

CREATING HEALING ENVIRONMENT FOR OFFICE SPACES

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Abstract - Good environment will reflect the user's life in many aspects. Therefore, many concepts have been developed to produce such good and excellent environment. In the hectic business environment of today the physical environment of office spaces plays a crucial role in shaping the well-being and productivity of employees. Current research from across disciplines identifies that engagement with space for people with mental illness can reduce emotional stress and thus improve health. This research paper explores the concept of creating healing environments within office spaces, focusing on the incorporating design elements that promote mental, emotional, and physical wellness. The paper begins by examining the impact of healing environment on employee. It looks at the growing trend of incorporating healing factors into office design, such as natural light, biophilic components, ergonomic furniture, and visual comfort. Modern office layouts sometimes promote productivity over well-being, resulting in stress. In contrast, healing workplaces aim to create a nurturing environment that promotes employee health and well-being. The study also emphasizes the necessity of inclusive design principles in accommodating employees different needs and preferences, ensuring that healing spaces are accessible for all. Through a comprehensive review of empirical studies, case examples, and expert insights, this paper offers practical guidelines for conceptualizing and implementing healing environments in office spaces. The objective of the research is to offer useful suggestions to companies that want to give employee well-being top priority by creating healing environments in their offices. Study also contributes to the body of knowledge around practitioner and also researcher.

Keywords – Healing environment, Employee well-being, Office spaces, Natural elements, Healthy workplaces

1.Introduction

Healing environments are spaces within a facility that minimize occupant stress and encourage positivity. Everyday stress has an influence on our bodies. If left untreated, stress can lead to various health issues, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Healing spaces are just one example of how building managers can improve the health of its inhabitants. Every person in environment contributes to

a care and wellness culture that benefits workers and sense of connection, employers can cultivate a culture of care and wellbeing that benefits both individuals and as a whole. Health conscious office design promotes worker health and well-being, retention, reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, job satisfaction, and enhanced creativity.

The world is rapidly urbanizing. Approximately 60% of people reside in urban areas. The number will

it. Therefore, even if your surroundings are not particularly calming, your presence and attention can still contribute to its healing effects. The concept of a healing environment for employees has gained increasing significance. An environment that is healing focuses an importance on the mental, emotional, and physical health of its employees, fostering a supportive and nurturing atmosphere conducive to overall health and happiness. Employers may foster

the organization uncovering insights into the relationships between design elements,

increase by an additional 20% by 2050. People who live in cities have limited space to their homes, which are composed of concrete slabs, walls, and roofs. People are already living more in the virtual world than experiencing reality. Big societies and cities also correspond to higher levels of stress, pollution, poverty,

etc. Key factors that have contributed to rise in mental illness, stress levels, and feelings of discomfort are the advancement of technology, busy work schedules, a decrease in physical activities, diminishing human-nature relationships, etc.

2. Methodology

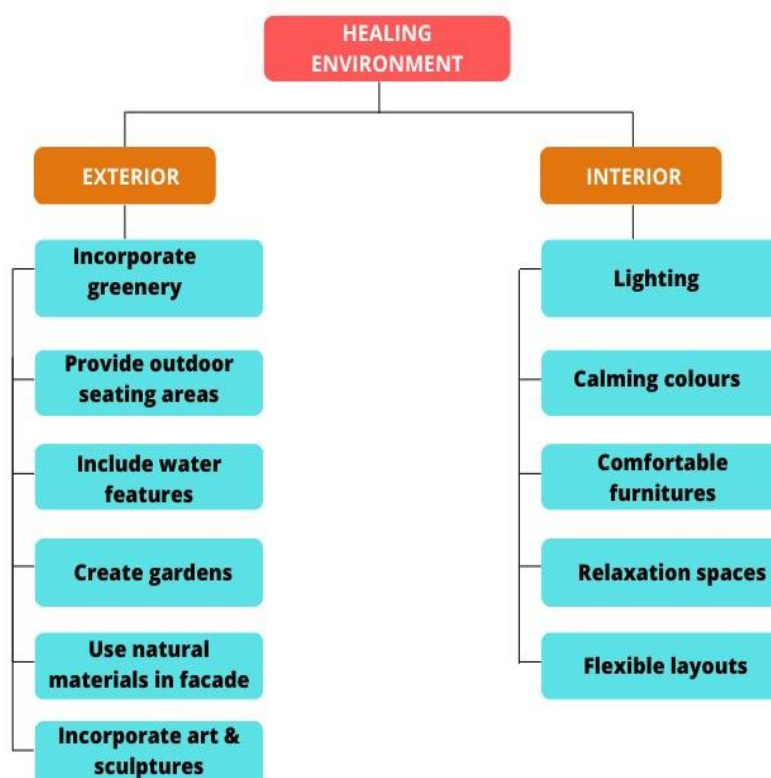
The research paper begins with a comprehensive literature review, as demonstrated in "Healing Environments in the Workplace: A Review of Current Research" by Johnson and Brown (2020), to establish a theoretical framework and identify research gaps. Mixed methods, as highlighted in "Promoting Employee Wellness through Healing Office Design" by Lee and Kim (2018), are then employed for data collection, utilizing surveys, and environmental assessments to capture both objective measures and subjective perceptions. Statistical analyses or qualitative interpretations are subsequently conducted to analyse the collected data, environmental conditions, and occupant well-being.

The search followed a five-stage systematic methodology. First, the research question was formed: What impacts on employees are described in the literature of the design of healing spaces? Next, key words, terms, and the search strategy were identified.

In the third stage, a range of key databases, publication vendors, and publishers in the field were searched, and papers were selected for review based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Fourteen papers were selected in the third stage. Next, the information of the selected articles was extracted and summarized. In the fifth and final stage, key findings of these papers were interpreted and reported in the form of a comparative tabulation.

3. Healing environment

"Healing" is the process of making someone well again or of getting well again, especially in the case of physical damage or other injuries. The concept of "healing architecture" was initially used in the 1980s to describe a category of the "healing environment" that looks into how surroundings affect their ability to heal and recover. Large windows, natural light, bright rooms, surrounding plants, and views of the outdoors are all beneficial in rehabilitation by employees spirits both physically and mentally. Physical elements such as lighting, communication, noise reduction, air quality, thermal comfort, privacy, colour, texture, and natural light all need to be taken into account when creating a healing environment.



3.1 Exterior Healing Spaces

a) Incorporate Greenery - Incorporating greenery into an office space and placing plants in strategic locations are key to creating a healing environment. Plants placed near windows to get more natural light and develop a stronger bond with the outside environment. Using living walls or vertical gardens enhances the acoustics and air quality. By using plants as natural dividers or partitions between workstations, privacy is enhanced. Creating wellness areas with lots of vegetation gives workers space to relaxation and recharge.

In order to create a whole sensory experience, aromatic and aesthetically pleasing plants are frequently employed in healing environments. Based on their smell and visual attributes, the following plant categories are frequently utilized in healing environments:

- **Aromatic Plants:** These plants yield fragrant blooms that improve the aesthetic appeal of healing surroundings while also pleasing the senses with their aroma. e.g.- Lavender, Jasmine, Gardenia.
- **Air-Purifying Plants:** Some plants may remove pollutants from the air, enhancing indoor air quality and fostering a healthier atmosphere. Aloe vera, peace lily spider plants, and snake plants are a few examples.
- **Aquatic Plants:** Because of their relaxing and cleansing qualities, these plants are frequently used in healing conditions. They are plants that survive in aquatic surroundings. Aquatic plants can assist lower stress levels and enhance the quality of the water. e.g.- Lotus, Water hyacinth, Water lettuce.
- **Plants with Intriguing Patterns or Vibrant Colours:** Eye-catching patterns or vibrant colours can draw attention to a plant and improve mood. E.g.- Croton, Calathea, Bromeliads.



b) Provide outdoor seating areas - Incorporating outdoor seating places in the workplace is a great method to support employees well-being and create a healing environment. These areas, which can include landscaped patios, rooftop terraces, or courtyard gardens, can be thoughtfully designed so that workers are able to enjoy nature while doing work. Comfortable seating arrangements surrounded by greenery, such as potted plants, trees, and flowering shrubs, create a tranquil oasis where employees can relax, recharge, and connect with the outdoors. Ensuring that these outside spaces remain functional and pleasant throughout the year requires the provision of amenities such as umbrellas, covered places, and weather-resistant furniture. These spaces can act as an extension of the office, providing chances for casual get-togethers, brainstorming sessions, or just some downtime. Employers show their dedication to the well-being of their workforce and create surroundings that encourage creativity, productivity, and general happiness by incorporating outdoor seating areas into their office designs.



c) Include water features - Adding water elements to workplace spaces can further amplify the therapeutic ambiance and encourage peace of mind and wellbeing in staff members. Whether it's a small fountain, a flowing stream, or a reflective pond, water elements add a soothing ambiance and create a connection to nature within the workplace. The soothing sound of running water can help block out disturbing sounds, resulting in a calmer and more comfortable workspace. Water features can help to promote relaxation and reduce stress because of their relaxing mental effects. Employees can take breaks from their hectic workdays by carefully arranging these components in indoor or

outdoor seating areas. Additionally, water features serve as focal points for meditation or mindfulness practices, offering employees a space to decompress and recharge. Ultimately, incorporating water features into office design not only enhances the aesthetics of the space but also contributes to employee well-being and productivity by fostering a harmonious and healing environment.



d) Create gardens - Creating gardens at the workplace is an innovative approach to promote a healing atmosphere that is beneficial to workers well-being. By integrating carefully curated green spaces indoors or outdoors, offices can offer employees a sanctuary from the stresses of the workday. In addition to purifying the air, indoor gardens with dense vegetation and botanical exhibits offer a soothing atmosphere that encourages rest and clarity of mind. Whether they are groomed patios, rooftop terraces, or courtyard getaways, outdoor gardens give staff members a chance to spend time in nature while taking breaks or having meetings. These gardens inclusion of walking routes, benches, and water features promotes exercise and mindfulness, which improves general health and productivity. By including staff members in the design and upkeep of these gardens, workplaces create a revitalizing atmosphere that promotes both mental and physical health as well as a sense of community and ownership. In the end, these gardens foster creativity, teamwork, and a holistic wellness culture, making them essential parts of the workplace environment.



e) Use natural materials in facade - The use of natural facades in office buildings is highly beneficial in the creation of a therapeutic atmosphere that encourages wellbeing and a sense of connection to the natural world. Using natural materials on the outside of buildings, such as wood, stone, and vegetation, improves their visual appeal and promotes harmony with the surroundings. Along with enhancing air quality, adding features like vertical gardens or living walls to the facade also adds esthetics appeal and a sense of connection to the outside environment. Natural facades provide a break from the concrete jungle and help staff members feel refreshed and at ease. The use of sustainable materials further reinforces the office's commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible design practices. An inviting and biophilic workplace greets workers as they come, setting the stage for a successful and satisfying workday. Businesses promote the health and happiness of their employees while simultaneously creating aesthetically striking workspaces by incorporating natural facades into office construction.

f) Incorporate art and sculptures - Paintings, sculptures, and installations are examples of carefully chosen artwork that can act as focal points in a work environment, encouraging creativity and a sense of community and inspiration. A harmonious interaction with the environment is encouraged and the healing atmosphere is further enhanced by the addition of natural components, such as organic forms or floral designs, to these creative exhibits.

3.2 Interior Healing Spaces

a) Lighting - Light also plays a crucial role in creating a conducive atmosphere for productivity, well-being, and overall satisfaction among employees. There are two types of lighting given below:

- **Natural lighting** - Using natural lighting in the workplace is essential to creating a healing environment that encourages staff productivity and well-being. Offices can achieve an open, friendly, and outdoor feeling by strategically placing windows, skylights, and glass dividers to maximize daylight access. . In addition to providing illumination for the office, natural light helps balance circadian rhythms, which improves sleep quality and general wellness. By prioritizing natural lighting in office design, companies can reduce reliance on artificial lighting, lower energy costs, and create more sustainable workplaces. Additionally, open floor patterns and transparent walls that let in more natural light promote a sense of community and teamwork among people in the workplace.
- **Artificial lighting** - In workplaces, artificial lighting is essential for creating healing environments, especially in situations where natural light is limited or unavailable. Artificial lighting has a substantial positive impact on worker comfort, productivity, and well-being when strategically planned and implemented.



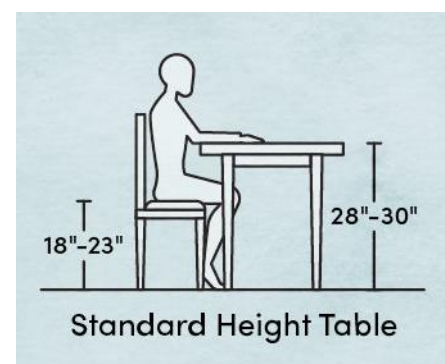
b) Calming colours - Choosing soothing colours for a workplace is frequently the first step towards creating a therapeutic space. Calm hues can be used to paint, furnish, and accessorize an office space in a way that makes it feel friendly and inviting, promoting relaxation and renewal for both staff members and guests. People can notice a modest but significant improvement in their mood and general sense of wellness by surrounding themselves with these healing hues, which also makes the workplace a more loving and welcoming place to work.

White is a classic colour that adds openness and cleanliness while reflecting light to make the room

brighter. Due to their well-known soothing influence, blues are widely used to lower anxiety and improve concentration, especially in analytical or creative contexts. Green connects people to the outdoors and promotes concentration because it is calming and harmonious, evoking a sense of nature. Pops of vivid colours like orange or yellow bring vitality and inventiveness, while neutrals like grey create a tasteful backdrop. A thoughtful selection of colours that are suited to the particular requirements and mood intended for the office guarantees a balance between stimulation and relaxation.

c) Comfortable furniture - The selection of furniture is crucial in creating a healing environment at an office by encouraging comfort and wellbeing. Long work sessions are made more comfortable and less taxing on the body by using ergonomic chairs with adjustable features that help good posture. Furthermore, pleasant areas for relaxing and casual collaboration are created by soft seating alternatives like comfortable armchairs or plush sofas, which promote a feeling of coziness and connection among coworkers. Natural materials, such as bamboo or wood, not only enhance aesthetic appeal but also inspire a feeling of peace and harmony with the surroundings.

In an office environment, furniture height plays a critical role in ensuring worker comfort, productivity, and general well-being. Ergonomics, the study of arranging the workplace to suit the capabilities and limitations of the human body, can be greatly impacted by appropriately sized and positioned furniture.



d) Relaxation spaces - Offices can greatly benefit from the installation of relaxation areas to promote a healing atmosphere. These areas give staff members a place to

relax, decompress, and refuel. They can be created as welcoming corners with gentle lighting, warm sitting, and soothing hues. It can be relaxing to add accessories like hammocks, bean bags, and couches. To create a calming atmosphere, also adding natural elements like indoor plants or artwork inspired by nature. To further improve the relaxing experience and also give amenities like yoga mats, meditation pillows, or even little water features. These areas can serve as a haven where staff members can go on quick getaways, practice mindfulness, or join activities that enhance wellbeing.



e) Flexible layouts - Flexible layouts can greatly improve the overall ambiance and functionality of office spaces designed for healing environments. These layouts prioritize adaptability and fluidity, allowing spaces to evolve according to the needs and preferences of occupants. By integrating modular furniture systems, movable partitions, and multifunctional zones, such environments foster versatility, accommodating various activities from focused work to collaborative sessions or relaxation areas. Such adaptability promotes a sense of autonomy and control for individuals, empowering them to personalize their surroundings to optimize comfort and productivity. Moreover, flexible layouts facilitate seamless adjustments to support diverse work styles and team dynamics, promoting creativity, communication, and overall well-being within the office environment. Emphasizing flexibility in design not only enhances the functionality of healing environments but also promotes a sense of inclusivity and empowerment among occupants, ultimately contributing to a more holistic and supportive workspace.

4. Case Study –

- Surbana Jurong Campus, Singapore
- Architects - Safdie Architects
- Area - 742000 ft²

The ten, five, and seven-story pavilions which make the 742,000-square-foot campus are arranged along a central pedestrian spine that connects indoor and outdoor courtyards, common areas, and facilities at every level. To create a treehouse appearance, the structure can be raised, allowing the ground below to expand and envelop the upper-level offices and lower-level public areas. A different approach to traditional, interior focused buildings is to design within the landscape.



The idea that workers should have suitable access to light, air, and green space to reduce stress, promote socializing, and boost creativity is the foundation of the design. Workplace wellbeing was carefully considered when conceiving the formation of the pavilions, courtyards, pathways, and flow. With direct sightlines to the nearby Eco Garden and an open atrium spine that links employees to the world outside the office, the atrium spine adds visual complexity and diversity. It also gives workers visual access to activities taking place on various floors.



Meeting rooms open directly onto the north courtyard, so that events can spill out into the garden. In contrast to the lively southern courtyard, this space is conducive to small group discussions or quiet reflection.



The luxuriant foliage adorning the building's exterior creates a seamless blend with the natural environment. Incorporating flora serves as a visual cue for calm and tranquility in addition to improving the aesthetic appeal.

The Surbana Jurong Campus office building's interior areas are designed with a healing environment in mind, creating a productive and well-being-oriented ambiance. Large windows let in an abundance of natural light, which creates a cozy, pleasant glow that energises and uplifts the people inside. This focus on natural light not only lessens the need for artificial lighting but also improves mood and mental clarity, encouraging a feeling of energy and alertness.



The design and furniture place a high priority on comfort and ergonomics, offering adaptable workstations that can be adjusted to meet the various demands of users as well as ergonomic chairs. Throughout the workday, opportunities for social engagement and relaxation are effortlessly integrated, fostering collaboration and refreshment.



The Surbana Jurong Campus office building stands as a shining example of a holistic healing environment, seamlessly integrating both interior and exterior features to promote the well-being of its occupants.

By prioritizing elements such as natural light, sustainable materials, and ergonomic design, the building not only enhances the physical health of its occupants but also nurtures their mental and emotional well-being.

5. Conclusion –

Creating a healing environment in office spaces is paramount for enhancing employee well-being, productivity, and overall satisfaction. By integrating elements of nature, optimizing lighting, promoting ergonomic design, and fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere, organizations can cultivate spaces that nurture physical, mental, and emotional health. Moreover, incorporating technology-driven

solutions for noise reduction and air quality improvement can further enhance the healing potential of office environments.

Technology can play a significant role in generating a healing environment. By offering guided meditation sessions or calming music, smart devices and applications, for instance, can help people in practicing mindfulness and relaxation practices. Furthermore, in order to replicate the patterns of natural light, smart lighting systems can be designed, which enhances

wellbeing. Technology can also facilitate remote healthcare services, allowing individuals to access medical consultations and therapy sessions from the comfort of their own spaces. Ultimately, investing in the creation of healing office spaces not only benefits employees but also contributes to a positive organizational culture, leading to increased retention rates, improved performance, and a happier, healthier workforce.

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