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.

OBJECTIVE

This research will provide additional academic evidence and guidance for the implementation of healing gardens in hospitals, validate the role of healing gardens in hospitals, and establish a connection between healing gardens and hospital environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several definitions of a healing garden. For example, a Healing Garden is a garden that is designed to promote healing. A healing garden is designed to provide a place of respite for patients, visitors, and staff. Healing gardens are often used in hospitals to provide a place for visitors, patients, and staff to relax and unwind. Healing gardens have been shown to provide benefits to patients, such as reduced stress and pain, improved mood, and enhanced well-being.

METHOD

In collaboration with ZGF, a children's hospital was selected for its fairly recent completion (2012), design goal to merge hospitality and healthcare, and proximity to a healing garden. The chosen garden was selected as it was designed for some of its unique design intent and ability to monitor users. It was selected for this study as it provided a programmed outdoor space for continuous and intermittent inpatient counseling. Each inpatient bay has a window with views to the garden, access to natural daylight, and views of the mountain. The garden is only accessible to recognized patients, visitors, and providers of the children's hospital. It is open from 8am to 11pm every day.

USE PATTERNS OF A HEALING GARDEN IN A PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

Methodology for finding information on the role/use/benefits of healing gardens was of particular focus for this portion of the research. The most common research methods are survey, semi-structured interview, and observation. Physiological and literary methods were primarily conducted outside a healing garden setting, while survey, interviews, and observation were done inside or in close proximity to the healing garden.

RESULTS

Three distinct groups of people used Randall Children's Hospital's Healing Garden: 38% providers, 4% patients, and 46% visitors. User group identification was determined through diary and activity (fig. 5).

The average length of stay at Randall Children's Hospital was eight (8) minutes. 9% of users stay less than five (5) minutes, 27% stayed 5-10 minutes, 27% stayed 11-15 minutes, and 27% stayed 16-20 minutes. The most common observation shows (11%) of the thirteen (13) observations present at each hour (24%), patient interaction (13%), cell phone (9%), touch (9%), walking (6%), children's play (5%), structural interaction (5%), and play (5%). The order of the activity was visually recorded fig. 7 from observation to action to optimization.

Behavior mapping was recorded to spatially track the circulation and movement of user groups. Findings from this phase of data collection are useful in furniture layout, green as provider, and yellow as child/adolescent.

NEXT STEPS

The next step of this research would be to develop and distribute a survey. The data from the survey could be used to refine the questions asked in the survey, but it would also be used as a comparison for the design guidelines established. This phase of the research will take place in the fall of 2013. The goal is to better understand the role of healing gardens in hospitals.