



# THE VALUE OF GARDENS IN HOSPITALS

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## ATTENTION RESTORATION THEORY

Kaplan & Kaplan

- Better concentration after spending time in nature
- Exposure to nature has a restorative effect on the brain's ability to focus
- The restorative influences of viewing nature develops a more positive state
- We learn to associate restoration with natural settings





## ATTENTION RESTORATION THEORY

Kaplan & Kaplan

- Positive distraction
- Improved creative thinking and improved problem solving capacity
- Elevation in mood, effective in reducing depression
- Reduction in stress







# PIVITOL RESEARCH – Roger Ulrich

## **View through a window may influence recovery from surgery, Science 1984**

**Sample:** 46 patients who had undergone cholecystectomy, a common type of gall bladder surgery.

**Groups:** Wall-view (largely featureless brick wall) and tree-view (small stand of deciduous trees)

**Results:** In comparison with the wall-view group, the patients with the tree view had:

1. Shorter postoperative hospital stays,
2. Had fewer negative evaluative comments from nurses,
3. Took fewer moderate and strong analgesic doses,
4. Had slightly lower scores for minor postsurgical complications.

**Summary:** The results imply that hospital design and siting decisions should take into account the quality of patient window views.

**Note:** Research data is up to 40 years old. Technology advances have influenced surgery

# AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH – Dr. Rona Weerasuriya, 2016

## **Health & wellbeing experiences during access to gardens in healthcare settings**

Doctoral research by Deakin University utilising Austin Health gardens

A qualitative study exploring people's lived experience via semi-structured interviews

72 participants - 36 staff, 18 visitors, 18 patients (6 Acquired Brain Injury and 12 general patients)

Nine key themes thematically coded and centred on "a connection to a restorative setting"

- **Living Energy** – seasonal changes, growth and regeneration
- **Connections to people** – socialisation, conversations (that couldn't be facilitated indoors)
- **Provided "an escape"** from ward to more "normal" setting, reflected world outside of hospital.
- **Provided spiritual connotations** (Participants used terms such as "good for the soul", "a safe haven", "peaceful", "tranquil" and "blessed")
- **Provided a welcoming, safe and comfortable space to spend time in** (good maintenance)

## Health & wellbeing experiences during access to gardens in healthcare settings

- **Facilitated relaxation & rejuvenation** (“calming”, “relaxing”, “serene”, “tranquil” and “soothing”)
- **Enhanced affective state** (Improvements to positive affect; "reflecting a level of pleasurable engagement with the environment, depicted by happiness, joy, excitement, enthusiasm, and contentment“, as well as decreased negative affective states such as anxiety, depression and hostility)
- **Afforded reminiscing** – positive memories of past experiences / childhood
- **Afforded intrigue and exploration** – opportunity to exert control over seeking and discovering new things





Intensive Care Unit Staff Area

## GARDENS & GROUNDS PROJECT AT AUSTIN HEALTH

*Creating gardens to improve the therapeutic environment of Austin Health*

Environmental Management Strategy 2009 - 2012

Gardens & Grounds master plan 2010

Implementation 2011 - Gardens & Grounds Project Officer position (Australian first)  
- Develop gardens & facilitate research

Gardens funded by non-operational sources and external donations/grants





Jessie Mary Vasey Labyrinth

## GARDENS & GROUNDS PROJECT AT AUSTIN HEALTH

Since 2011:

25 projects completed to date

Acute care, aged care, mental health, rehabilitation, child care, open spaces

\$768,000 spent on garden projects

7000 plants

Community engagement – media, guided garden tours, community speaking







SECURE EXTENDED CARE UNIT COURTYARD



## Challenges

- Unused overgrown rear garden enclosed by high wall
- Locked area with poor access

## Desire

- A retreat space – quiet, relaxed, meditative
- Additional edibles for the cooking program
- Mural and inspirational quotes
- Supervised space

## Funding

- Gender specific grant

## Design Process

- Consumer and staff input
- “Dreams are free”, then paired back accordingly

## Solutions

- Not all desires possible, but many were included



# SECURE EXTENDED CARE UNIT COURTYARD



*The time to relax is when  
you don't have time for it.*

*Sometimes I sit and think,  
and sometimes I just sit.*

*Every day brings new choices.*

## SECURE EXTENDED CARE UNIT COURTYARD





*"The garden now provides a more community based alternative space within the unit for relaxation and assists with decreasing anxiety"*  
Kerry Duff (NUM)





## ACUTE PSYCHIATRIC UNIT

## Challenges

- Under-utilised central courtyard garden (open access)
- Reduced use across year due to lawn/dirt surface

## Desire

- More functional all-purpose area
- Additional edibles for the OT cooking program
- Reduced maintenance needs (poor maintenance access)

## Funding

- Grant

## Design Process

- Management & staff input

## Solutions

- Improved surfacing , heavy durable planters & seats
- Raised beds for plants and edibles



ACUTE PSYCHIATRIC UNIT





ACUTE PSYCHIATRIC UNIT





- A more usable space used throughout the year
- Patients and families members spend time in it
- A welcoming space
- Increased use for variety of leisure activities





PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA RECOVERY SERVICE











## GARDENS FOR RESPITE, RELAXATION & RECOVERY

***“Emotionally the garden has been a refuge***

*a calm place for therapies and visits from family and friends,  
reconnecting my rehab world and real world in a supportive and positive way  
and speeding my recovery”*

Kate (past patient)