



***Healing Created Together:* Trauma Informed Community Based Mental Health and Social Service Agency**

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Final Project

Intro to Trauma Informed Design

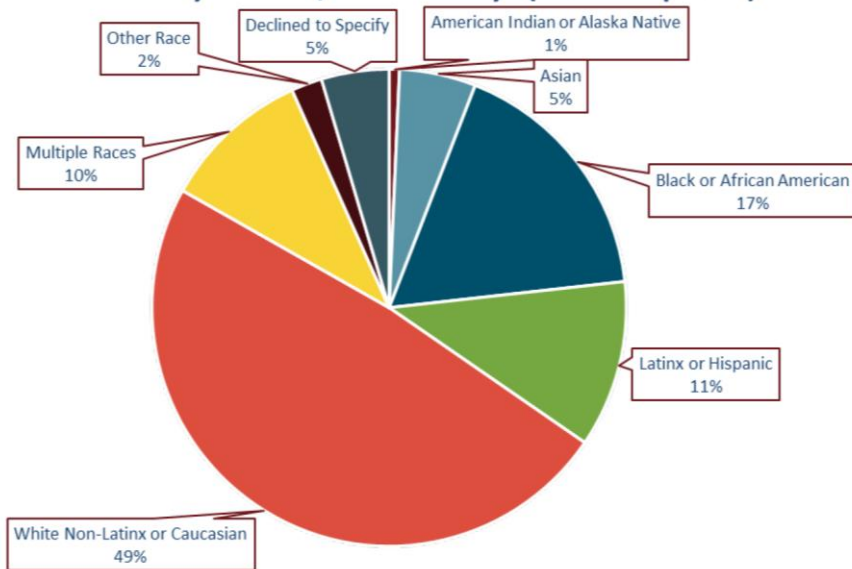
October 20, 2024

Trauma Informed Mental Health, Youth Diversion, and Domestic & Sexual Violence Center

Client Populations Information:

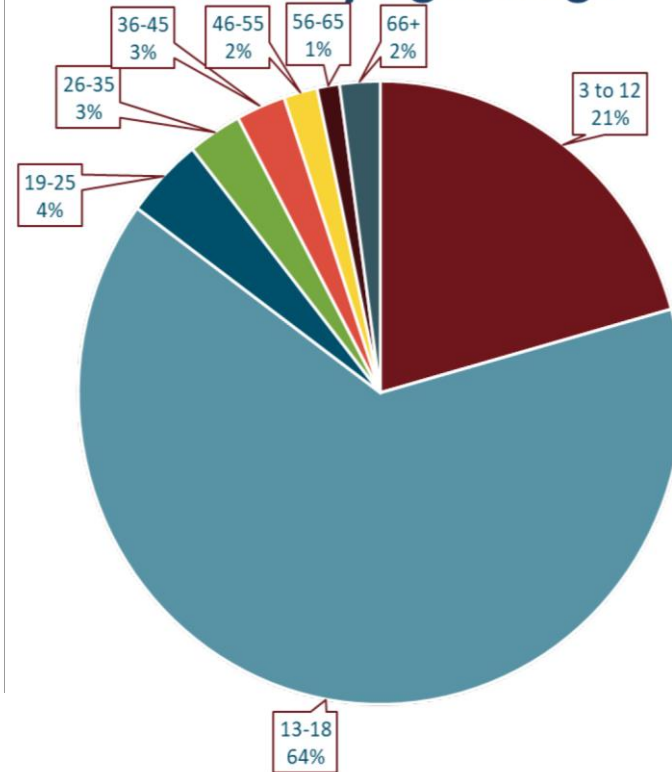
- 900 – 1000 clients seen annually across two sites and in community
- 89% of clients are under 26 years old; 85% are under 18

Clients by Race/Ethnicity (self report)



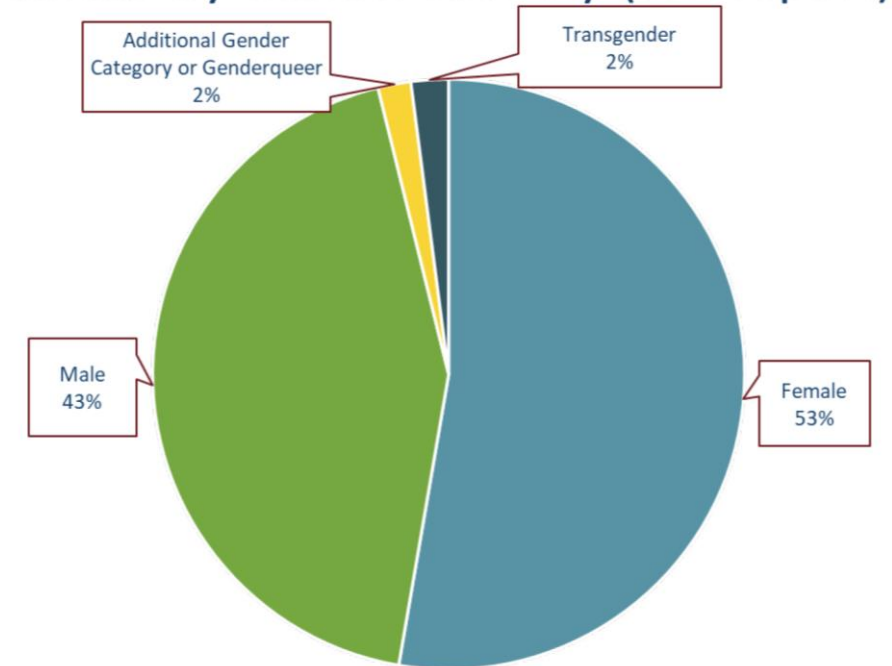
■ American Indian or Alaska Native
■ Black or African American
■ White Non-Latinx or Caucasian
■ Other Race
■ Asian
■ Latinx or Hispanic
■ Multiple Races
■ Declined to Specify

Clients by Age Range



■ 3 to 12 ■ 13-18 ■ 19-25 ■ 26-35 ■ 36-45 ■ 46-55 ■ 56-65 ■ 66+

Clients by Gender Identity (self report)



■ Female ■ Male ■ Additional Gender Category or Genderqueer ■ Transgender

Common Forms of Trauma and Co-occurring Challenges of Client Population

Client Populations Information:

- Majority of Clients (75% at last assessment) reported domestic or sexual violence experiences to their provider
- Half of agency clients are on Medicaid, 5% are on sliding fee scale
- Many have co-occurring challenges such as justice system involvement (especially in our youth diversion program), ongoing criminal, civil, and family law cases (especially for DV/SA), lack of access to housing and other basic resources, substance abuse challenges, chronic health conditions, complex trauma experiences including 4 or more ACES, and challenging family system dynamics that don't support the youth's healing
- Common mental health diagnoses include Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.
- Many themes with clients and families around client developmental needs. Lots of identity development work with clients (gender, sexual identity, culture, etc.).
- Preference for group and in person services
- Only nonprofit provider of these services in 16 municipalities that NYFS serves
- Draws client from the suburbs as well as both urban centers (St. Paul and Minneapolis)

Why This Space?

The space that I chose for my design project is the Community Mental Health Clinic (CMHC) that I work at. The agency currently owns this building and occupies the second floor. The first floor is occupied by a level four school, elementary through high school, and the top floor is occupied by a variety of for and not for profit businesses. An addition was built next door that has a conference room, kitchen, and large gymnasium that can be used for programming (that is not a part of this project) in 2011.

The location is ideal. It is near many major highways with easy access via bus and car. There is a major retail and shopping area a short distance up the street, and we are near lots of residential neighborhoods. There is a large accessible parking lot and the building is ADA compliant. This is the only CMHC in Suburban Ramsey County, so there is a lot of need for services. The space was created initially for a very different range of programming in the early 1990's, and we have continued to try to use a space that was not designed for our current programming (for example, we had a separate area for a day treatment program that is no longer in operation).

The building itself is an office building, and clients can come in for a variety of needs; they are not disclosing their need for services by virtue of parking and coming in the main door. It is situated on wetlands and most of the offices have large windows that face green spaces. Office sizes are spacious. There is an area in front of the building with space for outdoor seating and there is a sensory garden for clients on their walk into the building.

Property Overview

- + \$17.50 Gross Usable
- + Move in condition
- + Northwest corner suite with nature views
- + Numerous private offices
- + Large common conference room
- + On site ownership/property management
- + Ample free parking
- + Large 6 Acre Site
- + Near Lake Josephine Park
- + Walk to retailers: coffee, Trader Joe’s, Super Target, Walgreen’s, etc.
- + Short drive to Rosedale Regional Mall
- + Walk to library and YMCA
- + Area Corporations: HB Fuller, Land O’ Lakes, Medtronic, Deluxe Check, Allina, BHS, API, Boston Scientific, St. Jude/Abbott, Catholic Insurance, Wells Fargo, Cummins, DSI, Intl Paper, Ecumen



Property Highlights

Total Building Square Footage 59,327 approximately

Year Built 1982

Parking Stalls Ample Free Space

Sprinklered Building Yes

Monument Sign Yes

In Suite Janitorial Included in Rent

Utilities Included in Rent

Vending Machines On Site

Elevator On Site

Roof New 2001

Outdoor Area Picnic Table On Site

Bus Service On Lexington Ave

Stairwells 3

Common Handicap Bathroom On Site

NYFS Space Amenities In This Design

- Spacious Trauma Informed Waiting Area
- Predictable, Spacious Hallways and Client Meeting Spaces
- Adequate Multifunctional group therapy, training, and conference rooms
- Staff Wellness Room
- Large Staff Breakroom with natural light on two walls
- Outdoor Space for seating with sensory garden, lush gardens, and labyrinth
- Case Management Office with food and clothing for clients, snack packs and hygiene packs
- Art and Play Therapy Rooms
- Gendered and Gender Diverse bathrooms
- ADA Compliant

Participatory Design Process (Imagined)

- Begin with Trauma Informed Client Assessment (survey) looking at programs, staff interactions, and client care
- Staff survey mirror of above
- Leadership Team focus group/initial discussion
- Key staff interviews across a variety of programs 1:1
- 4 Client focus groups (youth separate from caregivers)
- 3 Staff focus groups (2 staff and one board of directors)
- Client interviews of identified participants from the focus groups
(all client and staff participation comes with gift cards)
- Summary review and feedback from leadership
- Preliminary design
- Staff and client feedback on design boards left in conference room with post it notes and instructions over two weeks – at least 20 clients (50% youth) and 20 staff (representative of all programs)
- Summary review and preliminary design feedback from Leadership Team
- Revision for LT review

SAMHSA's Six Trauma Informed Principles

Safety

Trustworthiness
and
Transparency

Peer Support

Collaboration
and Mutuality

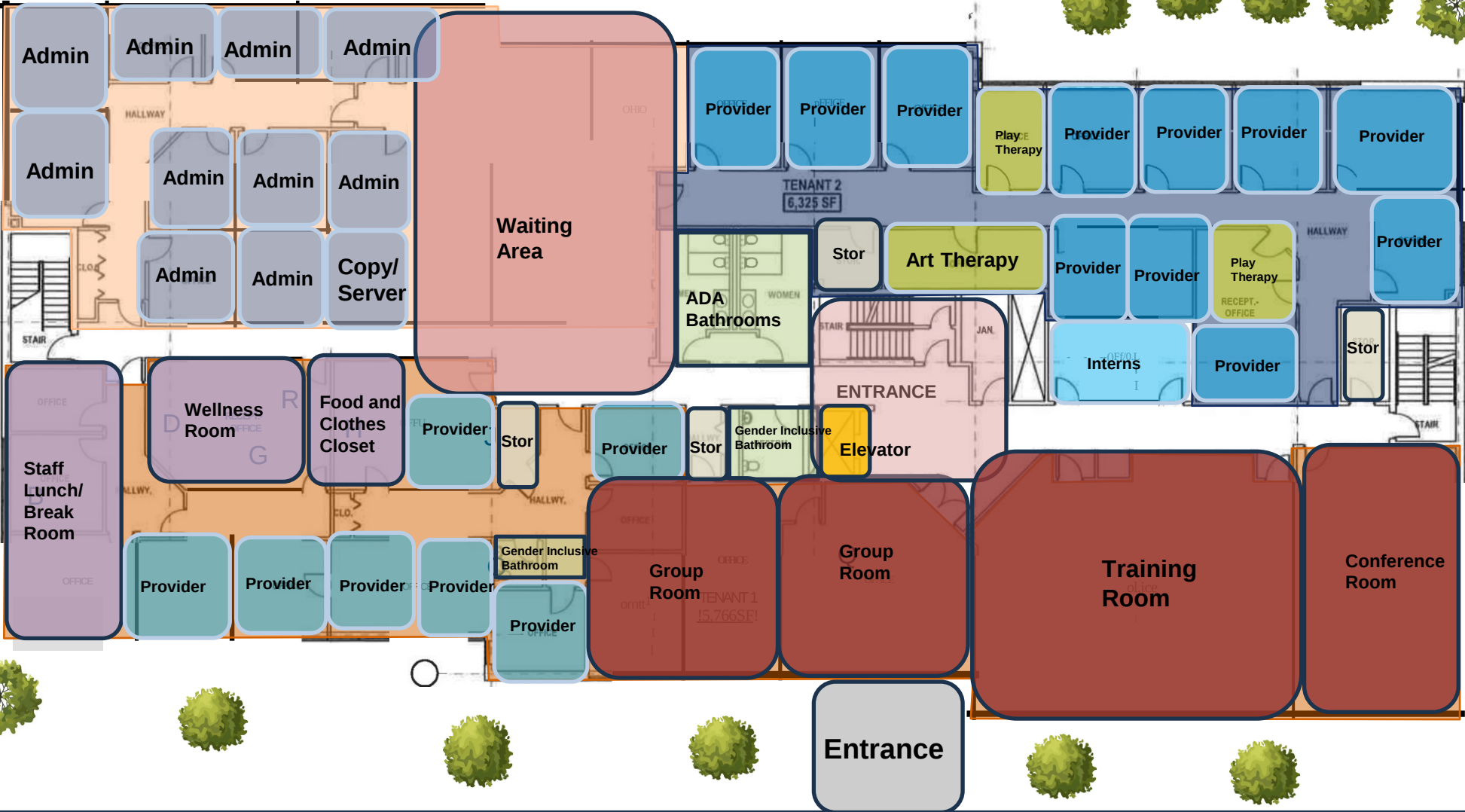
Empowerment,
Voice, and
Choice

Cultural,
Historical, and
Gender Issues

Second Floor Plan: Programming

Outdoor Space:

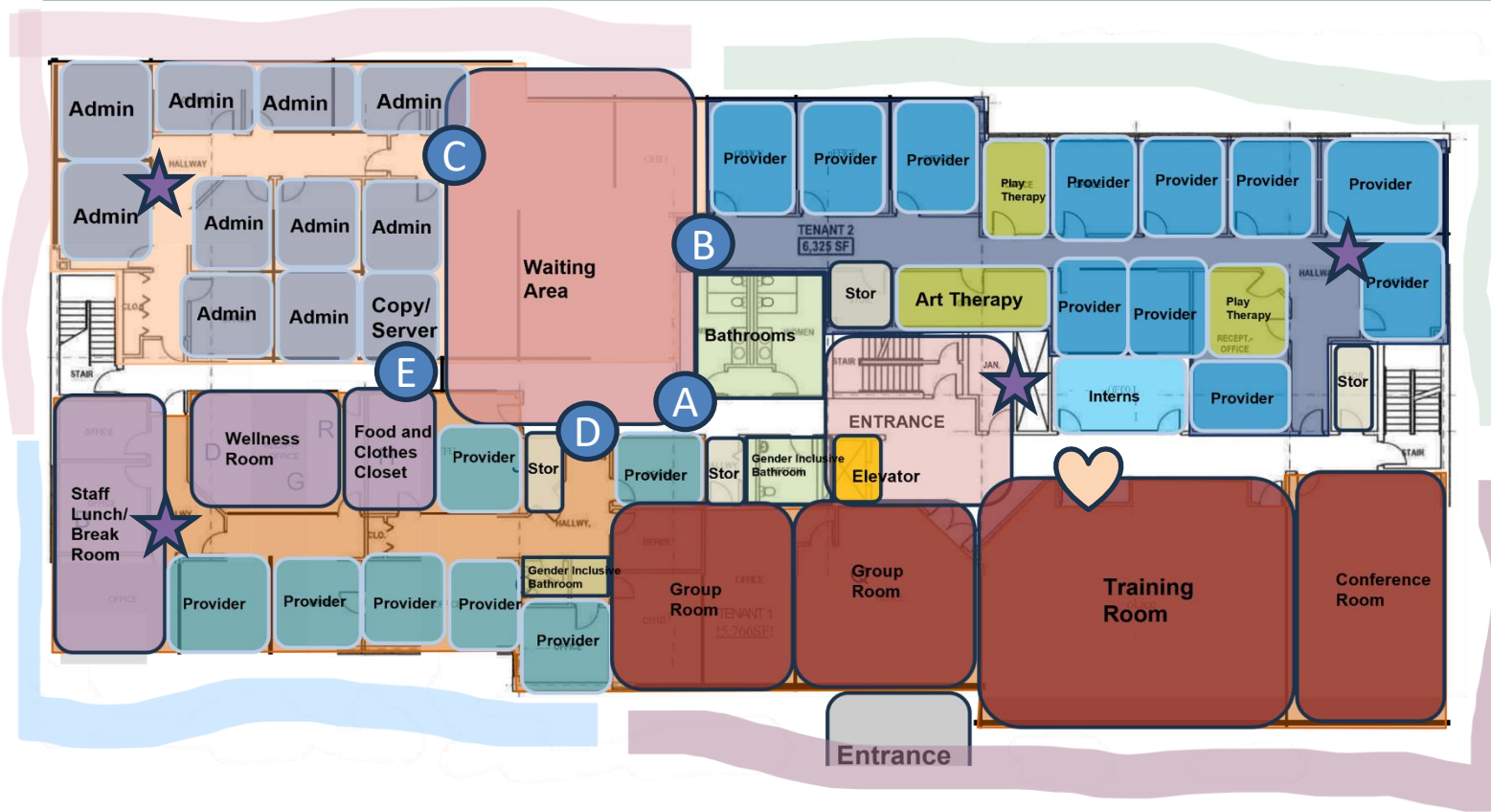
- Sensory Garden
- Meditative Labyrinth
- Tables
- Picnic Table
- Adirondak Chairs
- Nature Playground



Entrance

Parking Lot

General Themes: Wayfinding

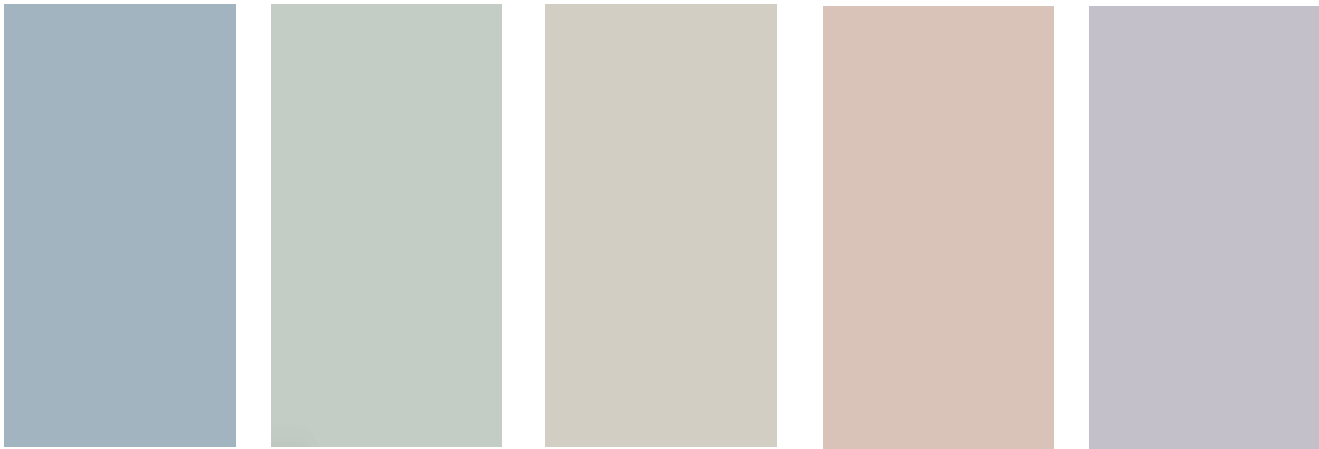


There are four entrances to the waiting area with doors (A- D). It would require too much demo to change this.

- Entrance **A** will be on the corner, glass door with angled entrance into the space for full visibility and clear sight lines. Door will be partially frosted (can see a person is behind the door, but not who). This supports **safety, trustworthiness, and transparency.**
- Doors **B, C, and D** all enter into admin or client care areas. Staff will be discouraged from using door C unless needed to pick someone up from the waiting area to meet with them. This will reduce cross traffic through the waiting area. This supports **safety.**
- Door **E** will enter into the copy room behind the waiting area, so will not be directly connected to the waiting area reducing traffic.

- There will be wayfinding signage that is extremely clear throughout the building to get to the suite with the NYFS logo. This supports **safety, trustworthiness, and transparency.**
- Every door will have a sign that says what is behind the door. Name of provider and role with Braille at appropriate height for accessibility. This supports **safety, trustworthiness, and transparency.**
- All doors will have signs that say “In a Meeting” or “Please Knock” so that staff can either be undisturbed, get partial privacy (door closed, but knock if needed), or open door/come on in. **This is important for staff choice and empowerment, cultural issues (for neurodivergent folks), and client empowerment, safety, trustworthiness and collaboration/mutuality.**
- At the four purple stars will be acoustic art two with images of nature, and two with beautiful designs. **They all promote safety (emotional), and the nature ones will promote natural analogues.**
- The four sections of the space will be painted four different colors (green, blue, purple, and pink/rose) to support wayfinding (see colors around outside).
- There will be signage in each hallway (intuitive in corners) with signage pointing which way for what office numbers/rooms.
- Waiting area doors will all be glass with frosting, but warm and inviting
- Heart is communal art wall. It will change over time, but will include a question like: successes to share, gratitude, something kind I did/said to myself today, etc. **This promotes peer support.**

General Themes: Common Areas



Soothing colors – greens, blues, purples, pinks



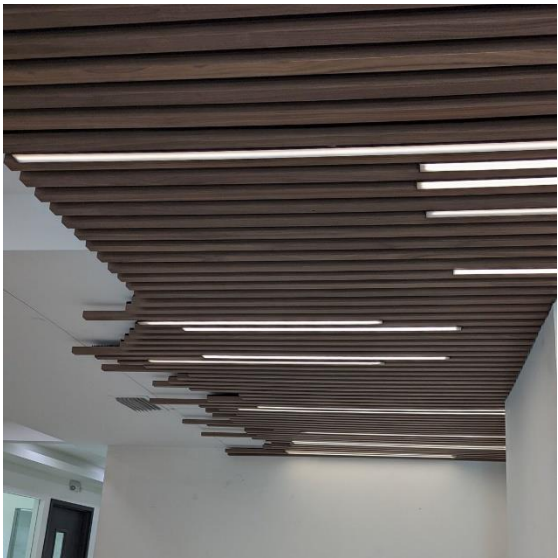
Air purifiers around the space



Temp control wherever possible



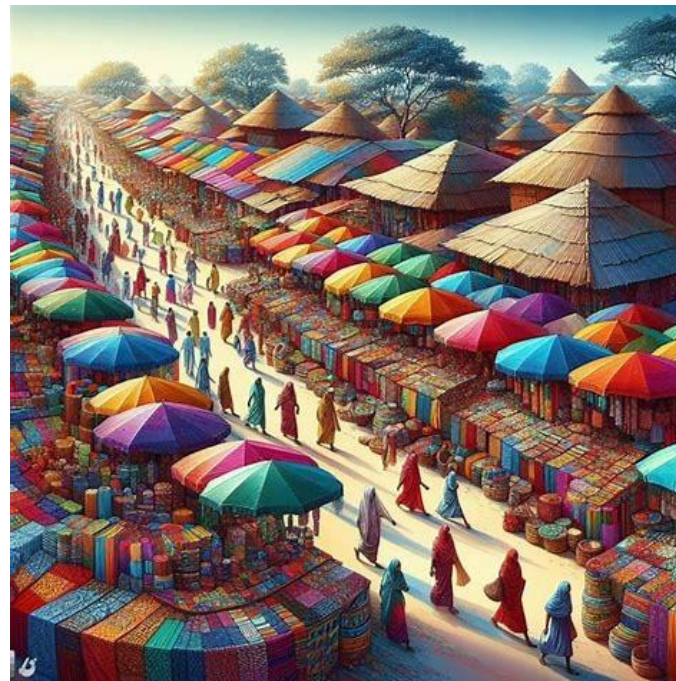
Acoustic privacy, natural woods, soft edges



Lots of light color choices, circadian lights, dimmers, texture, home-like, dynamic and diffuse lighting

General Themes: Artwork

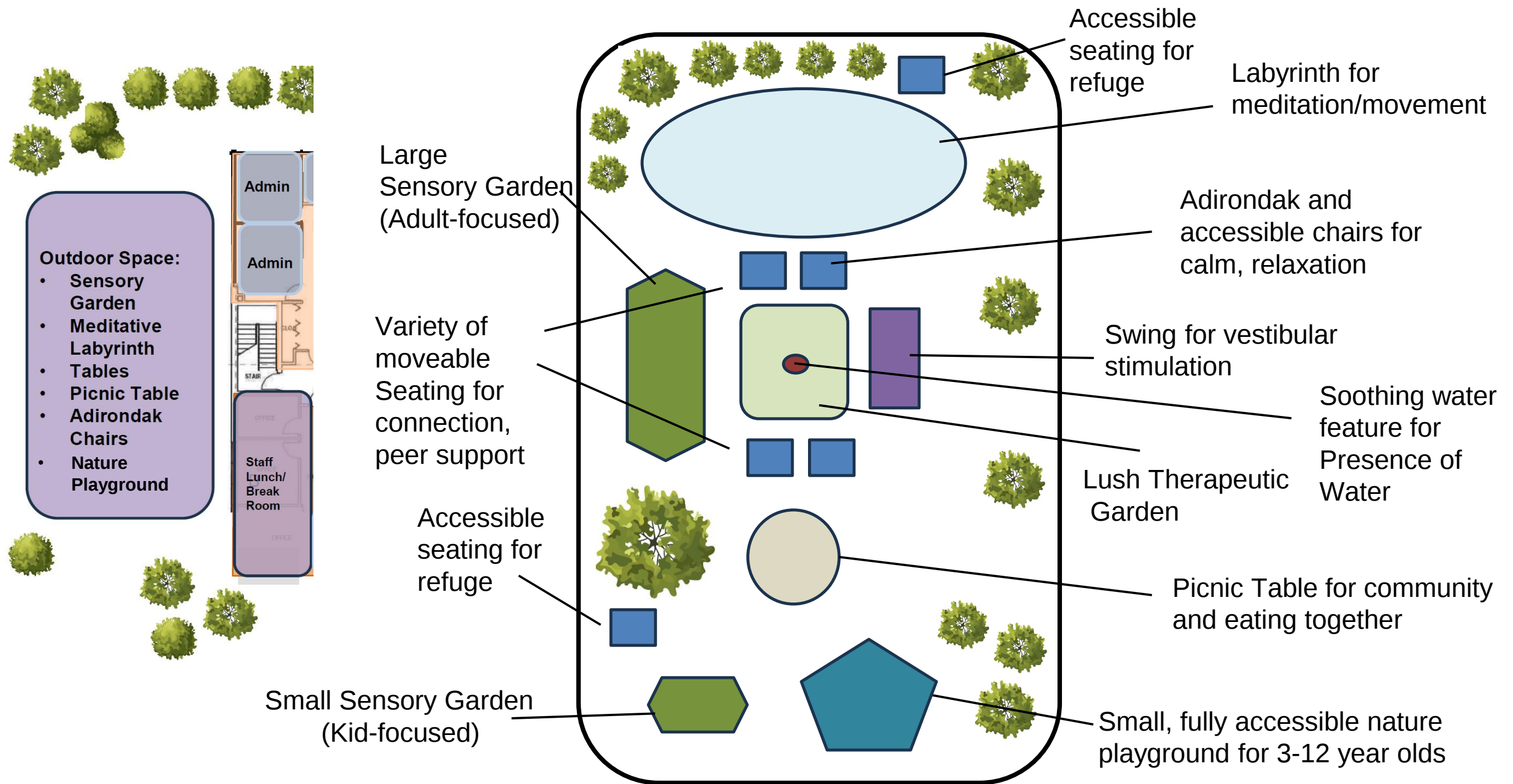
Culturally Responsive, Trauma Informed Artwork brings texture and color into spaces – Historical, Cultural, and Gender Issues



General Themes: Application to TID Principles

Principle	Found in Design
<i>Safety</i>	Lots of wayfinding signage, acoustic art panels, front door to waiting area, acoustic ceiling panels, circadian rhythm lighting, warm natural wood acoustic ceiling in common areas (conference room, training room, waiting area), soft edges/rounded corners, air purifiers
<i>Trustworthiness and Transparency</i>	Lots of wayfinding signage, acoustic panels, front door, color blocking four hallways for wayfinding (paint), home-like light furnishings with cloth and texture
<i>Peer Support</i>	Community art wall with rotating questions.
<i>Collaboration and Mutuality</i>	in meeting/please knocks signs on office doors, acoustic panels
<i>Empowerment, Voice, and Choice</i>	Lots of wayfinding signage, in meeting/please knocks signs on office doors, dimmer switches, temp control in all spaces
<i>Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues</i>	Braille wayfinding signage, in meeting/please knocks signs on office doors (good for neurodivergent folks), culturally responsive artwork, especially with major populations served; LGBTQIA+ artwork, mix of items with soft textures/textiles

General Themes: Outdoor Spaces



General Themes: Outdoor Spaces

All to support staff and client regulation



Sturdy, high quality outdoor seating



Water feature, regulating sound



Sensory Garden



Grasses, colorful flowers for sensory stimulation



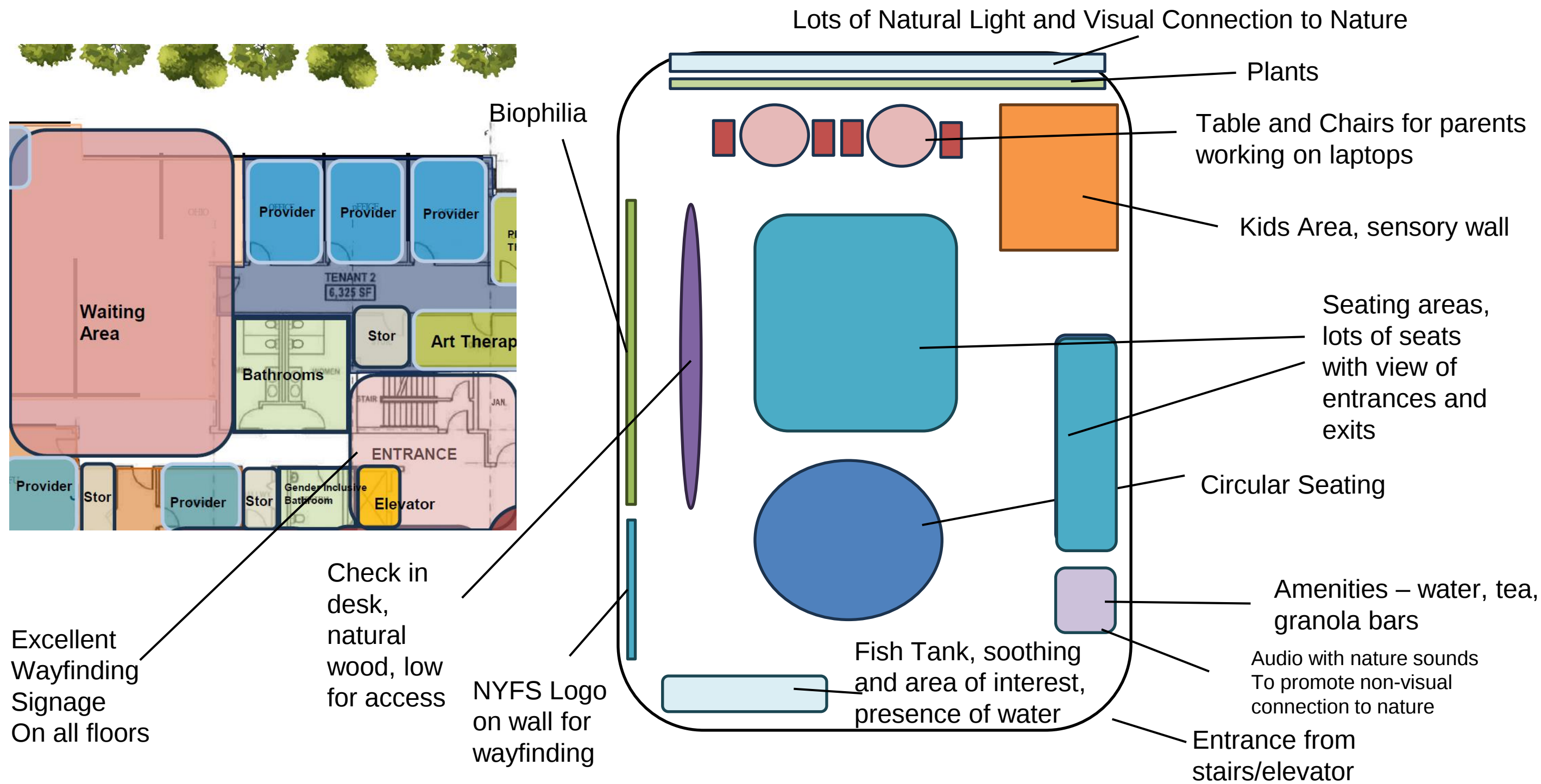
Meditation Labyrinth



Outdoor Spaces: Application to TID Principles

Principle	Found in Design
<i>Safety</i>	Staff lunchroom looks out over Outdoor space, calm and soothing, area is visible with open sight lines, area is well lit
<i>Trustworthiness and Transparency</i>	Open sightlines, space is accessible without staff supervision
<i>Peer Support</i>	Sensory gardens will be co-created with clients, playground for unstructured play (minimally supervised), can hold groups outside, picnic table for eating or games together,
<i>Collaboration and Mutuality</i>	Can hold walking and outdoor therapy sessions, can sit side by side not just across from one another, can garden together,
<i>Empowerment, Voice, and Choice</i>	Sensory gardens will be co-created with clients, lots of seating choices, lots of areas to be in outdoor area, multiple areas and features include water, rocks, gardens, seating is moveable
<i>Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues</i>	Areas for younger children, teenagers, and adults, areas are suitable for clients and staff, swing, labyrinth, movement spaces are good for neurodivergence, sensory gardens are elevated for all bodies access, nature playground is fully accessible.

Waiting Area



Waiting Area



Natural material, soothing colors, choice, variety of sizes

Natural Finishes

For caregivers working on laptops



Too many doors in waiting area, this allows folks to choose which door to face

Biophilia, areas of interest



Sensory Regulation for all



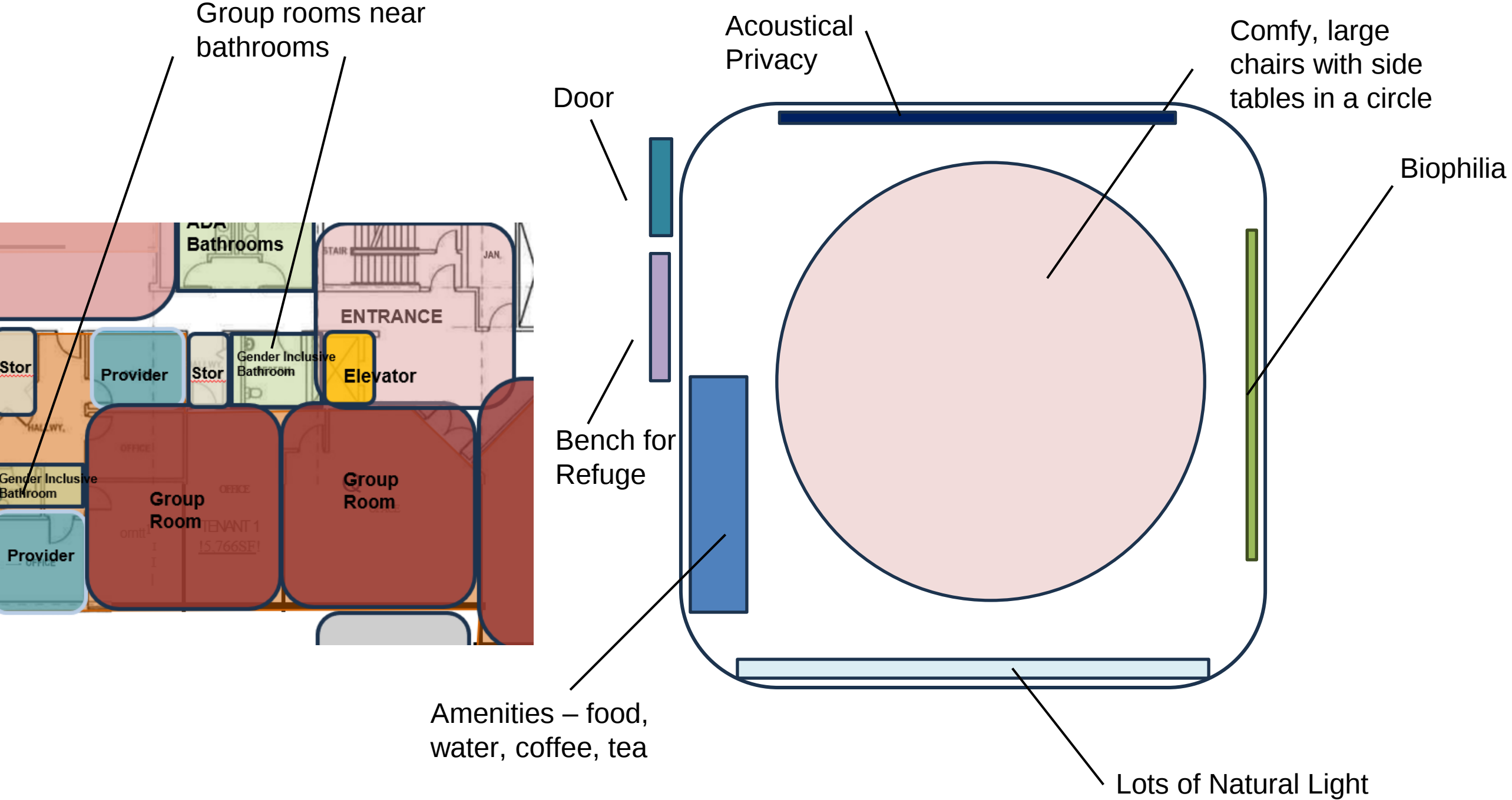
Home like finishes



Waiting Area: Application to TID Principles

Principle	Found in Design
<i>Safety</i>	Open sight lines, can see through doors with privacy (frosted), soft nature music to soothe, natural wall using biomorphic forms and patterns, seats of with refuge (individual, on own), green wall for nature in space, furniture is home-like, lots of fidgets, wintergreen lifesavers
<i>Trustworthiness and Transparency</i>	Easy to clean seating, open sight lines, wayfinding, upon entry see check in desk, low desk with ADA access and can see person fully, communicates trust
<i>Peer Support</i>	Can chat with others in waiting area, choose seats in more communal rather than individual areas, brochure holder with information from lots of other agencies, support groups, etc.
<i>Collaboration and Mutuality</i>	Tables where staff can support clients by explaining forms (if private enough)
<i>Empowerment, Voice, and Choice</i>	Natural and a variety of other lighting choices, a variety of seating choices. Many options of seating with view of doors, back against walls. Tables and chairs for teens who want to play games with caregivers or parents who want to work while kids are in meetings, chairs/furniture can be moved around, biophilia, aquarium
<i>Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues</i>	Seating choices include those for a variety of different bodies, play area with sensory wall for younger kids, culturally responsive magazines for all ages, genders, sexual orientations, and races

Group Therapy Rooms



Group Therapy Rooms



Biophilia



Amenities

Community
And Choice



Comfortable chairs for all bodies,
place to put fidgets, beverages



Home-like, areas of interest



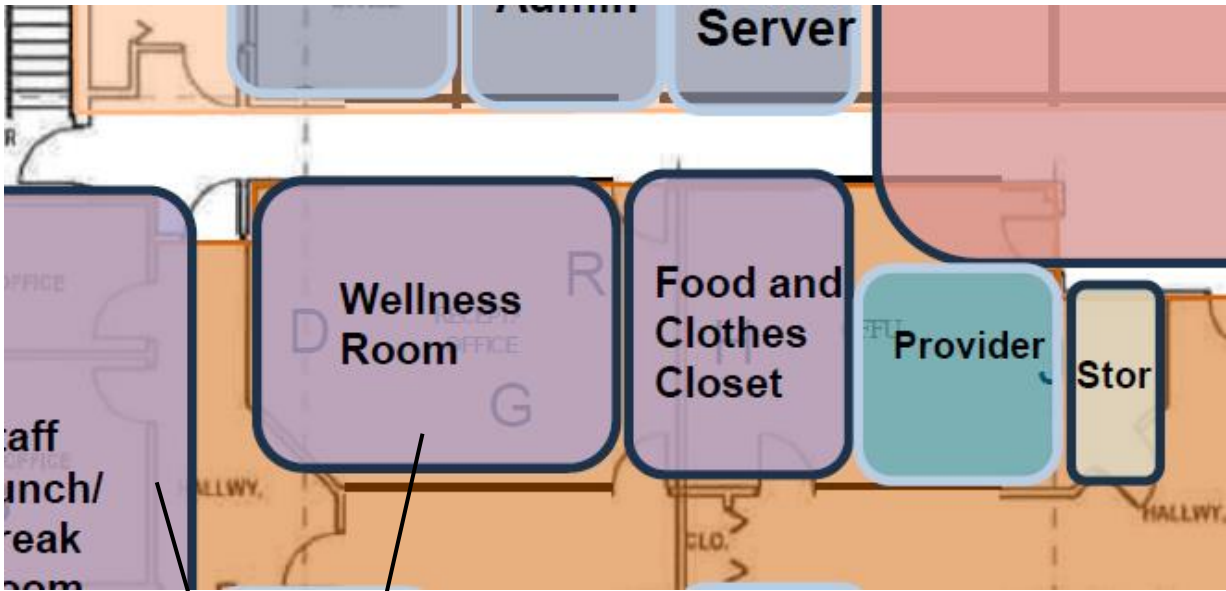
Acoustic wall paneling for privacy

Group Therapy Rooms: Application to TID Principles

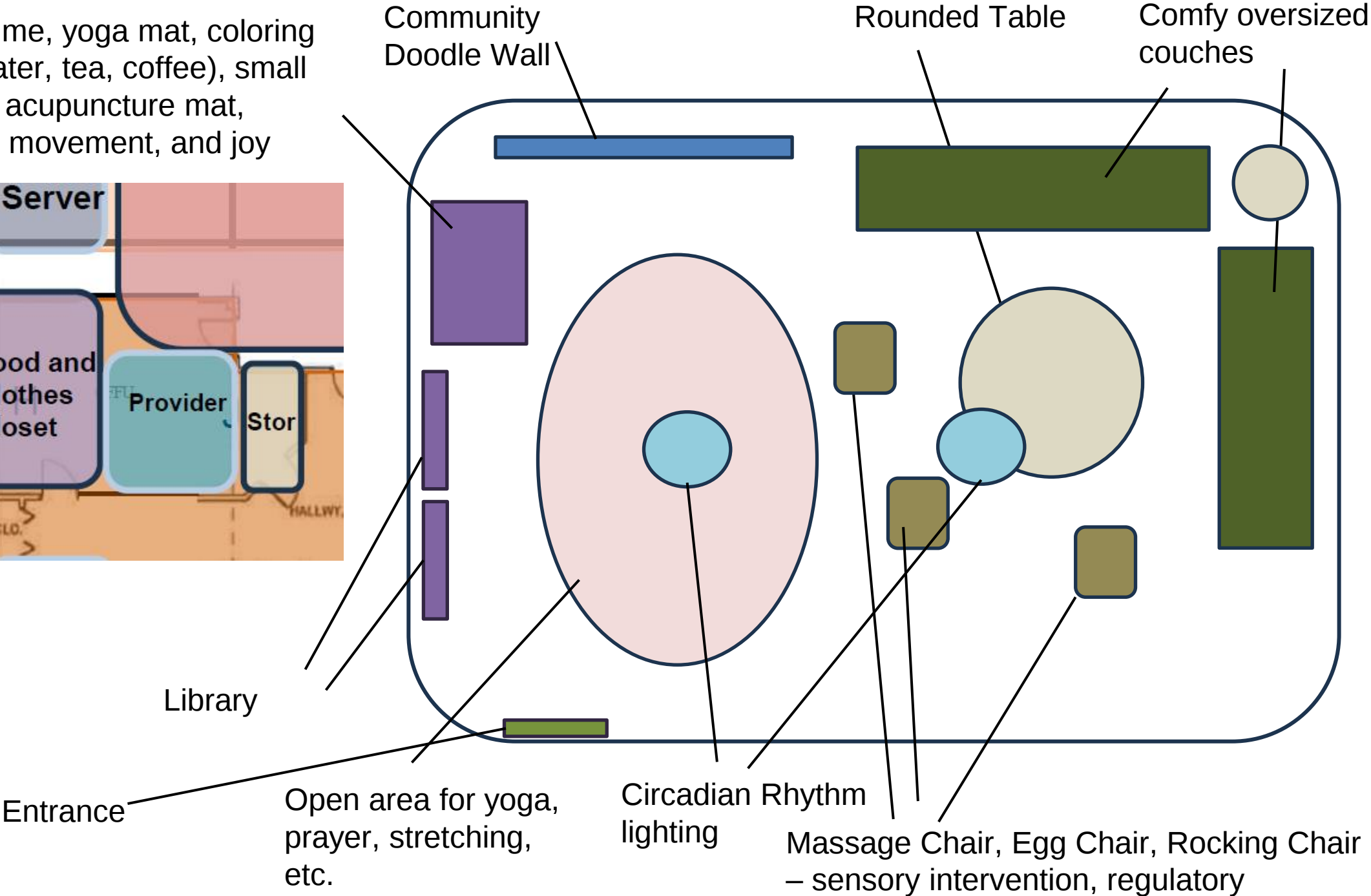
Principle	Found in Design
<i>Safety</i>	Group room is simple, open sight lines, chairs in a circle. Areas of refuge outside of group room with bench, green wall for nature in space, plants in the space, acoustic panels
<i>Trustworthiness and Transparency</i>	Open sight lines, privacy, simple, not over crowded, open spaces (can do trauma informed yoga as part of groups),
<i>Peer Support</i>	Group room is for peer support and group therapy
<i>Collaboration and Mutuality</i>	Group develops its group rules, goals, and typically helps to identify some topics to address in the group
<i>Empowerment, Voice, and Choice</i>	Three different options for stackable chairs, including one that is very wide – all tested for comfort, can move small tables and chairs around, lots of natural light and other lamps and lighting choices
<i>Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues</i>	Amenities – food, water, tea, coffee, fidgets, culturally responsive artwork, near gender inclusive bathrooms

Staff Wellness Room

Storage for fidgets, smelling slime, yoga mat, coloring materials, amenities on top (water, tea, coffee), small fridge with hot and cool packs, acupuncture mat, Bluetooth music brings in play, movement, and joy



Ensure good airflow and temperature control

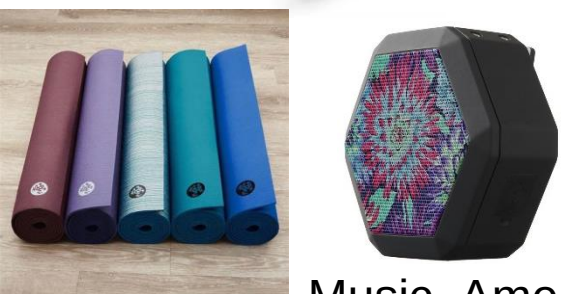


Staff Wellness Room

Sensory Seating Choices, Refuge



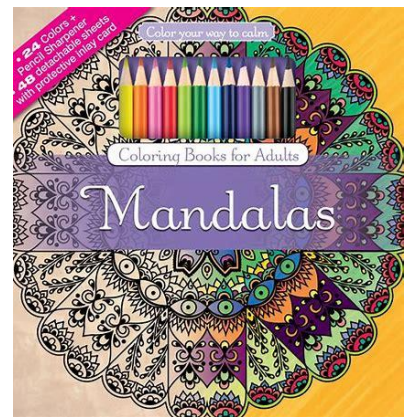
Biophilia, Home Like



Music, Amenities



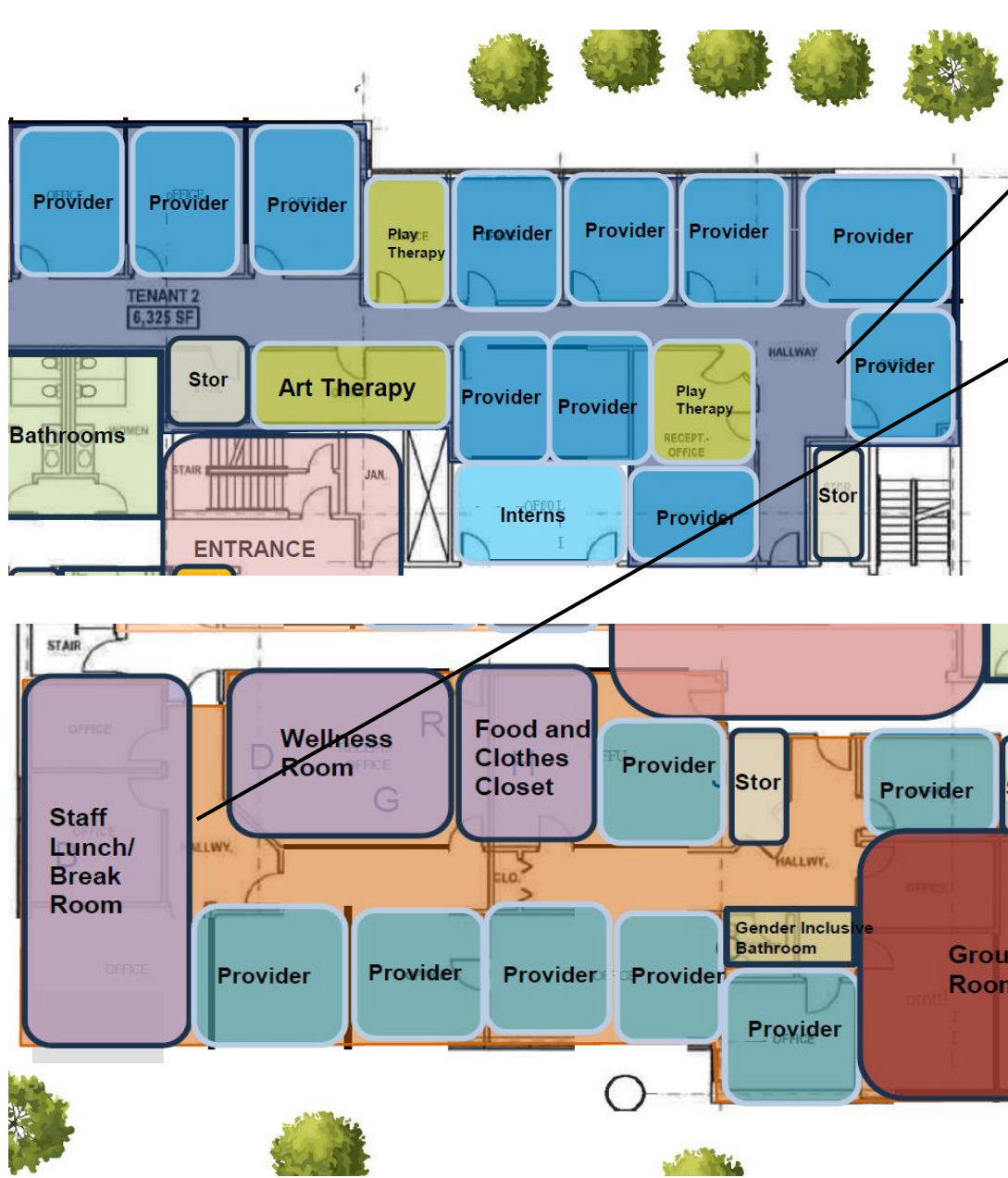
Community Art



Staff Wellness Room: Application to TID Principles

Principle	Found in Design
<i>Safety</i>	Circadian rhythm lighting, rocking chair and egg chair for refuge, plants support wellness
<i>Trustworthiness and Transparency</i>	Sign on door indicates when it is in use privately, or someone can come and join another person. Door is open when vacant.
<i>Peer Support</i>	Can be in there alone, or with others for shared regulation and connection, library where folks can leave and take books
<i>Collaboration and Mutuality</i>	doodle board, can ask to consult and co-regulate after hard case in regulatory space/room
<i>Empowerment, Voice, and Choice</i>	A variety of lighting options including fake candles, a variety of seating options – can lay on couches, massage chair, sturdy egg chair for refuge, rocking chair. Music can be played via phone and Bluetooth
<i>Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues</i>	Amenities include tea, coffee, water, snacks. Includes small fridge for cold packs. Fidgets, smelling putty, fidgets, coloring pages for all identities and sensory/neurodivergence needs. Open space for prayer or ritual (like smudging), or yoga/stretching, acupuncture mat, opportunity for joy, play, resilience

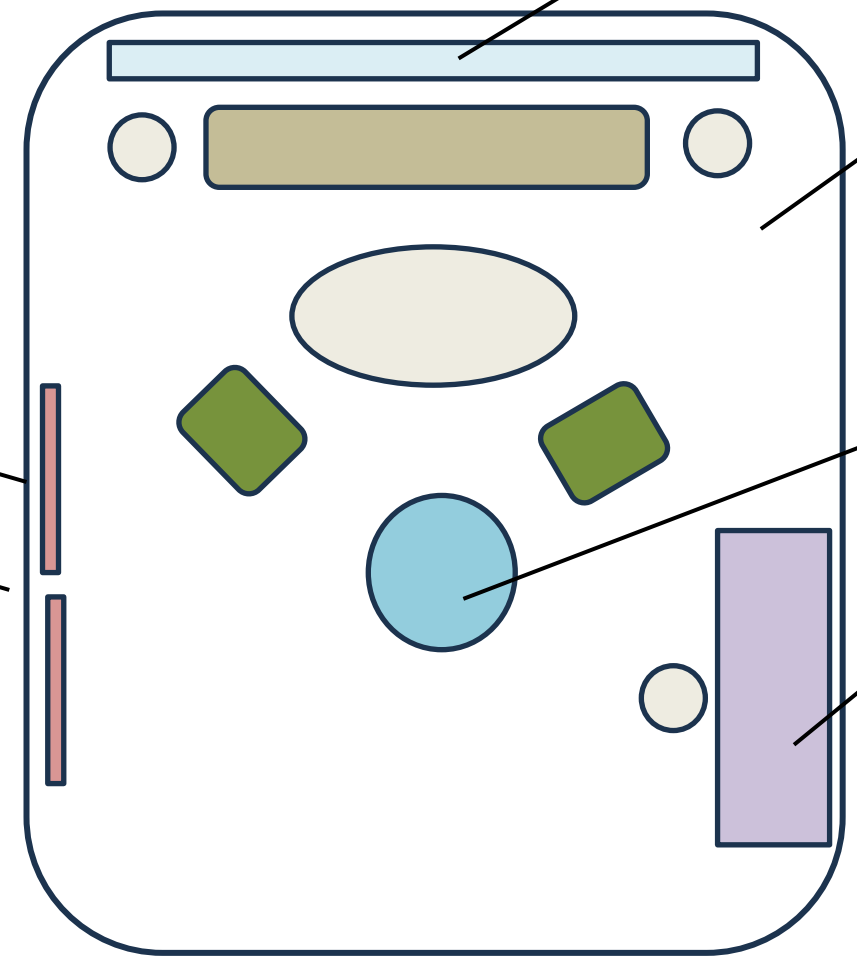
Client Meeting Rooms



Images printed on Acoustical Panels and areas painted different colors in Client Hallways for wayfinding

Lots of Natural Light

Bookshelves



Couch, Two Chairs, Side and coffee tables; lots of choice for seating

Circadian Rhythm lighting

Desk with chair, ergonomic

Client Meeting Rooms



Electric Shades, lighting choice



Ergonomic Chair, Natural woods



Rounded, inviting



Biophilia



Client Meeting Rooms: Application to TID Principles

Principle	Found in Design
<i>Safety</i>	Lots of natural light, lots of wood materials using biomorphic forms and patterns, plants in the space for wellness, therapist has ergonomic chair at desk
<i>Trustworthiness and Transparency</i>	Open sight lines to windows for visual connection with nature, floor to ceiling window next to door has blinds to show whether someone is in there, signs on door indicate if a session is happening
<i>Peer Support</i>	Room includes seating to bring in friends and family members to therapy sessions
<i>Collaboration and Mutuality</i>	Seating can be side by side (no special therapist chair), on same level, desk is small and, in the corner, space is created to feel like a living room
<i>Empowerment, Voice, and Choice</i>	Lots of natural light, lamps, and circadian rhythm lighting with dimmers for choice, electric shades can be moved up and down, can set temp/blankets/pillows, small tables around that can be moved including coffee table, lots of choices for seating.
<i>Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues</i>	Home-like feature, warm colors, culturally responsive artwork, bookshelves have art supplies on them and some simple games for teens and adults

References

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