



designwell

Clinic Futures.
Spatial design strategy
for primary health

Prepared by Designwell



HIPPOCRATIS COI

*Venerina effigies ex antiquo numismate
græco Constantinopoli reperto*



Hi, we're Designwell

A multi-disciplinary design studio with a unique perspective on creating spaces for healthcare. Here's four main ways you'll experience our difference.

1. Evidence-based

Just as the clinical decisions you make are informed by the best quality research, so is our design. There is a science to how space supports the health and wellness of patients and staff. We've taken the time to tap that knowledge base, and we bring it to bear on any project we work on.

2. User-focused

In creating a fit-for-purpose space, the users are our priority. We start our design process by getting up close and personal - taking the time to study what 'best work' looks like for your staff, and what 'best care' feels like for your patients. Understanding the particularities of your workplace and culture, discovering the personalities and needs of your staff and patients, and learning what the future looks like for your practice gives us insight to thoughtfully design tailored solutions for your people.

3. Brand integration

Brand is more than just a logo, more than a trademark. It's how you're seen, recognised, and experienced - both internally and externally; a reputation of sorts. 'Brand' is what informs your patients and staff about who you are and what to expect when they interact with you - before, during and after walking through your doors. Increasingly, brand is where the value of an organisation resides.



Our unique point of difference is our ability to work across brand and space so people experience your brand in tangible ways. Whether it's designing and executing the visible parts of your brand in digital or print, or crafting the part that people feel and experience - a floor-plan, finishes and materials, custom furniture; creating spaces that embody and inform the experience of your brand by staff and clients is something we believe in and are very at home with.

4. Multidisciplinary Lens

As you understand the value of having an MDT-approach to health matters, so do we when it comes to design. Not only creatives - we've spent years in the health field, both as designers and practitioners - and we have first-hand understanding of the unique design demands in the health sector. Our team bring a mix of skills and experience from disciplines of Product Design, Spatial & Interior Design, Architecture, Branding, and Identity Design Workplace Health + Ergonomics. Designwell brings together a range of perspectives and skills to inform and implement a well considered and integrated workplace design that is about more than 'four walls'.

Anglesea Pharmacy - a branding and graphics project by Designwell to convey Anglesea's commitment to being an innovative and adaptive practice for the future.



HEALTHCARE'S HORIZONS

The landscape is changing in healthcare, and quickly, bringing both challenge and opportunity.

Diminishing GP resources, difficulties with attraction and retention of staff - especially in the rural sector - are held in tension with the emergence of new technologies and higher levels of connectivity. Developments in the understanding of how to deliver truly patient-centric care are put to the test by increasing cultural diversity in the NZ population, necessitating a curious and empathetic approach to health care delivery.

An increasingly consumer-empowered economy, enabled by social media's feedback loops, has impacted the expectations and empowerment of patients, creating a need for providers to learn how to optimise patient experience for a successful and engaging interaction. Greater access to information, and a trend toward the management of chronic rather than acute conditions amongst patients, has prompted a shift from a 'consumer' to 'partner' for patient in their health journey, and a need for providers to engage effectively within this construct.

**To successfully navigate
the fast-changing
healthcare landscape,
space matters.**

**Approximately 25%-35% of
a patients' overall satisfaction
with a health care experience
is influenced by the design and
decor of the facility.**

Jacobs, 2016

Research has shown that the built environment (the physical design and decor in which health care is delivered) can exert significant effects on patients and staff.

Rice, 2018



Parsley Health's NYC Clinic exam rooms re-think a traditional approach to the exam room, by removing barriers between patient and clinician as well as creating personable, high-comfort yet hygienic space.

Photo: Reid Rolls
Design: Alda Ly Architecture

CLINIC FUTURES: WHAT IT'S ABOUT

Clinic Futures is Designwell's approach to designing healthcare spaces that are based on credible research and deep understanding of users to optimise outcomes.

By deeply understanding your culture, people and the way you work we are able to thoughtfully and creatively apply the best of evidence-based design (or 'ingredients' as we call them) to your context.



**What experience is
your space cultivating
for your patients
and staff?**

THE INGREDIENTS

Based on the literature available, and our experience in workplace design, we've summarised 'ingredients' we understand as being important for designing healthcare spaces that facilitate patient-centered care, and motivate and support staff.

Once we're well acquainted, we will work with you to determine which of these ingredients apply to your setting, and specify a bespoke blend of these to guide your design. Maybe you're struggling with collaboration between clinicians? Or perhaps you are looking to find ways of better welcoming and engaging patients? Such learned insights have implication for what blend of ingredients should be dialed up or down to be the best fit for your space.

Over the next few pages, we will introduce you to the Clinic Futures ingredients, understand their impact, and show you how these have been expressed in different settings.

Clinic futures



Wellness-oriented
Efficient & Effective
Safe
Therapeutic
Empathetic
Connected
Inspiring



WELLNESS-ORIENTED

There is an increasing emphasis on the primary health sector to shift focus from illness toward preserving and increasing a person's state of wellness. (KANTROWITZ & MCDHB) This applies as much to patients as it does to staff, and there are some important ways this initiative applies to the built space.

1

Educational

Assisting patients as partners in their own health journey shifts the practitioner to the role of guide, helping patients access and navigate information about how they can integrate healthy change in to their lifestyles (STEELCASE). The built environment can support this interaction through physical features - such as furniture choices, layout, and floorplate - to foster interaction between patient and provider, enable access to technology and visual aids, as well as providing group training or educational opportunities such as tai chi, or cooking classes.

Thought should also be given to the placement and quantity of health information to make sure there is clear and perceivable messaging.

2

Natural

Natural features - such as light, plants, natural finishes and materials reduces our stress and anxiety and make us feel more at ease. Providing access to these features within and around the built environment optimizes the health of staff who spend extended periods in the built environment, as well as creating a therapeutic space to calm patients and better ready them for a health-interaction.



Parsley Health's NYC Reception and waiting area employs natural features such as timber finishes, curved forms, plants and natural light to create a space that creates an aura of wellness

Photo: Reid Rolls
Design: Alda Ly Architecture

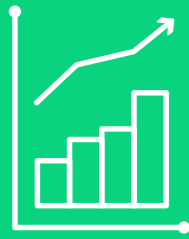
3

Active

Access to daylight in health care facilities seems to have a significant impact on patients as well as on staff.

Huisman, 2012

Healthy patients and healthy staff are active people. Movement has manifold health benefits, and integrating this in to a pattern of life ensures these are realised. Thought should be given to promoting movement of staff within their normal work rhythms (such as regular postural change, ambulation), while also prompting and supporting patients to engage in activity within and outside of the health space. Offering measuring facilities (such as weight/biometrics) within the health space may support or inspire patient in their weight-loss journey, while providing spaces where activity-based classes may be coached can help support patients to engage in a more active lifestyle.



EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

With a frequent mismatch between available resource and demands placed on providers, efficiency in healthcare settings has never been more important than it is now.

Resource restrictions also raise the stakes on ensuring the interactions that take place within healthcare settings - both provider to patient and within the MDT itself - achieve effective outcomes. Attention to the built environment can help support such outcomes.

1

Layout

A thoughtful layout can support both the deliberate and serendipitous interactions of the MDT, as well as place providers proximally to the important resources they need to perform their tasks with efficiency. Furthermore, the leveraging of natural resources (such as light), and careful management of distraction elements such as of sound are optimised with a considered footplate.

A sound understanding of workflows and team interactions should inform a layout design.

2

Standardisation

Introducing standardisation prevents wasted resources, minimises human error, and enables a the ready utilisation of spaces by a broad number of clinicians. Achieving this in a way that also maintains the comfort and welcome of a 'human' environment requires thoughtful design.



Parsley Health NYC's team space for clinicians provides the benefits of shared space for collaboration whilst providing adjacent connected yet secluded space needed for higher concentration.

Photo: Reid Rolls
Design: Alda Ly Architecture

3

Concentration/collaboration balance

An effective team will share information readily yet have the ability to perform high concentration or highly private tasks independently and without distraction. Achieving this delicate balance necessitates a careful crafting of varied space resources (together with etiquettes) to ensure that the spectrum of activities - ranging from independent high focus work, to 1:1 meetings, cross-team meetings and informal impromptu collaboration - are well supported.

80% of the most valuable interactions can be classified as short and informal - the kind that might occur in a hallway or at a coffee machine

(Kraut, 1990)

General conversational distraction causes 70 minutes of lost productivity in an 8 hour office day

(Harvard Business Review)

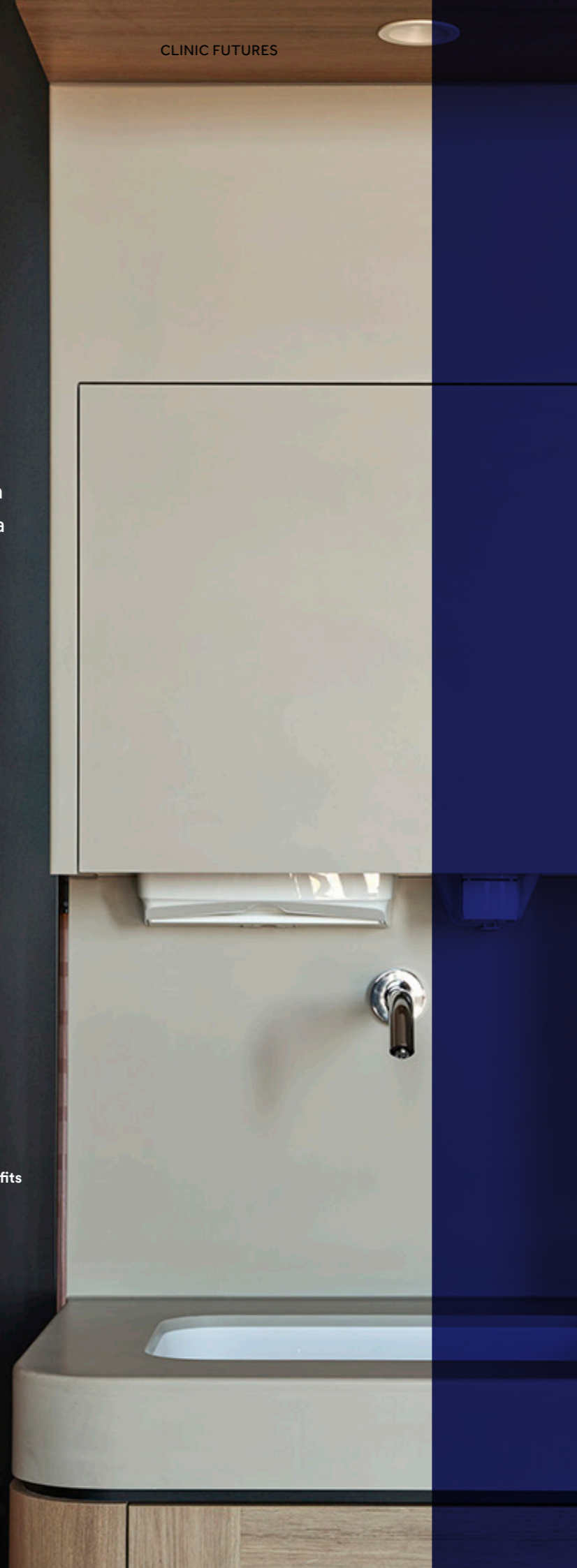


SAFE

Safety and health go hand in hand. The built space plays a powerful role in supporting the safety of users in both explicit and implicit ways.

Cabrini Hospital, Melbourne
A hand-washing station is thoughtfully integrated to achieve an easy clean yet aesthetically pleasing solution that benefits from the efficiencies of standardisation as well as preventing potential injury by removing all sharp corners.

Photo: Peter Clarke
Design: Bates Smart



1

Prevent injury

Simple steps to prevent injury are a low-hanging fruit when it comes to ensuring the safety of users in a health space. Ensuring optimal ergonomics for both staff and patients with mindful furniture selection helps avoid back injury. Avoiding hazards from knocks, slips trips or falls can be managed by careful selection and placement of furniture, ensuring good clearance around entrance ways, rounding off sharp corners and ensuring non-slip floor surfaces. Lighting well - including avoiding back-lighting or dramatic changes in lux levels (particularly at thresholds), and avoiding highly reflective surfaces is also important for older or visually impaired users who may not adjust well to light changes.

2

Privacy

Patients are known to be more forthcoming with important health information when they are comfortable that their environment is audibly secure*. This, combined with appropriate visual privacy is a basic consideration for a safe treatment environment for patients. The increasing need for collaboration between staff and ready share-ability of information however, demands new levels of consideration to managing audible and visual privacy for staff handling patient information in settings outside the immediate consult or treatment room. Careful placement of these areas and consideration of their proximity and methods of separation from patient areas to maintain confidentiality in collaborative settings is essential.

3

Infection Control

With primary healthcare spaces accommodating a range of users (well and compromised) infection control is a well understood need. Consideration to surfaces (porousness, clean-ability, antibacterial properties), form (avoidance of corners, ledges, dust traps, handle types), airflow (ventilation, room separations), natural light access (i.e.. exposure to sun), integration of hygiene measures (such as hand washing stations), and clean-ability of high-touch share spaces (toy areas, patient furniture) can help control for the spread of infection.

4

Minimise human error

Errors commonly happen under stressed settings, foreign settings, or isolated settings. Designing a built space that minimises stress from distraction (high focus spaces), yet supports quality communication and collegiality for the sharing of ideas and information helps optimise staff attention and shared resource for accuracy. Furthermore, appropriate standardisation helps create familiarity in unfamiliar settings for effective task performance.



THERAPEUTIC

Though explicitly considered in retreat or pamper spaces, little thought has been given to the implicit healing capacity of space in the primary health setting.

Think about the way an arrival and experience at a spa or a massage clinic might differ from an arrival to a primary health clinic. The sense of calm and connection that primes the visitor for a well-being experience is prioritised in these therapeutic spaces. Whilst the economics and processes of a primary health setting differ greatly, the overall goal of improving a visitors wellbeing is shared.

There is a vast amount of evidence pointing toward the ways space can be restorative, or prime people for a healing experience, and these can be readily and appropriately integrated in to the primary health setting to improve the experience and efficacy of primary health services and interventions.

1

Biophilic

Humans, at a biological level, respond to nature. Natural materials, natural shapes, natural patterns, and natural movement - like the way leaves move in the wind - prompt the down-regulation of the sympathetic nervous system, putting a patient in a better space for receiving treatment, advice and improving their tolerances for discomfort or stress. Designing space to integrate these features will prime a patient for a therapeutic experience.



Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK)
Regional Ambulatory Cancer Centre,
West Harrison, NY
Photo: Ewing Cole Design: Ron Blunt

Contemplation of an aquarium before dental surgery has been found to reduce patient anxiety during treatment.

Kensley, 2008

2

Let the light in

Florence Nightingale was among the first to recognise the therapeutic importance of bringing natural light in to modern healthcare spaces. We now know that sunlight helps reduce depression and anxiety, among other therapeutic benefits. Careful use of windows, skylights, and mirrors can help maximise access to this critical resource.

3

Engage the senses

How does a space sound? How does it feel? How does it smell? How does it look? These factors are not often highly considered in health care settings, despite the documented positive impact these can have on stress*, memory*, and even the patient impression of their treatment provider*. A therapeutic engagement of the senses with considered soundscapes and noise management, with use of textures and colour, plants, light, movement, and scents can help harness these benefits for all users.

4

Offer Choice

Patients enter a space from various cultures, various ages and levels of mobility, various states of wellness, and with varied needs from a space. Furniture should be varied and loose to offer flexibility and accommodation to a range of users.

5

Connect to the outside

Maintaining outdoor views where possible - particularly in wait areas, and at main staff work-points - helps maintain an connection with the outside. This is an important psychological factor for the unwell person - not only does it benefit circadian rhythms, but it helps to maintain a sense of participation in the outside world. If this isn't an option, art that conveys natural scenes is a good alternative.

6

Accommodating spaces

Creating a sense of comfort and familiarity for a visitor - including generosity of space to accommodate support people - is an important factor to breaking down the sense of discomfort and uncertainty people and feel in a clinical space. Achieving a more residential look furthers a visitors sense of comfort and welcome to support therapeutic intervention.

Parasympathetic activity is increased by viewing natural scenes

(Gladwell et al 2012)



Real plant life framed at
Tongrentang HeKang Center
Photo: AFFD Space Design



EMPATHETIC

The efficiency of 'systems' and standardisation runs the risk of homogeneity and the 'dehumanising' of a space. An empathetic design pays careful attention to the 'human' factors and honours them in space - what are people's backgrounds, what makes them comfortable? What state are they in right now, what do they need, and how can they best supported?

1

Patient-Centered

User experience is paramount to shaping a positive and efficacious health interaction. This has been recognised and championed by the health sector for some time - particularly as it pertains to practices like informed consent, communication methods, and cultural awareness. How spaces support patients to have an optimal and empowered experience has been comparatively under thought. Type and placement of furniture, finishing materials and decoration, use of art and many other spatial elements also shape the patient experience and can help a patient feel understood and prioritised in their interactions with primary health providers.

2

Comfortable and Welcoming

Creature comforts - they matter a great deal in shaping an empathetic space. The height of a reception counter, the spaciousness and accommodation of a waiting room, the temperature, type and availability of light are just some examples of simple, easily modifiable environmental factors that help your patients and staff feel comfortable and at home in a healthcare space.

3

Culturally Sensitive

Diversity in perspectives, history, experiences that are culturally embedded have a physical expression. What kind of seating (chairs, or floor mats), what materials are used (traditional, synthetic, modern), colours, what art is seen, what shapes and forms are encountered in the space, what role hospitality plays in the space, what spaces are offered and who can access them can have the impact of acknowledging and empowering patients by creating familiar touch-points and integrating these in to the healthcare spaces with which they engage.



Parsley Health NYC's waiting room has a deliberately residential feel with an adjacent kitchen to engage with patients who may be interested in nutritional coaching events.

Photo: Reid Rolls
Design: Alda Ly Architecture

4

Empowering

Whilst most modern clinicians recognise the importance of their patients being engaged and empowered in their health experience, many patients still approach such an interaction with the clinician seen as a 'power' person (holding specialist knowledge and authority). Spatial elements and cues can be used to support a positive power dynamic (such as fostering eye-level communication, removing physical barriers between clinician and patient). Furthermore, spaces can be integrated in to space to engender a patient to actively engage in their own health journey and their own health information made readily available to them.

Space relations are experienced differently depending on the culture of the person and this can affect the spatial requirements to which spaces have to respond.

GRAZIA GIULIA COCINA, 2017



CONNECTED

We live in an age of connection and knowledge, where the sharing of ideas and information is essential to the thriving of the modern workplace. This applies to healthcare as much as it does the corporate world, with efficiency and best-case multidisciplinary practice the holy grail for the health profession.

1

Group spaces

Critical to the exchange of tacit knowledge and shaping of ideas is conversation. Spaces need to be designed to provide adequate opportunity for this - whether a formal meeting room, team work area, break-out spaces, or a comfortable lunchroom environment. Integrating these spaces in to the floor-plate can boost team connection and communication.

2

Integrated technology

Connectivity is the linchpin for a collaborative workplace, enabling staff to work effectively with each other across space and time. Getting this right unleashes the potential of both the physical and digital workspace, where mobile and team work is a reality. Connection between patient and clinician is also an exciting potential for improving access to remote communities, better informing, engaging and empowering patients in their health journey, as well as improving the efficiencies of providers with observations and follow-up actions. Awareness of the speed of developing technologies should be front of mind when designing and future-proofing primary healthcare environments



80% of the most valuable interactions can be classified as short and informal - the kind that might occur in a hallway or at a coffee machine.

(Kraut. 1990)

The probability of interaction between individuals declines significantly after the first 50m of separation.

(Allen. 2004)

Cabrini Hospital, Melbourne
A staff touchdown work-point supports quick informal interactions between clinicians and admin staff

Photo: David Clarke
Design: Bates Smart

3

Proximity and Serendipity

Humans are inherently social creatures. The way that translates in the workplace is that we are most likely to collaborate with people we are physically close to, can see, or happen to bump in to. Clever and considered design of a workspace layout - in both formal and informal areas - can help facilitate much needed interaction in the workplace.

Tia womens health clinic in New York conveys a message of fun and destigmatising the experience for users.

Photo: Kezi Ban
Design: Rockwell Group



75% of professionals say that visible investment in workplace design makes a difference to their feeling of value as an employee.

(Robert Walters Whitepaper)

An inspiring environment persuades outsiders to buy and insiders to believe.



INSPIRING

The built environment is a powerful tool for attracting and retaining staff, patients, and creating culture.

Whether or not the message is being consciously managed, the physical environment presents clue about the beliefs and values of an organisation. At its best, this could be something that is compelling, affirming, or inspires and promotes an ethos. Perhaps it inspires patients to take control of the health journey, or your staff to believe that they are part of a friendly and fun workspace, or that they are highly valued.

Because spaces are tangible, they are where your brand and your message gets *felt*.

What do staff and clients experience when they enter your work space?

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We'd love to hear from you.

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