Ten Principles for Better Behavioral Health Outcomes

Behavioral health facilities have historically elevated the need for safety above the comfort of patients. Yet research shows that a calming, homelike setting with access to nature helps patients regulate emotions and, in some cases, take little or no medication. Here are ten design principles NBBJ used to balance patient and safety needs when creating more therapeutic environments.

1. Design with nature.
2. Help patients feel at home.
3. Allow a sense of control.
4. Reduce stress with quiet.
5. Make care more accessible.
7. Provide private distractions.
9. Prioritize safety...
10. ...but safety doesn’t have to mean institutional.
Emotional Embrace

- Emotional
- Home

Focus
- Explore
- Comfort
- Hope
- Relax

Innovation – New Paradigm of Care

Chad’s Outpatient Clinic Visit

- Name: Chad
- Age: 8

Outpatient Clinic

- Chad has been referred by his pediatrician for abdominal pain.
- He is due to return to school, but he has been staying home with his family.
- He has been monitored for the past few days, but the pain has not improved.
- He is very anxious and worried.
- He is being monitored closely and will be referred to the clinic.

Chad’s family is concerned about his condition and the impact it has on his daily life.
04
What’s Next?
Distraction!
Mobility / Flexibility / Control

Care for the Caregiver

Arousal fatigue + Global Pandemic = Sympathetic Nerve Response Overload

Care must need at least a 10-minute rest every 90 minutes from focused activities. After 10 minutes, we will see changes in the autonomic nervous system to calm the body, mind, and heart. This cycle is called the 'standard 90 minutes.' After 90 minutes without a break, we move to the fight or flight physiological state. A motionless staff are at risk for emotional and physical strain in the delivery of care.

How can hospital staff make the most of their 10+ minutes of rest time to recharge?
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