

Trauma Informed Design

Space and Design Considerations

AIA: TID2023 (HSW)

IDCEC: 118901 (HSW)



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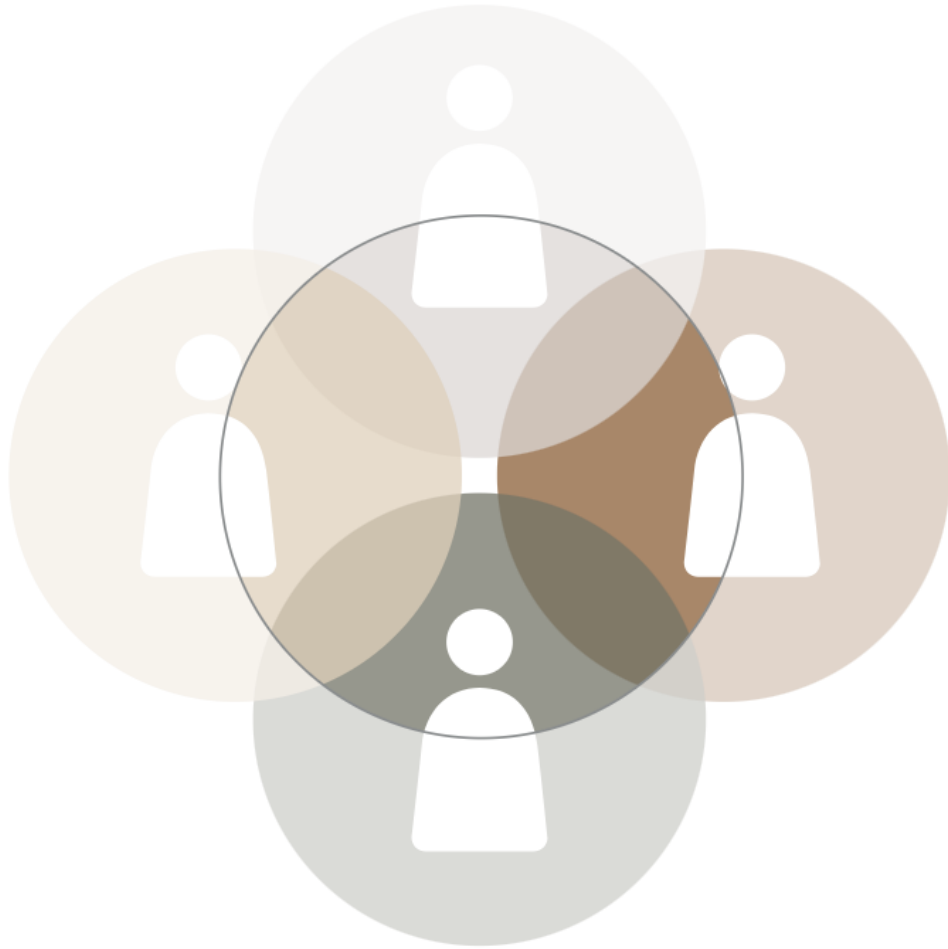
Learning Objectives

- 01 Introduce Trauma Informed Design, an element of Inclusive Design, and explain how trauma experiences can impact our inner understanding and interpretations of the spaces in which we work and collaborate.
- 02 Describe Trauma Informed Design considerations to dissuade dysregulation responses and create environments in which all can feel safe and supported.
- 03 Discuss design elements that may allow for reregulation for the different types of dysregulation: flight, fight, freeze, and fawn.
- 04 Understand that there is a continuum of needs in the office share how psychological safety and empathic design can help to address conflicting requirements.

Inclusive Design

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black blazer over a white shirt, blue jeans, and grey patterned flats, is sitting on a grey fabric sofa. She is holding a light green ceramic mug with both hands. In front of her is a black coffee table with a marble-patterned notebook and a silver pen resting on it. The background shows a window with natural light.





Universal Design

Single experience without adaptation



Inclusive Design

Multiple solutions for equitable outcome

Start with Safety

Take care of yourself

Vulnerability without disclosure

Discussing impacts and not the event(s)

"Talking in draft"

If you feel yourself responding, think about why that may be

AGENDA

1

**What is
Trauma?**



2

**Types of
Dysregulation**



3

**Trauma Informed
Design**



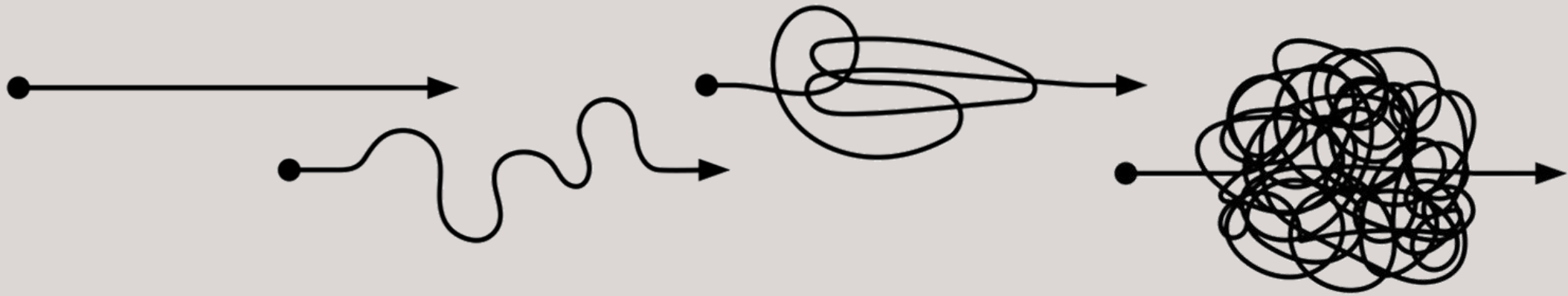
1 What is Trauma?

Trauma



Persistent inner crisis; extreme stressor that overwhelms ability to cope; has lasting effects on physical, emotional, and mental well-being

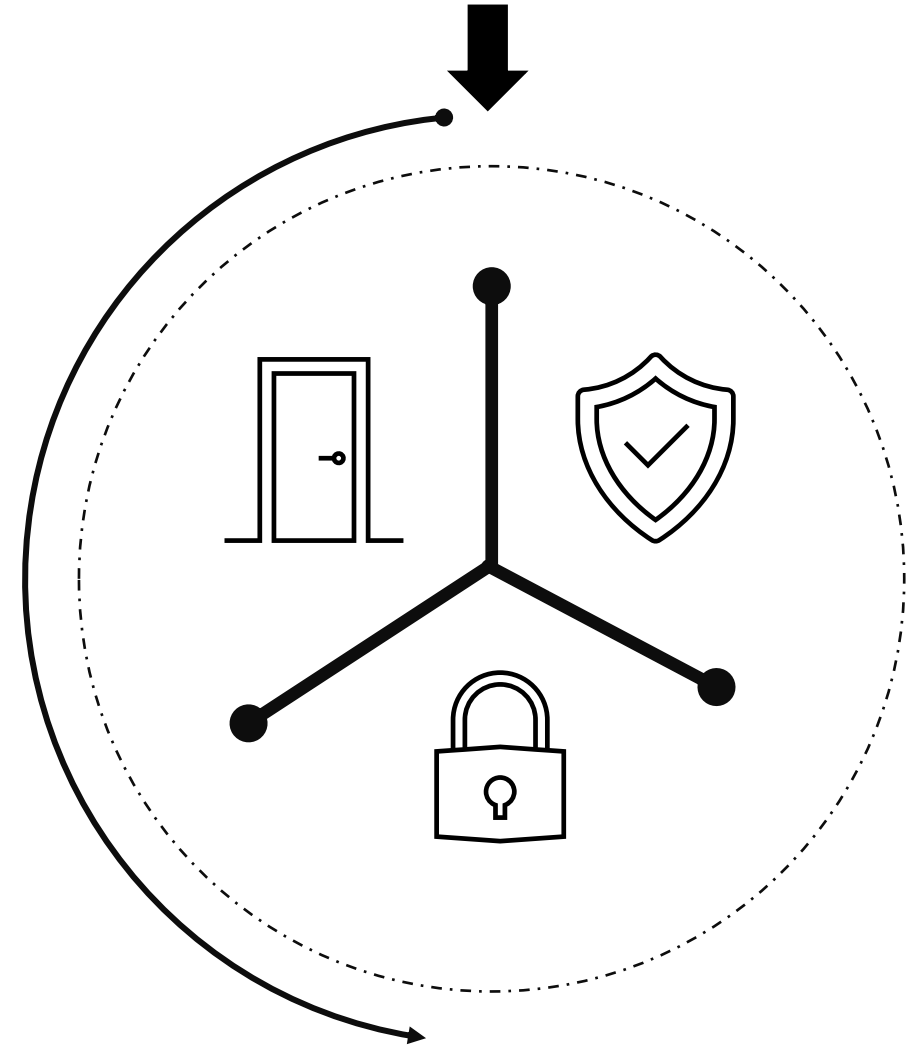
Complex Trauma



A series of traumatic events that take place over a long period of time, like months or years.

TRAUMA INFORMED DESIGN

- » Create environments that promote a sense of calm, safety, dignity, empowerment and well-being for all occupants
- » Space design and architecture may be the first opportunity to impress a sense of safety and connection.



Vocabulary Overview

ACTIVATED

An individual's internal state just prior to becoming dysregulated

DYSREGULATION

When an individual physically and emotionally prepares to manage an unsafe or threatening situation. This response is automatic and unconscious. Dysregulation may result in someone outwardly acting in a specific way or the experience may be completely internal.

Dysregulation often appears as the following modes: Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn

REREGULATION

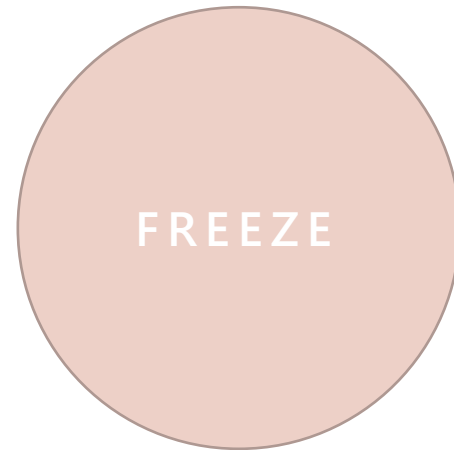
The process by which an individual regains a sense of security and safety after experiencing dysregulation, through employment of specific strategies or tools, in the proper spaces, and with time. When we feel safe, secure, and comfortable functioning in our environment, we are in a state of regulation, our safety state.

Types of Dysregulation



DYSREGULATION

TAKES MANY FORMS





Trauma Informed Design

A top-down view of a cluttered desk with various design and drawing tools. In the center, a large green leaf is placed on a white surface. To the left, there are several white plastic containers and a black pen. In the foreground, there are several pens, pencils, and a ruler. To the right, there are two sheets of light brown paper and a silver ruler. The background shows a white surface with some faint sketches and a black pen. The overall scene suggests a creative workspace for design or architecture.

Design to Dissuade Dysregulation

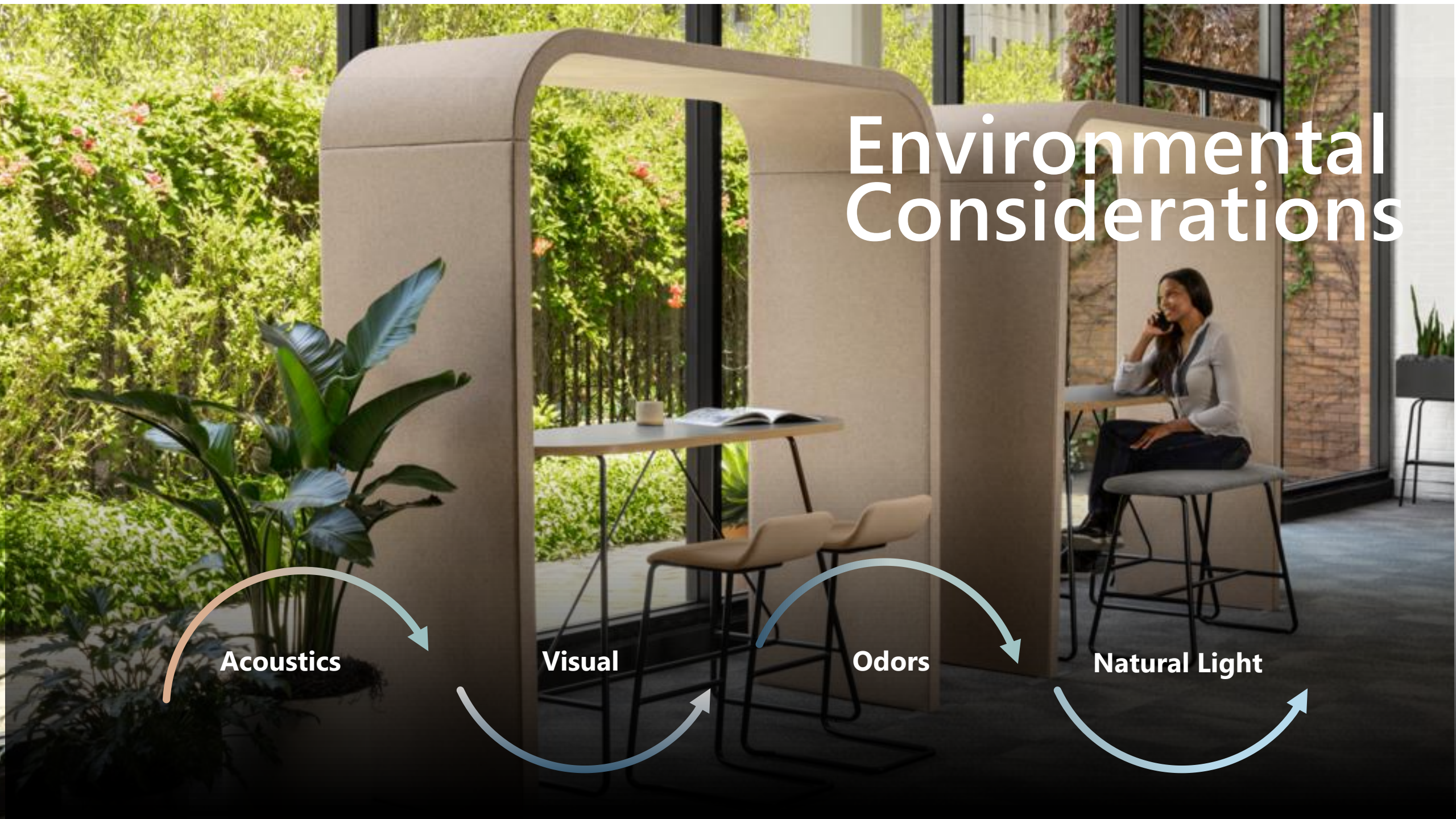
Environmental Considerations

Acoustics

Visual

Odors

Natural Light



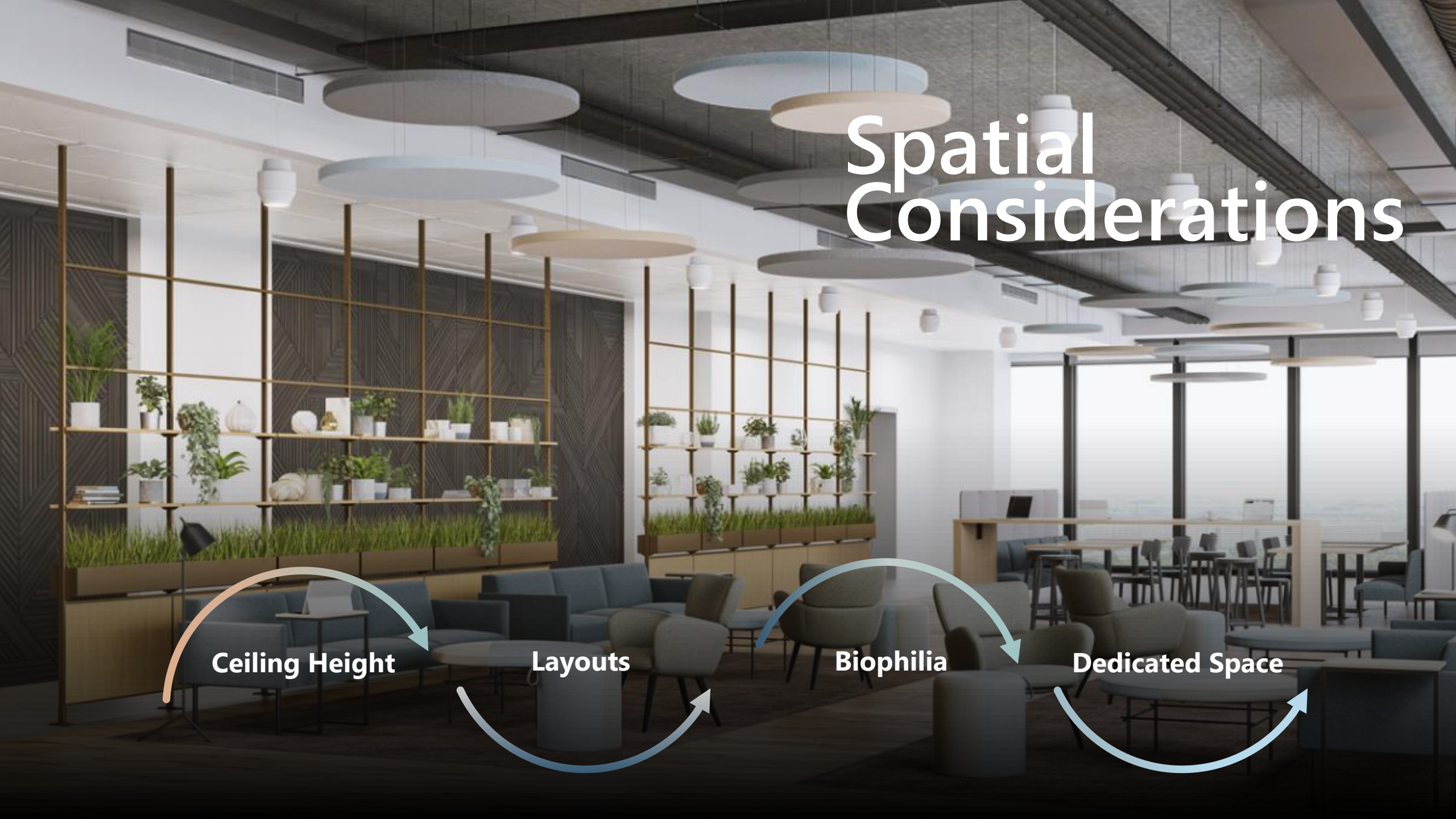
Spatial Considerations

Ceiling Height

Layouts

Biophilia

Dedicated Space



Furniture Considerations



Design for Reregulation

A modern office lounge area with people sitting on a sofa and standing at a table, illustrating a design for reregulation. The scene is set in a bright, open-plan office with large windows. In the foreground, a woman in a light-colored sweater sits on a beige sofa, looking at her phone. A man in a blue shirt sits on the same sofa, looking towards her. A small wooden table with a coffee cup and a book is in front of them. To the left, a woman in a black top stands at a long wooden table, working on a laptop. The room is decorated with a large potted plant, a wooden shelving unit with books and plants, and several pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.



FIGHT

Need safe release like
channeling energy
into exercise

- Walking path
- Area to run, scream, sweat, escape
- Punching bag in rec room
- Sound-proof booth



FLIGHT

Every little stimulus can be overwhelming, a safe place to hide in solitude can ease fear


- Place to block out the world
- No sounds/smells
- Room to literally lay/sit on the ground if needed





FREEZE

Excitement and stimulation can ease people back into their bodies

- Feeling breeze
 - Rocking, fidgeting, doodling
 - Repetitive task
 - Walking on crunchy gravel
 - Water feature
 - Working in a garden
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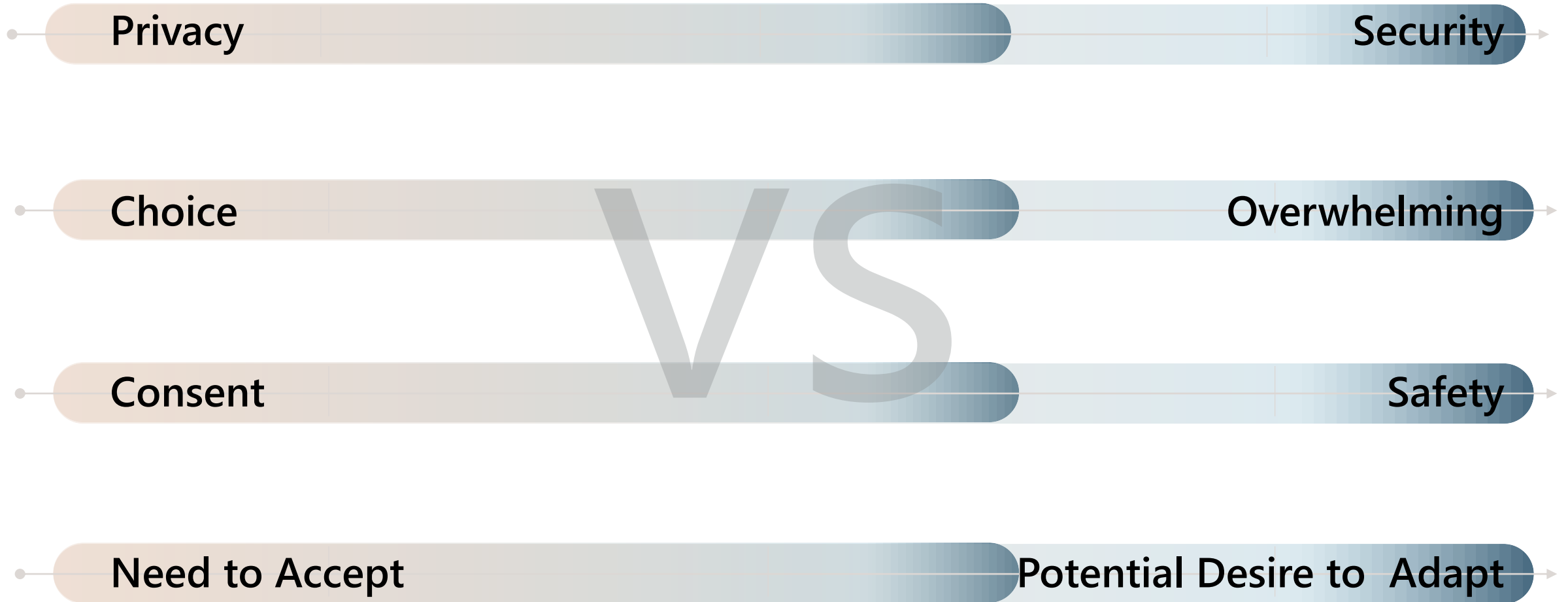


FAWN

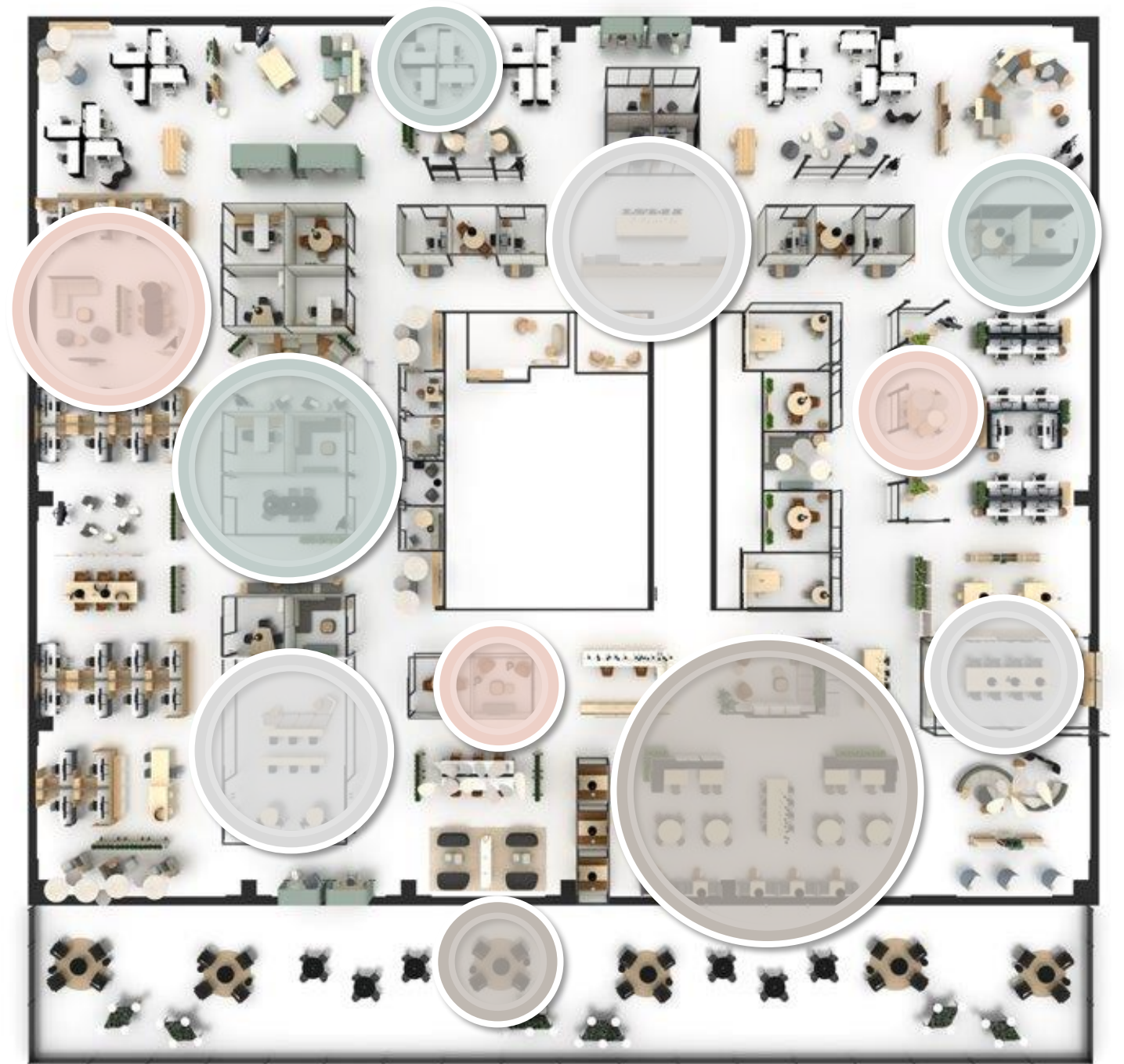
Clear physical boundaries and welcoming social interactions

- Division of individual space
- Ability to disengage to meet needs

CONTINUUM OF NEEDS



Requirement: Sensitivity, empathy, understanding



An ecosystem of
inclusive spaces.

What does this look
like in practice?

INCLUSIVE
DESIGN VIRTUAL
FLOORPLATE





CURVATURE

Softness and
comfort

Cool and calming
colors

No harsh edges

Opportunities for
side-by-side
engagement



SIDE-BY-SIDE SITTING

Space to sit shoulder
to shoulder

No directly across
option

Soft corners for ease
of access

Nearby options for
face-to-face
interactions



PRIVACY WITH SECURITY

Separation for main
area with views

Back protected by
solid wall

Door closes for DND
signal



PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Allows for
collaboration and
community

Clear division of
space and
"ownership"

Access to disengage
if needed



SEPARATION AND SPACE

Dedicated areas for
private moments

Acoustic dampening
for comfort and
privacy

Free of windows to
offer space free of
judgement



OUTDOOR ACCESS

Individuals can get
back in their bodies

Offers space to take
a moment and
recenter

Connecting with
senses the openness
of sky and air

SUPPORT REREGULATION

Psychological Safety

Psychological Safety for All

2020 Conversations

- I can speak up, express concerns
- It's okay to not be okay

**We thrive in an eco-system
of inclusion & empowerment**

Current Conversations

- My values align with my company's values (sustainability, DEI)

- Management understands how/when I am working
- Clear expectations, communication
- Family/life support

**We belong, and feel
known and supported**

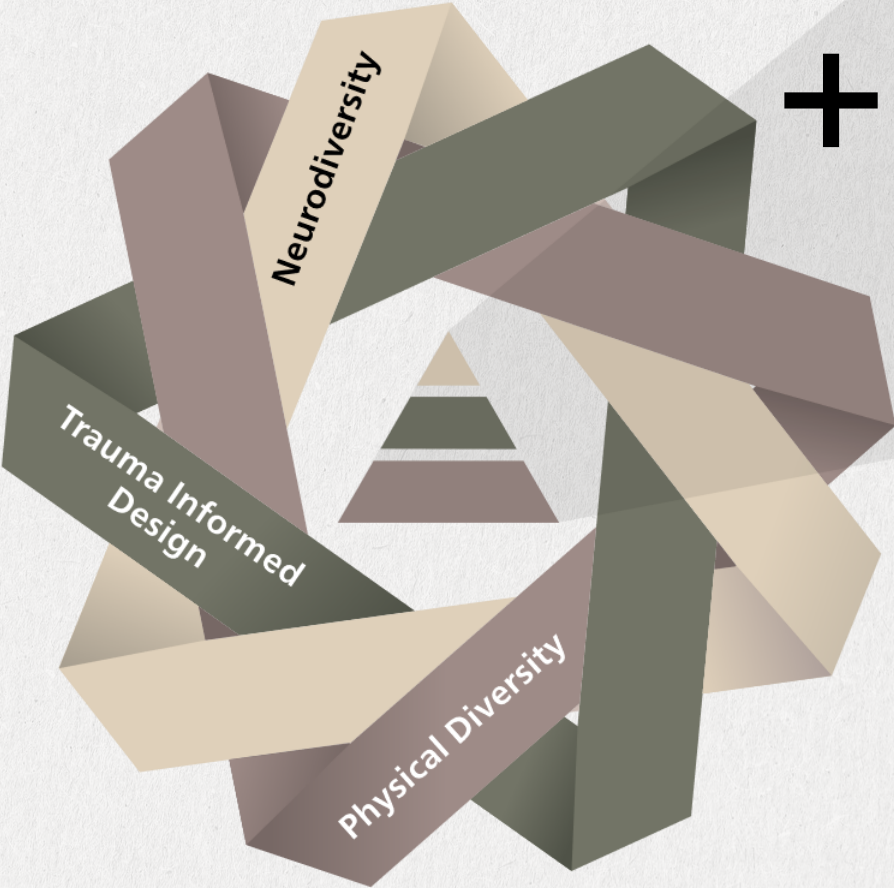
- Use of all spaces is encouraged
- Benefits are reinforced
- Location bias confronted

- Social distancing
- Cleaning protocols
- Masks
- Air quality

**My concerns are
addressed, and I feel safe**

- Trauma Informed
- Neurodiversity
- Acoustics

Inclusive Design



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DEIB

Discussion

RESOURCES



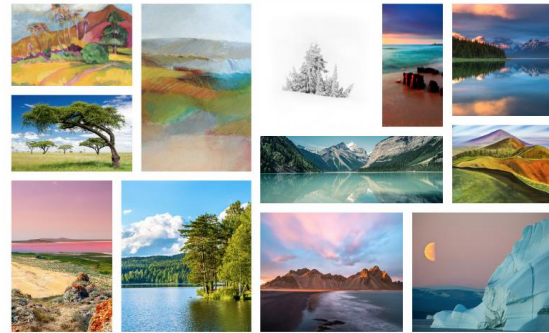
[View](#)



The Concept of Trauma-Informed Design

Posted on Wednesday, October 6th, 2021 at 10:11 AM.

Written by [Tina Baia](#)



[View](#)



Empathy in Architecture: Using Trauma-Informed Design to Promote Healing

POSTED SEPTEMBER 4TH, 2020 IN [BLOG](#)

BY [ANNE MARIE GARCIA](#)

[#BEHAVIORALHEALTH](#) [#INTERIORS](#)

SHARE



An estimated 70 percent of adults in the United States have experienced a traumatic event at least once in their lives and up to 20 percent of these people will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). An estimated 5 percent of Americans – that's more than 12 million people – are struggling with PTSD at any given time.

Trauma can be described as a response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event, whether a single incident or repeated, that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope. Trauma can cause feelings of helplessness, a diminished sense of self, the inability to feel the full range of emotions, and a variety of physical health issues.

The stress of the current COVID-19 pandemic and pain, grief, and indignation arising from continued political unrest and racial tensions, are increasing the number of people experiencing trauma. These situations are creating a collective wave of trauma-related symptoms with an increasing number of people reporting feelings of fear, anxiety, and isolation every day. Now is a good time to revisit our responsibility as healthcare architects and designers to aid healing through intentional, trauma-informed design.

As we move through our daily lives, the built environment we are surrounded by has a profound impact on our emotional, mental, and physical state of being. We've all experienced what can happen inside of ourselves when we step into any given space. Take a moment and imagine how you'd feel standing in a dark, damp basement with low ceilings compared to standing in an open and airy atrium filled with natural elements. Chances are you'll be hanging out in that atrium if given the choice. Our surroundings directly inform our nervous, endocrine, and immune systems. For an individual with PTSD, a poorly designed space can be particularly detrimental to their healing process.

Trauma-informed design incorporates the principles of trauma-informed care: empathy and understanding. It is an effective approach to designing spaces where trauma-experienced individuals may spend time, such as hospitals, Veterans Affairs facilities, behavioral health centers, and social service facilities. The goal of trauma-informed design is to create environments that promote a sense of calm, safety, dignity, empowerment, and well-being for all occupants. These outcomes can be achieved by adapting spatial layout, thoughtful furniture choices, visual interest, light and color, art, and biophilic design. Each of these concepts is detailed below.

[View](#)



ARTICLE

HOW TRAUMA-INFORMED DESIGN CAN HELP PROMOTE SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT

Curated Article | [Forbes](#)



Giving Compass' Take:

- [Neha Gill](#) explains how trauma-informed design integrates trauma-informed care into design processes, spaces, and programs to promote safety and well-being.
- Do you support nonprofit organizations that incorporate trauma-informed care into their programming? What role can funders play in helping organizations incorporate trauma-informed design?
- Learn how [trauma-informed support](#) contributes to better academic outcomes.

[View](#)



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Thank You

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