience.
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