

5 WAYS TO BECOME A LEADING-EDGE HEALTHCARE FACILITY

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

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HEALTHCARE CENTERS TODAY FACE INCREASED COMPETITION IN TERMS OF COSTS, QUALITY, EFFICIENCY, AND INNOVATION.

For that reason, 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™, which can facilitate healing and create total patient satisfaction.

The incorporation of an **Integrative Space™** strategy provides a unique and exceptional outcome, assuring that your healthcare facility is one-of-a-kind. Here's what you might expect:

- * 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 are able to 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

An **Integrative Space** is one that is in resonance with life. In other words, it is meaningful on all levels—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. 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 aspects of an environment and the other to the energetics of a space. Both merging to create a whole greater than the sum of the two approaches—an Integrative Space.

ALVAR AALTO BELIEVED there was an organic relationship between nature, buildings & man.

The Finnish AIA Gold Medal award-winning architect, designer, sculptor and painter Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) believed there was an organic relationship between nature, buildings and man. This archetypal construct mirrors that of Chinese ideology which based the concept of Feng Shui on the heaven, earth, and humanity paradigm. When all three aspects were present and aligned there was congruence and cohesiveness. This would be a place where people could thrive.

It wasn't enough to consider the aspects of the physical building (earth) and the requirements or needs of the people (humanity). Nature needed to complete the scope of the project. All along, the Chinese had been using nature as the determinant behind the construction of villages, palaces and grave sites.

Thousands of years later, Aalto proposed that good architecture took its excellence from biology as described by Malcolm Quantrill: "He sought an organic synthesis of his structures with their surroundings."¹

¹ Quantrill, Malcolm. Alvar Aalto: A Critical Study. New Amsterdam Books, New York, NY, 1983.

TODAY, USING FENG SHUI PRINCIPLES, AN INTEGRATIVE SPACE USES NATURE AS THE DETERMINANT FOR EVERYTHING FROM PLACEMENT TO PALETTE, FROM FIXTURES TO FLOORING.

Beale Endowed Professor of Health Facilities Design and co-founding director of the Center for Health Systems and Design at Texas A&M University Roger Ulrich, PhD, did many evidence-based tests which “convincingly suggests that patients experience less stress and pain if they can view nature and other pleasant distractions. Artwork can be effective in soothing stress and providing distraction from pain, especially when it depicts nature or people with emotionally positive facial expressions. Abstract, emotionally negative, or surreal artwork, however, appears to aggravate stress in some patients.”²

ARTWORK can be effective in soothing stress and providing distraction from pain.

In a later study, Ulrich determined: “A growing number of studies suggest that exposure to natural elements like water and trees—whether it is simulated or actual—tends to mitigate anger.”³ It seems that a natural environment reduces stress and anger and, more importantly, can improve a patient’s health.

How this data translates into the modern health-care environment is the scope of my work combining ancient Feng Shui wisdom with modern architecture and evidence-based science. This merger of separate modalities assists in the creation of an optimal space where patients will recover quicker and experience higher patient satisfaction.

Here are ways nature can be incorporated into a healthcare setting to not only assure a quick recovery but also less stress in general—for patients, visitors and staff:

- 1. Use only nature scenes in hospital rooms, corridors, and waiting rooms.** Losing sight of the horizon line and the disorientation that comes as a result has been a theory behind why people get sick and/or don’t heal as quickly. Whether a painting of a seascape, a photograph of a flower, or an image that depicts animals—these all elicit a message about finding a way back to health. In my work as an Integrative Space specialist I have witnessed first-hand the impact of having an affiliation with a local art gallery who can provide a variety of nature-based art pieces to place in patient rooms. Not only do patients receive the benefit of this artwork, but the gallery benefits as well from the potential sales.
- 2. Determine that windows in patient rooms are large enough for the patient to the view from their bed.** Certainly images of nature on the wall can suffice, however, being able to actually see trees, flowers, grass and perhaps a glimpse of that horizon line without having to leave the bed supports the recovery message. If you’re in the middle of a construction or a remodel project, this is the perfect time to bring in an Integrative Space expert to help you determine the best placement for the window. It is ideal to have the window installed low enough for the patient to easily see outside without being forced to sit up.

² Ulrich, Roger. “Evidence-based Health-care Architecture,” The Lancet. December 2006.

³ Ulrich, Roger. “Anger-Stress: The Role of Landscape Posters.” Environment & Behavior, Vol. 40, No. 3, May 2008.

- 3. Create a focus point out the patient's window—garden, sculpture, flowers, fountain, tree, etc.** Recently, I was hired to provide Integrative Space insights for a local hospital. As a result of our conversation about the importance of nature, they installed a bird feeder outside each of the first-floor patient rooms. Each bird feeder was made by students from a nearby elementary school. Looking at their own bird feeder each morning provided the patient an up-close experience of nature, an appreciation for the creativity with which they were each crafts and was a temporary distraction to their situation. Additionally, it gave the patient something to look forward to each morning when a volunteer would come by to replenish the bird seed. Whether a bird feeder or a special outdoor flower or a path, an experience Integrative Space specialist can help determine the best approach.
- 4. Assure that staff has ample opportunities to experience nature.** The obvious connection to nature would be a window in their office or, if not that, nature artwork that speaks to their personal aesthetic sense. Access to a garden or a labyrinth will help staff regenerate as well. Having staff who takes a few moments to connect with nature assures better patient care. Caregiver stress affects not only co-workers but those patients who are trying to heal. If patient satisfaction is jeopardized by irritated staff, this will most certainly affect the bottom line of the facility. My experience in creating Integrative Spaces is that most of the outdoor gardens, labyrinths, benches and paths are used mainly by staff, indicating the crucial need for this feature.
- 5. Indoor plants can reflect vitality and growth.** Emphasizing the importance of nature can also be underscored by the use of plants. Placing plants in public areas can be a great solution to the issue of integrating nature into the facility. Whether real or silk, they can produce similar results in terms of perception and assure that your facility has taken the effort to create an Integrative Space.

These are basic nature-based tips which can facilitate healing and patient satisfaction. By assuring that nature is a component in the design of a health-care environment, this will begin the creation of an Integrative Space—one in which a patient, staff, or visitor will feel less stress and more support for a whole and healthy life.



GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED

It will be important to put an expert on your team to assure that the approach to an Integrative Space will be optimal. My experience in overlaying the ancient principles of Feng Shui and modern research in a variety of healthcare environments enables me to provide clear and workable solutions to almost any issue. If you want your healthcare facility to express a unique and outstanding experience for patients, staff, and visitors, contact me for a free consultation to see how an Integrative Space can assist. Contact Carole today at carole@carolehyder.com or 612-823-5093.