The Role of Healing Gardens

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THE ROLE OF HEALING GARDENS

The overarching objective of this research is to expand the dialogue of the role of healing gardens in hospitals. In order to understand the role of healing gardens in hospitals, it is important to determine how and to what extent the healing garden is being used. By expanding this dialogue we can reaffirm the legitimacy of current approaches such as design criteria and the program. When the perception and role of healing gardens in hospitals is understood, research-based design decisions can improve the quality of life for patients, providers, and visitors.

USE PATTERNS OF A HEALING GARDEN IN A PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

LITERARY RESEARCH

Three distinct groups of people may use or interact with a healing garden: the patient, the provider, and the visitor. Previous research and design decisions have been made to accommodate each of these user groups. Initially, research on the role of healing gardens in hospitals was focused on the patient, with studies showing that patients and visitors spend more time in healing gardens than in other areas of the hospital. In recent years, research has expanded to include the provider and visitor groups, with studies showing that these groups also benefit from the presence of healing gardens.

RESULTS

Three distinct groups of people used Randalls Children’s Hospital Terrace Garden. The total amount of use for each group was measured in minutes. The patients spent a total of 10 minutes, providers spent 12 minutes, and visitors spent 14 minutes. The difference in duration of use for each group was determined through observation and activity mapping.

NEXT STEPS

The research has successfully established an initial set of data for the Healing Garden at Portland Children’s Hospital. This data is useful for comparing use patterns and activity between a local hospital and other regions of the United States where research has been done. Findings from this research began to tell us how and to what extent a healing garden is being used, but more research is needed to answer the question. Occupancy between this research and literature research suggest the role of healing gardens in hospitals is not yet known, and it is difficult and possibly dangerous to make design guidelines for this design typology.

Methodology for finding information on the role/use/benefits of healing gardens, was of particular focus for the literary portion of this research. The most frequent method used was “behavior mapping” with physiological and literary methods less frequent but still significant in the field of research. Behavioral and physiological methods were complemented by site observations outside of a healing garden setting, while surveys, interviews, and observation were done onsite in close proximity to the healing garden.

Survey & Interview

“Behavior mapping” is a method for collecting data on the usage and movement of user groups during garden use. In the plan of the research, behavior mapping involves three user groups: patients, providers, and visitors. For each user group, behavior mapping involves tracking the behavior of each group and mapping their movement within the garden. This method is useful for understanding how each user group interacts with the garden and how the garden is being used.

Determine measurements:

- Activity Type: stationary, active, exertion
- Location: patient room, patient interaction, structural interaction, cellular interaction
- Duration: 0-5 minutes, 6-10 minutes, 11-15 minutes, 16-20 minutes
- Associate: patient, provider, visitor, non-patient, non-visitor

Evaluation tools: HOBOs for Light & Occupancy

The EAT (Evaluating Architecture Tool) method for collecting data on the design quality of the built environment is being used to understand the built environment.