



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

The Texas Model

Compassionate Design In Facilities & Art Programming

Elaine Windberg
Youth Experience Leader



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Understanding the Environmental Impact: Why Compassionate Design Matters



Principles & Goals

Compassionate design is about integrating the principles of trauma-informed care into the physical environment with the goal of creating physical spaces that promote safety, well-being and healing.

Principles*

Compassionate design realizes:

- Youth are more likely to cooperate, communicate, and actively participate in therapeutic programs when they are in an open, positive, welcoming environment that focuses on reformation rather than punishment.
- The physical environment affects identity, worth and dignity, and promotes empowerment.
- The physical environment has an impact on attitude, mood and behavior because there is a strong link between our physiological state, our emotional state and the physical environment.
- That designing and maintaining healing environments leads to empowerment and resists re-traumatizing those who have already experienced so much trauma.

Goals

- An environment that “does no harm”
- A normalized, comfortable environment

**These same principles and goals also provide a better work environment for staff!*

FEEL BETTER

THINK BETTER

CONNECT BETTER

Space Planning

- Personal Spaces
- Social Spaces
- Calming Spaces
- Outdoor Spaces
- Visitation Spaces
- Multi-Functional Activity Spaces



Personal Spaces

Empower youth to make spaces their own by allowing them to:

- Choose paint colors
- Choose coordinating bedding
- Space for personal photos and small items



Social Spaces

- Increased opportunities for interpersonal contact, conversation, group activity, personal sharing and mutual support.
- Expanding the size or number of community spaces will make the facility feel more open and encourage youth to interact with peers, counselors, and staff.
- Reduces the amount of time youth spend alone in their rooms, counteracting feelings of isolation, contributing to their quality of life, and improving outcomes.



Calming Spaces



- **Calming/De-Escalation Space** designed to foster feelings of security and sanctuary.
 - Quiet space decorated with comforting messages, affirmations and inspiring quotes.
 - Sensory supportive to promote relaxation and/or intense stimulation. As such, the space should be designed using features that are calming to the senses and where the user can experience visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile stimuli.

Outdoor Spaces

- **Outdoor spaces** that carefully address proper safety concerns of a secure setting can be calming, positive and therapeutic distractions.
- **Vegetated spaces**, generous landscaping and therapeutic gardens tended by youth can improve an individual's self-esteem and mood, while the presence of water can have a relaxing effect
- **Ample natural light** is critical to improving well-being and expediting the healing process. In a recovery-focused environment, youth are afforded plenty of access and exposure to natural sunlight.



Visitation Areas



Youth with children should be provided “child-friendly” space, such as a children’s visitation room.

Multi-Purpose Activity Spaces

Participation in exercise, recreational activities, art, or education – are beneficial in terms of increasing self-esteem, providing a sense of accomplishment, and developing interpersonal and social skills.



Color & Harmony

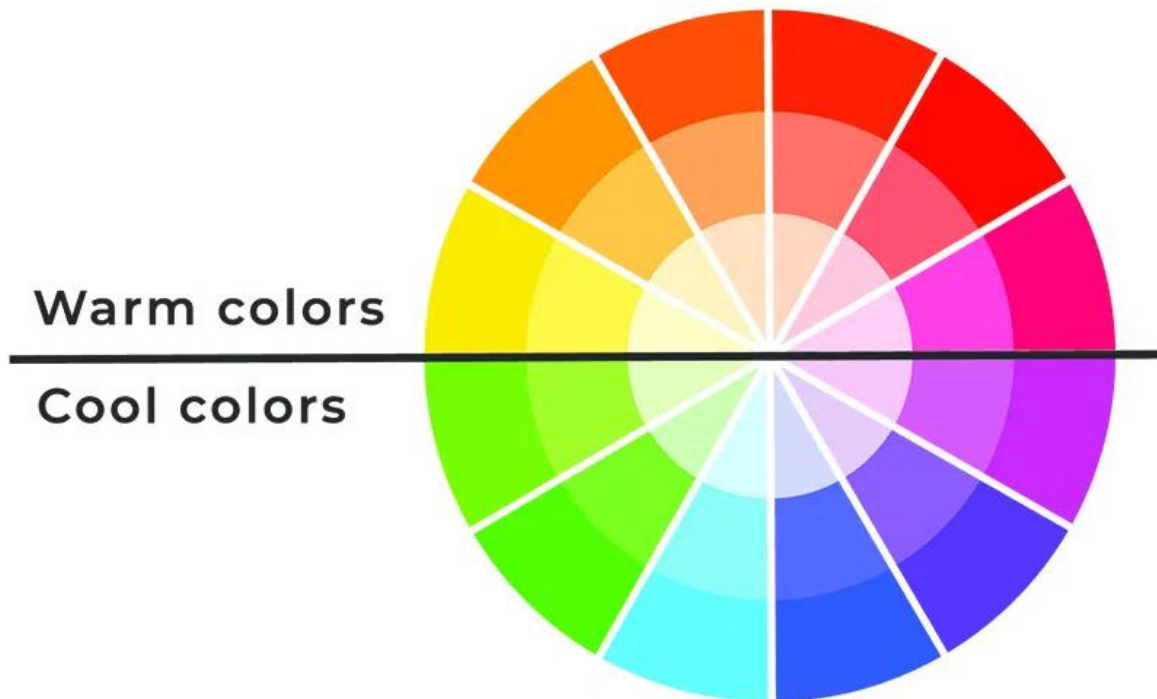


Color is a power which directly influences the soul. ~Wassily Kandinsky

Stimulating vs. Calming Colors

Certain colors can be stimulating or calming, so it depends on the type of ambience desired for a particular function.

- **Calming rooms or spaces** need a cool, peaceful dominant color choice (e.g. warm white, light blue-green, ice cream colors, etc.) with limited decorations and distractions.
- More **active environments** that lift the spirits and appear friendly can also be calming. In these instances, warm, more optimistic color palettes and color accents make the interiors more interesting, brighter, cheerful and personalized.



Planning Your Color Scheme

Color plays a role on all surfaces and elements. This includes floors, walls, ceilings, furniture, cabinetry, privacy panels and other areas.

- **The general rule when decorating is to use three different values: light, medium and dark.** Walls and floors are usually done in light colors, depending on the effect you're trying to create. Floors should be a little darker than walls to keep them from floating.
- **If you choose neutral colors** (white, beige, taupe, gray, and black) use bold-colored accessories to accent the walls and add interest. When you're ready for a change, simply change out the accessories.
- **Don't forget the ceiling.** A general rule of thumb is to paint the ceiling three shades lighter than the walls. It will make the walls feel higher. If you're trying to create a cozy environment, paint the ceiling a darker color.



DESIGN TIP



When working with a palette, use the 60-30-10 rule.



60%
of the room is your **dominant** color (walls)



30%
is your **secondary** color (rugs and furniture)



10%
is **décor** and **accents** to complete the palette

Creating Visual Interest

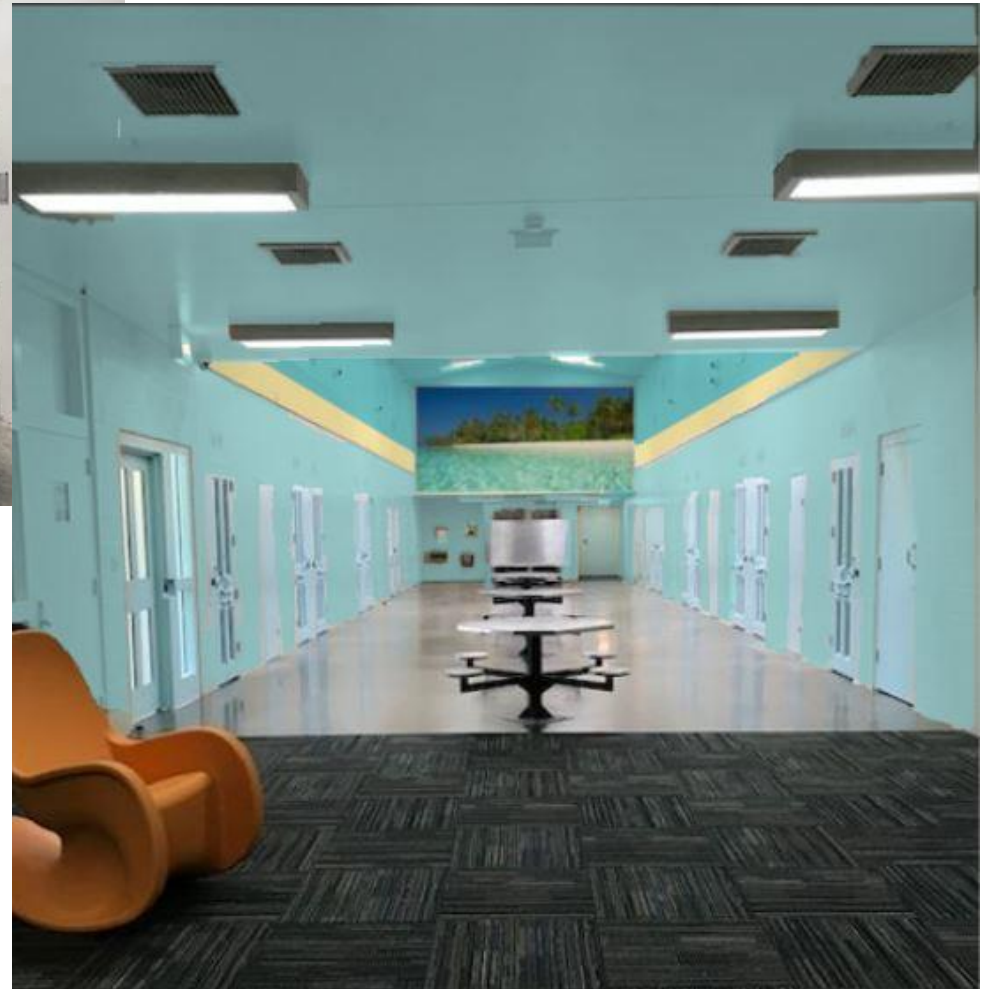


Did You Know?

Happy people look, sad people touch. People are more attentive to tactile stimuli when they're in a negative frame of mind, making them more likely to crave soft or pleasant textures than to pay attention to visual stimuli, such as color and pattern.



A Little Color Goes A Long Way!



Furniture

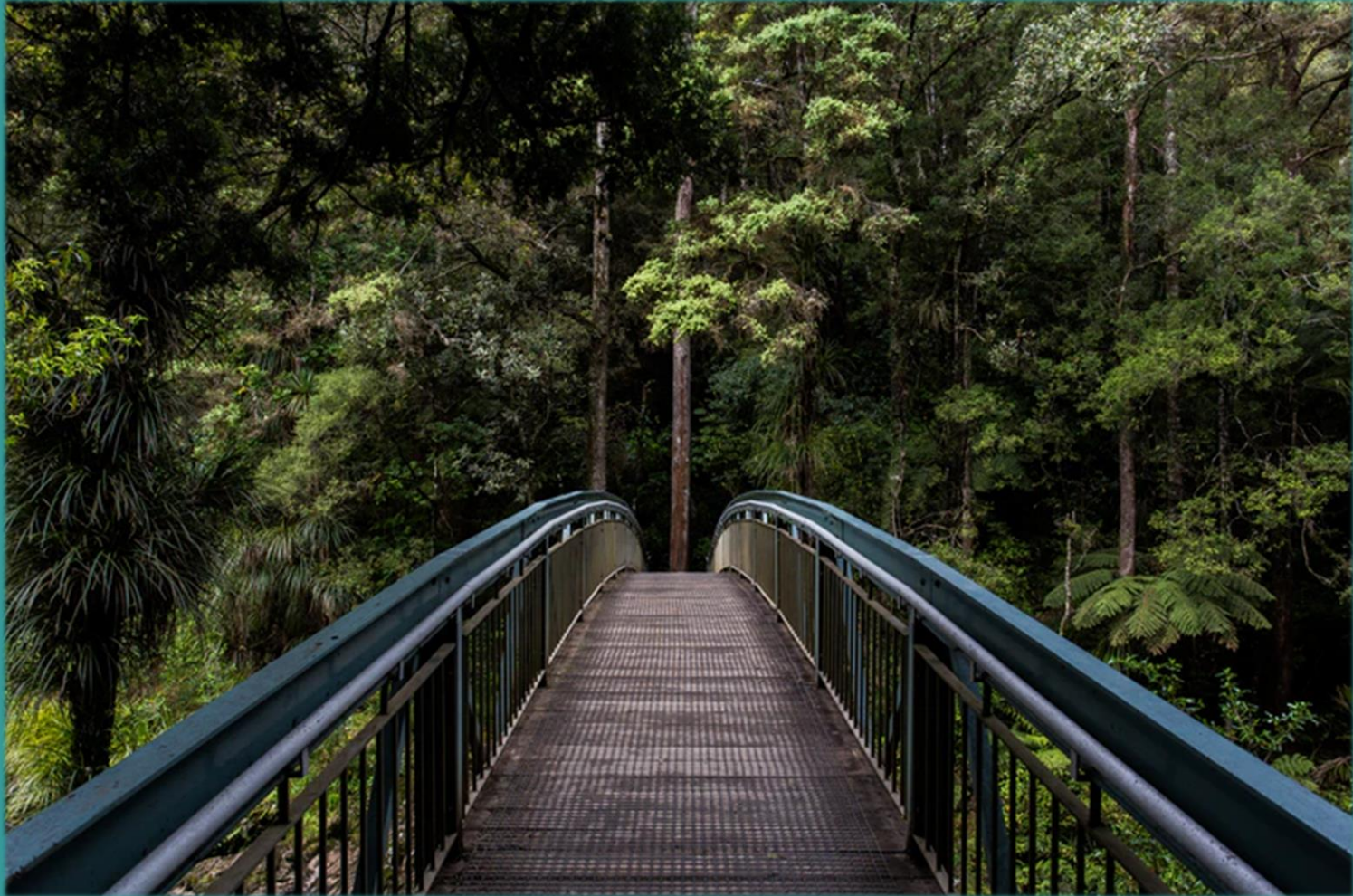


Safe, Functional, & Aesthetically Pleasing

When creating an environment that is more humanized and conducive to rehabilitation, select furniture with less institutional design.



Connecting to Nature



Connection to Nature

Connection to nature is therapeutic and can positively influence behavior. Adding aspects of nature into design is known to reduce stress and aggression.



Seeing Things in a New Light



Warm, Cool, & Natural Light

Color Temperature

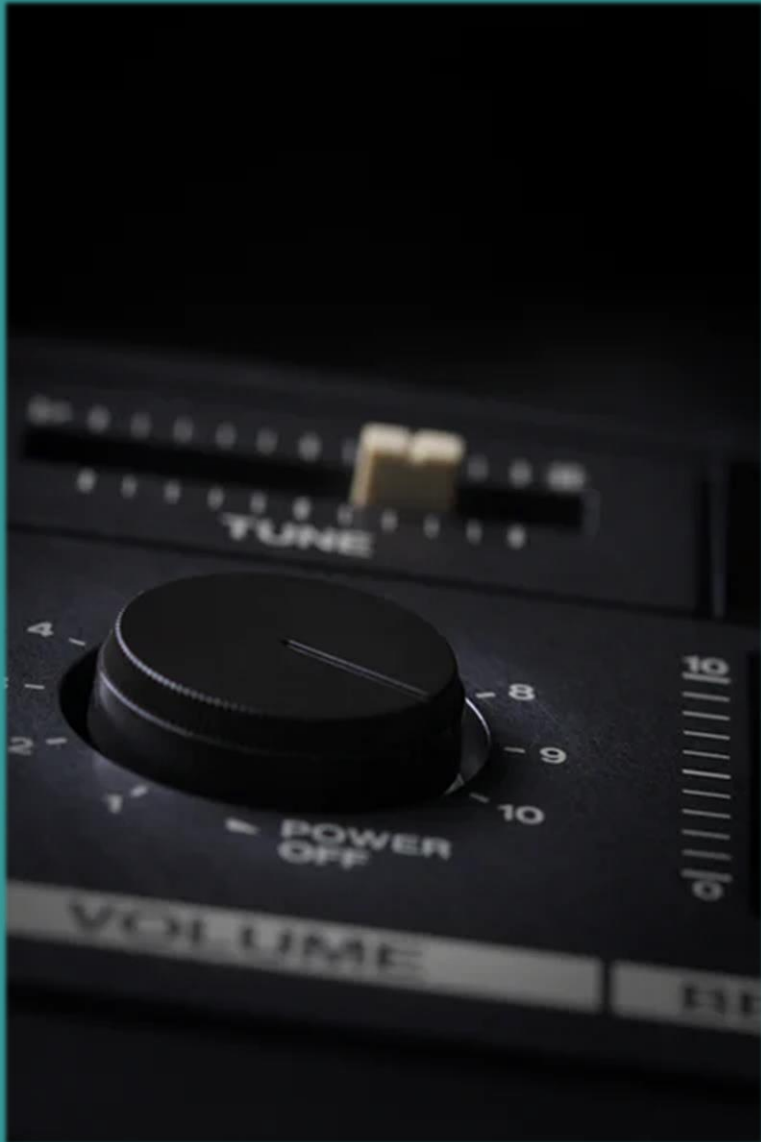


Soft white bulbs provide a warm, comfortable light. Consider using these in areas where the focus is on calming and relaxing, such as dayrooms, living areas, sleep areas, and therapeutic/calming spaces.

Bright white bulbs have a cool and refreshing light that gives a cleaner look. Perfect for places where the best light really counts, such as reading areas, dining rooms, and bathrooms.

Daylight bulbs emit light to mimic energizing daylight. Many people find these to be too ‘clinical’ and are the most disruptive at night. Used intelligently, they are ideal for those spaces where the mind needs to be alert, more focused, and working at full speed, such as classrooms, wood or metal shops, and kitchens.

Turn Down the Noise



It is an understatement to say that juvenile facilities can be noisy.

Poor acoustics are the result of hard, sound reflective surfaces within a space that is not tempered by anything soft or sound absorbent.

Noise is one of the key stressors in any environment and directly affects the ability of both youth and staff to concentrate and communicate effectively.

Acoustics



Improving acoustics in existing facilities does not have to be expensive or complicated, but it is absolutely vital that nothing can be used as a weapon or as a ligature. However, noise issues also occur in secure mental health units and can be overcome with thoughtful design and careful selection and placement of materials.

- Sound absorbing acoustic ceiling tiles should be installed on every square inch of ceiling possible.
- Soft, fuzzy blankets.
- Decorative, soft, fuzzy fabric-wrapped acoustical panels – decorative, sound-absorbing panels for any space.
- Thick carpeting and area rugs are highly effective in controlling noise within buildings or even areas by absorbing sound, reducing surface noise generation, and reducing impact sound transmission.
- Cushions and pillows are considered porous sound absorbers. Generally speaking, the thicker they are the more sound you can absorb. Arrange over-sized pillows and cushions on the floor to create a casual yet welcoming seating area that can absorb sound.

Wellbeing Through the Arts





Art as therapy vs. Art is therapy

- Art as therapy focus on the therapeutic relationship between the therapist and the youth.
- Art is therapy programming focuses on the process of creating art as a way to address youths' issues.

Did You Know...

- Engaging in just 45 minutes of art-making significantly reduced the levels of cortisol.
- Creating art makes you feel better about yourself.
- Creating art can help us become better problem solvers.
- Improves quality of life.





In 2009, Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute began supporting songwriting and choral workshops in New York City's two secure juvenile detention facilities. 75% of the youth in the two facilities voluntarily participated in a 12-session program spanning two weeks, during which they participated in a choir performing traditional repertoire while also writing their own songs and lyrics.

- Increased youth positive emotional state, sense of achievement, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Participants showed statistically higher rates of earning high-school credit, and built stronger social networks
- exhibited lower levels of disengaged or disruptive behaviors

For a population that feel their lives are out of control, the arts provide a haven from their current life or institutional circumstances in a nonthreatening way and becomes a channel to express their inner feelings, manage emotions and behaviors, cope with trauma and victimization, and develop artistic talents and skills.





By bringing thoughtful approaches and careful considerations into the discussion, we can help create a more therapeutic and restorative – rather than detrimental – impact on those we serve and support.

Thank you!

Email: Elaine.Windberg@tjtd.texas.gov

Phone: (512) 490-7662

