

# Integrative Clinic Design

Remarkable Healthcare Facilities,  
from Concept to Reality

BY **CAROLE J. HYDER, MA**

[www.carolehyder.com](http://www.carolehyder.com)



# Introduction

## What can an Integrative Space™ do for a clinic?

Healthcare centers today face increased competition in terms of costs, quality, efficiency, and innovation. Patient satisfaction and employee retention are crucial factors in creating and maintaining a successful healthcare facility.

For these reasons, it's more important than ever to distinguish your organization as a leading-edge healthcare provider. One way to do this is through the incorporation of Integrative Spaces, a process which can facilitate healing and create total patient satisfaction.



“Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and atmosphere of your healthcare facility using the Integrative Spaces Strategy™

The incorporation of an Integrative Space™ strategy provides a unique and exceptional outcome, assuring that your healthcare facility is one-of-a-kind. This approach is perfect for your facility if you want to:

- Be the place where more and more people will gravitate who are looking for alternative ways to heal
- Be on target as the demand for more integrative healing becomes a regular request
- Be a leader in integrative health and healing
- Be part of a forward-thinking initiative that assures healing
- Have the satisfaction that all levels of healing have been addressed
- Take a proactive stand about addressing all needs of patients before they ask
- Provide a place for people who can sense the difference between a healthcare facility that incorporates Integrative Spaces and one that doesn't
- Be known for independent thinking
- Provide a remarkable space for healing

### What is Integrative Space™?

An Integrative Space provides cues which can lead to positive experiences, feelings and thoughts—healing included.

The best way to achieve this optimal environment is through the intersection between the ancient principles of Feng Shui and the modern research behind neuroscience—one speaking to the physical

“An Integrative Space™ builds on and surpasses functionality to create a space that addresses a deeper language.

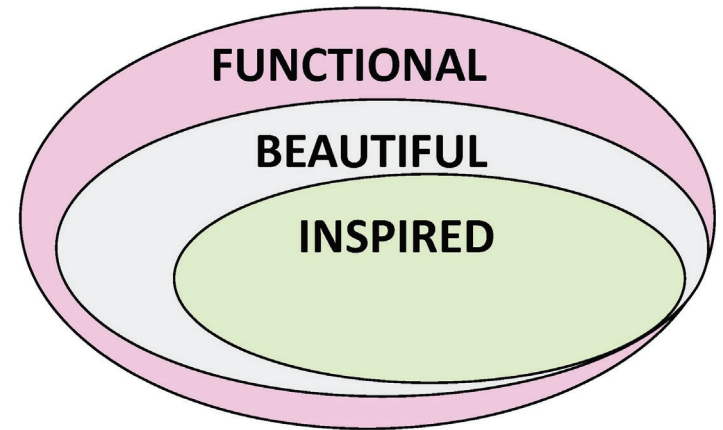
aspects of an environment and the other to the energetics of a space, both approaches merging to create a whole greater than the sum of the two.

All healthcare facilities must be functional and meet stringent code requirements. It is also important that, in doing this, the space maintain useful design principles. But all that still does not create a space that *inspires* those who are in the facility—patients, staff or visitors. Functionality and beauty are both enhanced by overlaying the powerful aspect of inspiration, taking an ordinary space and making it extraordinary.

### How can a clinic apply Integrative Space™ principles?

From a patient's first experience in the parking lot, the waiting room, the check-in desk, the exam room and to their exit, all provide opportunities for a patient to have a special experience.

In this e-book *Integrative Clinic Design*, you will read how to create your own facility with these principles in mind. Case studies and practical applications will enable you to embrace and incorporate various aspects of this approach, supporting you as you create a healthcare facility in which patient, staff or visitor will feel less stress and more inspiration toward leading a whole and healthy life.



**The Components of an Integrative Space**  
*Functionality and beauty are enhanced by the power of inspiration.*



# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION // i

Chapter 1: LAY THE GROUNDWORK // 1

Chapter 2: REMOVE THE OBSTACLES // 5

Chapter 3: CREATE WAITING ROOMS WHERE HEALING CAN BEGIN // 10

Chapter 4: DESIGN EXAM ROOMS FOR THE PATIENT // 12

Chapter 5: UTILIZE SENSORY THERAPY // 14

Chapter 6: BRING IT ALL TOGETHER FOR A WELL DESIGNED SPACE // 17

CONCLUSION // 21

ABOUT THE AUTHOR // 23



## CHAPTER 1

# Lay the Groundwork

### Conceptualize the Experience

What are the words to describe a true Integrative Space™? The succinct phrase by eco-architect Christopher Day (see quote below) sums up the essence of what an Integrative Space entails. It doesn't just involve a building but the experience behind the building.

Working with teams during the process of creating a unique and unforgettable healthcare facilities, we do an exercise that moves them from thinking they're building or remodeling a medical care facility—a dental office, or senior housing, or a medical clinic—to the intention behind this building.

The goal is to get them beyond the physical structure of the clinic, and let them discover what kind of experience they want people to have. They come up with adjectives to describe their ultimate end-plan.

A patient may forget that there are granite floors but they won't forget instances when the staff was remarkably friendly and attentive. A resident in a senior home or assisted living facility may not even notice the wallpaper in the halls, but will certainly take note that someone took the extra effort to put



“... only architecture built up out of adjectives can nourish the soul.”

CHRISTOPHER DAY, *Places of the Soul*

fresh flowers in the lobby. Going to have a root canal may distract a patient from paying attention to the upholstery in the waiting room, but doesn't prevent the patient from being inspired by the artwork.

Although floors and wallpaper and upholstery are all crucial to the design of the space, the feeling that people experience is what they remember. Did they feel welcomed, special and inspired? This feeling comes from designing with explicit patient-centered intentions.

Every healthcare team wants to create a space where people can get healthy or stay healthy—a great goal to be sure and appropriate for medical facilities. However, it's the specific, unique adjectives behind it that make the difference.

Thomas Lockwood, in his book *Design Thinking*, states:

**“Coming to an understanding of what customers value is far more beneficial than asking them what they want.”**

It's crucial that the healthcare team who is creating a space for patients/residents think not just about creating an Integrative Space™, or think of an Integrative Space, but think through the concept of Integrative Space.

*What do people value? What are the descriptors they would use for an unforgettable moment?*

Once those words/adjectives have been harvested, the project can begin its physical expression.

Following is a case study about a client who not only didn't have a building to consider, but didn't have the land on which to build it. This pre-design project enabled Integrative Space principles to be built into his clinic before it even existed.

# Case Study

## Early Stage Plans Make a Concept a Reality

A chiropractor client of mine is expanding his business and wants to build his own medical building. He doesn't have all the land acquired; he doesn't have a blueprint; the construction may be 2-4 years away; and he's still determining staff needs. Oh, and he's not local so we're working long-distance.

Contrary to what you might think, this is the perfect time to discuss how to create an Integrative Space™.

Rather than retrofit a few Integrative Space principles into an existing structure, we are talking about how to design the new building to support optimal healing. Rather than making do with what's there, we get to create what's there.

His foresight led him to reach out when his new medical facility was still in the "napkin stage"—sketches and rough ideas. We are creating and un-creating as the project unfolds—always mindful of the underlying goal of having a space built with healing principles from the ground up.

Here's a glimpse at what we're doing at this early juncture:

- Determining where to best place the building by looking at the topography of the land through photos and plat maps. Based on tree lines, his future landscape plans, and the road, we can find the "sweet spot" where the medical building will relate the best to its environment.
- Deciding where to put the front door of the building, taking into consideration his personal affinity toward specific directions and some prevailing winds that come from the northwest.



- Concepting for workflow and productivity. Thinking through how the doctor moves through his existing clinic, we can duplicate some of the paths that function well in terms of layout and create new ones that will improve his flow.
- Planning with foresight for growth. The doctor is planning his business (and his building) for the future—not based just on an increase in patient numbers and patient offerings, but adding another chiropractor or two to the team, a nutritionist, a nurse practitioner, and the ability to offer classes.
- Defining overall intentions behind the building—healing being one crucial aspect. Words like integrity, reliability, joy, security are also being factored into the choices made for design and health.

Above all, we are working together on a building that doesn't yet exist but we are setting its template now. Using photos, emails, and phone calls, his new clinic is becoming a reality although there's nothing yet to see.

Yes, this is the perfect time to begin the process of creating an Integrative Space™. Before the physical version gets in the way.

What happens if a building is already existing? And it was built with completely different adjectives and intentions? Read on to see what could happen.

“Both matter and spirit need each other—neither is whole without the other. But whereas design describes buildings physically, their soul qualities can only be built.

CHRISTOPHER DAY, *Places of the Soul*

## CHAPTER 2

# Remove the Obstacles

### Remodeling an Existing Building

An Integrative Space™ is one that is meaningful on all levels—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. It provides cues which can lead to positive experience, feelings and thoughts—healing included.

This optimal environment is achieved through the intersection of the time-tested principles of the ancient Chinese system of Feng Shui and the modern research behind neuroscience—the latter speaking to the physical aspects of an environment and the former to the energetics of a space. Both merging to create a whole greater than the sum of the two—an Integrative Space.

What this implies is that an Integrative Space must provide an unseen force that can support the effectiveness of a clinic, hospital, or any medical facility.

Since we're speaking of the unseen dynamics of a space, can a healthcare facility be created in a space that has been previously used for something entirely different—some place that was most likely not thinking about being integrative?



“Can Existing Buildings  
Be Transformed into  
Integrative Spaces?”

In other words, can a clinic be designed in what was once a gas station? Can a dental office expect to exude an integrative message when the earlier tenant was a grocery store? What I have found is that the outcome can be superb, challenging or neutral.

In 2015, I was contracted by a doctor who was opening a private women's clinic. She bought a building that had been an emergency veterinary clinic for over 25 years. The vet was very successful and moved to a much larger building. Their interaction during the sale was nothing less than perfect—in fact, the doctor and the veterinarian have become friends.

Even though it was possible animals were being euthanized in that building, so many circumstances provided her a positive interaction that the ground-work for her creating a healing clinic was easy and powerful. And every week her patient numbers increase.

The chiropractor who bought a gas station which had gone bankrupt? Not so lucky. Despite his efforts to attract clients, he continued to struggle until we made a few changes:

- Changed the entry point into the building to create an entirely different more positive experience for clients;
- Landscaped on all four sides of his building to make a purposeful connection with nature;
- Changed the remodeled shape of the building to emphasize that this was indeed a different business with a different story.

In effect, we removed any evidence of the prior tenant and created a new pattern.

Ingrained qualities of a structure can influence a building's next inhabitants. We just need to determine whether it's in a positive way, and, if not, employ solutions so the space supports a new mission.

Stress is a crucial factor in people's lives. Stress can also negatively impact a clinic. Find out how by reading the next section on how to manage this stress.



## Bring Order to Chaos

### Is Your Healthcare Facility Stressed? This May Be Why

When I was working primarily as a Feng Shui consultant for the residential market, I repeatedly stressed the argument that if your space is in order, you will be as well. When a space is “in order,” it provides an experience of balance, harmony, and clarity to all who walk in the door—I call that an Integrative Space™. People can feel what an Integrative Space is all about even if they don’t know how or why, even if it’s an unconscious recognition.

It follows that a healthcare facility also transmits a message and let’s hope it’s an integrative one as well—one that speaks to body, mind, and soul—balance, harmony, and clarity. If a space is stressed or in any way unsettled, then that message is transferred to the people who come there, many of whom are trying to heal.

How does a place get unsettled and stressed? One way is clutter.



The word clutter comes from the French word “to clot”—something that creates a lump or obstruction, a gathering together of materials into a thick mass. Clutter does not create an experience of smooth transactions or peaceful moments. Rather, it clogs up the space which, in turn, stresses the patient.

Here are 3 areas where clutter is typically found:

**EXAM ROOMS** – Leaving pamphlets around about procedures, conditions, protocols, etc. which a patient can peruse while waiting is not restful. It may be educational on some level, but it doesn’t provide a patient with a quiet moment or two. Having some magazines may be a short-term distraction but they aren’t always uplifting. How about a book of poetry or a book of inspirational sayings? What about a book of artwork or some other hard-cover coffee-table-like book?

**COUNTERS** – It’s fair to say that often a patient ends up filling out paperwork or arranging payment on a counter which is prolific with racks of brochures, medical studies, and data sheets. This information may be about payment methods or patient rights or a particular health condition—free for the taking and totally informative. However, I argue it would be cheaper, and contribute to less clutter, to hand the patient the one that’s relevant and, in turn, provide them more space to easily fill out the paperwork. Keep them off the counter thereby de-stressing the whole experience and letting the patient feel comfortable.

**ENTRANCES** - First impressions are everything. Walking into a front entry with racks of newspapers, trash receptacles, and wheelchairs all lined up may not be the message a healthcare facility wants to broadcast. This is certainly a utilitarian message but where’s the one about feeling welcome

*Continued on next page*

and safe? What about an attractive place to sit?  
What about a more decorative floor option?  
What about a place for some artful treatment of  
the walls?

I realize many of the suggestions can't be implemented. Having wheelchairs by the front door is an absolute necessity, for instance. I also know that though some of these suggestions, although simple, are not easy. Removing a plant nurtured by someone who is quite proud of its growth and vitality to make more counter space may cause its own stress. But being aware of keeping the facility with as little clutter (and stress) as possible will pay for itself in patient experience.

Let's get specific about creating a clinic into an Integrative Space™, starting with the room of first impressions...



## CHAPTER 3

# Create Waiting Rooms Where Healing Can Begin

### Ease the Discomfort of Waiting

Waiting is an uncomfortable task—whether waiting for time to pass, waiting for a special event, waiting for water to boil. It's even more difficult when waiting to see a medical professional.

If you happen to be going to a clinic for a check-up, it will probably be uncomfortable. If you're waiting for a treatment at the hospital, that may be unpleasant. And it goes without saying, if you're waiting for test results, that situation could involve tension.

As it turns out, the place where everyone checks in and passes time until their name is called can be a big contributor to jittery nerves—or it can provide a pleasant distraction depending on how it's set up.

Most waiting rooms in clinics are arranged for efficiency, trying to get as many chairs lined up as possible to accommodate the patient, their friends and/or family. This stiff professional air may speak to efficiency and competence,



“Healing Begins in the Waiting Room

but there's very little that conveys comfort and reassurance. The only positive distraction might be a stack of magazines (many outdated), that may also speak to a lack of care.

Here are a few Integrative Space™ tips to make the waiting room worth waiting for:

- Keep the chairs from lining up against the wall around the perimeter of the room. There is a stiffness in this arrangement of seating possibilities. Instead try to create smaller “pods” or circles to mirror a more natural look.
- Do not place chairs so people have their back to windows or glass walls. Being up against transparent walls does not provide those who sit there with any sense of protection or privacy. They are already vulnerable; assure that the patients are shielded from outsiders being able to see them.
- Provide a pleasant distraction (not just television or magazines). This could be a piece of artwork, a fountain, a large mural on the wall, or a fireplace. It gives the patient a chance to get outside of themselves for a moment and thereby alleviate some anxiety they may have.
- Include plants or flowers in the waiting room. They represent vitality and growth so they give a message of hope. Silk renditions or even photographs of nature can assist in healing if upkeep is a concern.

The goal is to create a space where healing can begin even before a patient sees a medical professional. Using the principles, the waiting room can be a comfort for a patient. If they immerse themselves in a healing ambiance, it will assure that their ultimate healing can more easily take place.

A Follow Up Message on the Future of Waiting Rooms – [Click Here to Listen](#)

Waiting rooms aren't the only spaces that need to be considered important to an Integrative Space. Read next about exam rooms.



## CHAPTER 4

# Design Exam Rooms for the Patient

### Foster a Positive Experience at a Difficult Time

As a Feng Shui consultant, I have been involved in many aspects of creating Integrative Space™ in medical environments. The universal issue in exam rooms seems to be the same—they're boring and, well, clinical. And although we don't want to be discussing health issues with a medical professional in a room that feels chaotic or disorganized, we also don't want to be stuck sitting in a stark white one either.

Here's are 4 ways to create a more positive patient experience:

- Paint the walls a soft, healing color: An Integrative Space will no doubt have a specific color palette that is being used throughout the clinic. However, in private exam rooms, soft yellow or tan is appropriate. It blends with the skin with little distortion of the light.
- Provide a connection to nature: Having a window in an exam room may feel like the patient's privacy is compromised. However, if a window looks out over



“Create a therapeutic space for the journey to healing

a lake or a field of trees or a flower-bed, it can provide a positive experience by connecting the individual to the outside world. People heal by being in nature, even by looking at it from afar.

- Hang compelling artwork: If there is no window in the exam room, then definitely artwork can provide the nature connection—a landscape, seascape, mountains, trees, flowers. Window or not, the artwork needs to be compelling enough to draw the patient into its story.
- Provide inspirational reading material: If a patient has to wait 10-15 minutes for the medical professional, provide them inspirational reading material. This could be a coffee-table book or an art magazine—filled with fine art, photographs, and drawings that inspire and lift the soul. Rather than an outdated stack of magazines, go for inspiration instead.

Exam rooms can intensify the patient's concerns and unrest, not to mention testing their endurance if they have to wait a while before anyone sees them. By creating a therapeutic space that engages their spirit, they can begin their journey back to health just by being there.

If you're still uncertain as to how to de-stress a space, in the following section you'll find some ideas for using sound, sight, senses, and smell.

“We have evolved as a biophilic species, meaning that we are drawn to nature; we like to feel connection to it in our homes, our offices, our communities. Our very genes are encoded to link our well-being—our being well and our feeling well—to sustaining an intimate connection with the natural world.

SARAH WILLIAMS GOLDHAGEN, *Welcome to Your World*

## CHAPTER 5

# Utilize Sensory Therapy

### Soothe Stress Through the Senses

For many people, heading to a clinic doesn't always have a pleasant connotation. From the prospect of getting a flu shot to a medical procedure to surgery, there is usually a certain amount of discomfort or downright pain involved.

Advancing medical procedures and modern equipment have certainly improved the experience of “going to the doctor,” but there are still moments when it simply hurts—unless, there are wholesome ways to distract the patient during the process so they aren't focused on their discomfort.

Here are some practical suggestions for making a patient's visit more positive by incorporating Integrative Space™ principles:

#### **SOOTHE WITH SOUND**

Sounds can be a great interference for someone going through an uncomfortable procedure. Dentists already know this. They use wireless headsets that can easily fit over someone's ears, enabling them to listen to music, poetry or...



“An Integrative Healthcare Clinic Can Change “OW” to “AH”

nature sounds (rain, thunder, rushing water, etc.) and keep their minds off what's happening. Ambient music can make a difference, especially if tailored with the patient's preference—classical, folk, new age, etc.

### **VISUALLY DISTRACT**

Visual distractions can help people remove themselves from their situation. This can take the form of posters or artwork on the wall, or even the ceiling (see [Vara Kamin's Impressions of Light](#)). An aquarium provides a connection to nature not only by the presence of fish and plants but by the inherent move of the water. Artwork on the wall has the potential for doing this as well.

### **PROVIDE A TACTILE EXPERIENCE**

Engaging the tactile senses is another way to minimize pain or stress. Whether a blanket or a teddy bear, the patient will have something soft to touch and embrace which can be a cue for comfort and safety. Again, this is their preference—soft yarn of an afghan, squishy pillow, warm blanket or a fluffy towel—or a teddy bear.

### **DIFFUSE IT**

Using a diffuser with an assortment of aroma selections can be another means to creating a less painful experience for a patient. At the very least all means should be taken to minimize medical smells that can act as a trigger for fear.

Any one of these suggestions would create a better experience for a patient who is dreading a visit to a clinic.

The idea of a personal environment of this nature does, however, fly in the face of efficiency and timeliness. Plus, it brings up the question of staff—who would be able to make these things happen?



Yet, *what if* the time was taken and the effort made to assure that each patient could select their favorite music, choose some artwork that they're drawn to, grab a blanket to curl up in and breathe in a faint hint of lavender as they prepared for their medical treatment? Would it hurt less? Possibly. Would it be less stressful? Absolutely.

I argue the patient would reflect on the personal care they were given, less on the pain, and, on some level, their body would relax and breathe a sigh of relief . . . “Ahhh.”

What follows is a real-life story about a doctor who incorporated integrative principles in her private clinic. See what she did to create a space where she can provide expert care to a diverse market.

“ We should focus our efforts on creating environments for our innate psychological need to flourish.

DANIEL PINK

## CHAPTER 6

# Bringing it All Together for a Well Designed Space

## CASE STUDY

### A Clinic Designed for Healing, Peace and Happiness

Doctor's offices can be sterile and uninviting. By using Integrative Space™ principles, however, a local women's clinic could overcome those issues and create an environment that is both welcoming and comfortable.

In December 2014, I was asked to be part of the St. Paul Clinic & Pharmacy project which was a dream of two doctors in the Twin Cities area. Dr. Pa Foua Yang, who specializes in ob-gyn care, and her pharmacist husband Dr. Ky Fang had been looking for a building to purchase in order to open a women's clinic. When they contacted me, they had just found a building that they thought would be perfect. They were committed to incorporating Feng Shui throughout all phases of the clinic's development.



Feng Shui works with the flow of life force which the Chinese call ch'i to create balance and harmony in an environment. It's a system that provides ways to create an ideal living or work-space to bring prosperity, productivity, and peace—in other words, an Integrative Space™.

Here are three specific areas we focused on in creating their special clinic:

### The Waiting Area

The first area that patients and visitors will see when they enter the clinic is the waiting room. For this reason, that area sets the theme of the clinic. Therefore, we took steps to make sure that the 5 Chinese Elements were in place: plants for the wood element, wall fountain representing the water element, the red fire element was present in the artwork, the white color is connected to the metal element and the ceramic floor and wallcovering fulfilled the earth element.



“ We didn’t want our clinic to be just about equipment and procedures, but about our patients.

DR. PA FOUA YANG

## Special Considerations for Employees

Even though their expectations of having employees were small during this initial phase, both doctors knew that eventually this would be an important part of business growth. They diligently set up a private lunch room along with an employee-only bathroom—a strong message of support and appreciation for those who will eventually come to work for them.

## Office Space

Because of the size of the space, my clients were not planning to have a private office, opting to do office work at the reception desk or wherever there was open space. After discussing the importance of them having a private space for themselves and establishing a strong message about their authority, a small private office was designed into the plan.

Our overall goal was to create an optimal medical environment while adhering to my clients' intentions of healing, peace and happiness.

Wall colors, room designations, employee considerations, office space, bathroom placements, desk placements were all discussed regarding their alignment with Feng Shui principles.

In addition to the waiting room, the Chinese system of the 5 Elements was employed in Dr. Yang's office; the Feng Shui bagua was applied; ideal directions for both doctors





were considered; ceremonies were Integrative; the Chinese calendar was also consulted for a suitable date to open the doors.

As patients are flowing through the doors of the St. Paul Clinic and Pharmacy, Dr. Yang shares that the comment most often heard from patients coming into the clinic: “it’s so peaceful in here—it doesn’t feel like a clinic.” This is exactly what my clients were looking to achieve.

By now, hopefully you have taken away several ideas of how to create your own Integrative Clinic. Not all facilities will accommodate or need the suggestions made obviously, but the incorporation of just a few will make a difference for patients, staff and visitors.



“From color to placement, directional influences to artwork, Carole guided us in creating a clinic that is welcoming, healing and professional. We would not have the beautiful and intentional space that we have now without her help. She helped us achieve a truly integrative space that we love.

**DR. PA FOUA YANG**



# In Conclusion

*Integrative Clinic Design* has described how to proceed in creating a space that leads to positive experiences, feelings and thoughts. These intentions can begin before there is even a physical structure as exemplified in one case study as well as during the remodeling process, as noted in another case study.

From a patient's first experience entering the clinic, to the waiting room, check-in desk, exam rooms and overall experience, *Integrative Clinic Design* outlines simple changes that can be made, often for little cost, as well as new perspectives that can certainly be adopted to create an unforgettable facility.



“Improve the Efficiency, Effectiveness and Atmosphere of your Healthcare Facility

## Get the Help You Need to Make Your Clinic an Integrative One

It will be important to put an expert on your team to assure that the approach to an Integrative Space™ will be optimal. Carole Hyder's experience in overlaying the ancient principles of Feng Shui and modern research in a variety of healthcare environments enables her to provide clear and workable solutions to almost any issue.

**Your healthcare facility can express a unique and outstanding experience for patients, staff, and visitors.**

### Contact Carole for a Free Consultation

[carole@carolehyder.com](mailto:carole@carolehyder.com)

612-823-5093





# About the Author

Carole J. Hyder is an internationally recognized consultant, speaker, teacher, author and trainer in the field of Feng Shui. Her Integrative Spaces Strategy™ combines ancient practices with modern research to create superior environments in the healthcare industry.

Carole holds an MA in East Asian Studies, and has been a Feng Shui consultant since 1992, having studied with His Holiness Grandmaster Thomas Lin Yun, Her Holiness Crystal Chu Rinpoche, and Roger Green, all master teachers in their respective philosophies of Feng Shui.

Carole is an international speaker on various Feng Shui topics and has appeared regularly on TV programs in the Twin Cities area. Besides authoring articles in countless publications, she has written three books and produced one video/DVD on the topic of Feng Shui. In 1998, Carole founded The Wind and Water School of Feng Shui, a 7-month certification program for those interested in studying Feng Shui in greater depth.

Her Integrative Space™ work has been incorporated in hundreds of residential, commercial, and healthcare environments, most notably her long-term tenure at the Hudson Hospital in Hudson, WI.

