



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

To evaluate the efficacy of evidence-based designs used in the construction of a crisis shelter garden for the purpose of nature-based therapy.

Post-Occupancy Evaluation of a Crisis Shelter Garden and Application of Findings Through the Use of a Participatory Design Process

Lygum, V. L., Poulsen, D. V., Djernis, D., Djernis, H. G., Sidenius, U., Stigsdotter, U. K. 2018 | *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal*, Volume 12, Issue 3, Pages 153-167

Key Concepts/Context

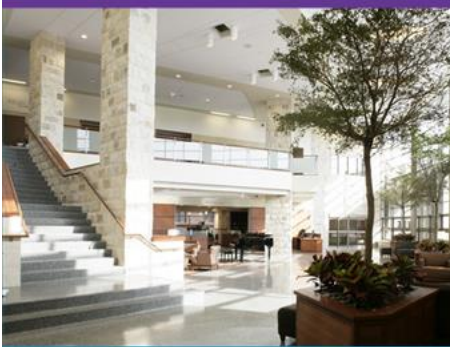
As an increasing number of designers and healthcare practitioners utilize nature-based therapy tools, there is a growing need to understand how certain elements within these natural spaces might contribute to heightened therapeutic effects for patients with specific conditions. Crisis shelters that provide healthcare resources to women and children exposed to domestic abuse could benefit from nature-based therapy tools, but a deeper understanding of how these environments should be built is needed. The authors suggest that a close study of patient experiences in gardens built under this context could help expand the medical community's general understanding of nature-based therapy in general.

Methods

Over two months, the researchers conducted post-occupancy evaluation (POE), which included a landscape analysis, observations of physical traces in and around the garden, and a total of 15 interviews, each lasting 30-45 minutes. Interviewees included three social workers, three current and three former residents, the crisis shelter leader, two psychologists, the facility janitor, a weekend guard, and four childcare workers. Observations made during the field analysis were compared with the qualitative data provided through the interviews, allowing the authors to organize primary themes into six resulting categories.

Findings

Six primary themes emerged from the POE: inadequate garden maintenance, issues with garden accessibility, low levels of safety and privacy, lack of stimulating



The Center for Health Design:
Moving Healthcare Forward

The Center for Health Design advances best practices and empowers healthcare leaders with quality research that demonstrates the value of design to improve health outcomes, patient experience of care, and provider/staff satisfaction and performance.

Learn more at
www.healthdesign.org

sensory input from the environment, the importance of having many varieties of places for children to play, and the need for a balance between social and private spheres within the garden. Comparing interview data with data from the landscape analysis allowed the authors to formulate recommendations for addressing the gardens' issues, and noted that these recommendations could be applicable to many other therapeutic garden designs.

Limitations

The authors noted that behavioral mapping or video recordings might have provided valuable insight into the qualitative data analyzed in this study. Data derived from the field observations of "traces" were largely based on assumptions.

Design Implications

Post-occupancy evaluations similar to the method used in this study could help designers make informed building decisions when planning or renovating a nature-based therapy space. Considering staff and patient perspectives could help designers enhance the overall therapeutic affect of these spaces.

The Knowledge Repository is a collaborative effort with our partners

Academy of
Architecture for Health
an AIA Knowledge Community

AAHF
ACADEMY OF ARCHITECTURE FOR HEALTH
FOUNDATION

ASHE
Optimizing health care facilities

Design for Aging
an AIA Knowledge Community

The American
Institute
of Architects

FGI

The American
Institute
of Architects

Additional key point summaries provided by:

NIHD | Nursing Institute for
Healthcare Design
LEADERSHIP • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

RESEARCH DESIGN
CONNECTIONS