

Improving Inpatient Psychiatric Care Outcomes Through Increased Exposure to Nature

Recommended design strategies



Current Supporting Research

- Diverse patient groups accord high importance to having a window view of nature
- To create supportive healthcare environment the patient should have access to nature and other positive distractions
- Modern humans have a predisposition to react positively to features such as, companion animals,trees, flowers, and water
- Findings from non-patient and patient groups indicate that simply viewing nature can significantly ameliorate stress within five minutes
- Prolonged exposure to nature views not only helps to calm patients, but can also have positive effects on other health outcomes
- When experiencing stress or anxiety, viewing nature scenes quickly produces mood improvements and elicits beneficial physiological changes such as lower blood pressure and reduced heart rate

Focused Interview

Interviewee:
Male
30 - 35
Diagnosed mental illness

- Main Takeaways:
- Increase access to outdoors
 - Increase optimal views, e.g. downtown, active streets and sidewalks, horizon
 - Access to animals, e.g. therapy animals, aquarium
 - Private rooms
 - Operable windows
 - Operable window shades

Meeting the Goals of Universal Design

Body fit	Adjustable height raised garden bed
Comfort	Variety of bench heights in the common space/courtyard
Wellness	Views to the outdoors from all areas in the care unit
Awareness	Circular or loop, floor plan
Understanding	Clearly operable windows and window treatments
Social Integration	Cooperative gardening and Socio-petal furniture layouts
Cultural Appropriateness	Patient freedom to move around the space
Personalization	Private rooms allowing for personalization

Psychiatric Care Unit: implementing features to increase exposure to nature



Reasons for Improvement:
Current Numbers
(Statistics for New York State in 2016)

An average of **2,470** patients were admitted for inpatient psychiatric care in 2016

Average length of inpatient stay for adults is **400** days

Average length of inpatient stay for children is **55** days

Nearly half of NYS psychiatric hospitals operate approximately **100** beds with an average budgeted capacity of only **55** beds