Designing Environments that Enhance the Human Experience

National Summit on Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing
My Why

The Healthy Workplace

How to Improve the Well-Being of Your Employees—and Boost Your Company's Bottom Line

Leigh Stringer
Well-being, the Built Environment, and Graduate Students

- Biophilia
- Belonging
- Neurodiversity
Biophilia
“Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction.”

- E.O. Wilson, *Biophilia*
Elevation and the Corresponding Need for Biophilic Design Intervention

**MID-RISE - SKYSCRAPER**
- 12+ STORIES
- Biophilic design essential for health, combined with frequent immersion in nature

**MID-RISE BUILDING**
- 8-12 STORIES
- 8 STORIES ABOVE THE AVERAGE URBAN TREE CANOPY

**MEDIUM BUILDING**
- 4-8 STORIES
- 4 STORIES WITHIN EVOLUTIONARILY APPROPRIATE HEIGHT RANGE

**SHORT BUILDING**
- 2-4 STORIES
- 2 STORIES STRONG CONNECTION TO GROUND PLANE

**1 STORY BUILDING**
- Corresponding need for biophilic intervention

**BIOPHILIA ESSENTIAL**
- Biophilic design essential for health, combined with frequent immersion in nature

**BIOPHILIA CRITICAL**
- Biophilic design important along with immersion in nature

**BIOPHILIA POSSIBLY NEEDED**
- Proximity to ground plane creates strong linkages to nature

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Biophilic Design: A New Scale Emerges, Jason McLennan and Julia Drachman
Belonging
Neurodiversity
Biodiversity and Neurodiversity
What is Design for Neurodiversity?

Truly Universal Environment

Physical
- Stamina
- Flexibility
- Strength
- Mobility
- Agility

Sensory
- Sight
- Hearing
- Smell
- Touch
- Taste

Cognitive
- Memory
- Learning
- Communication
- Perception
- Attention

Spatial
- Air & Light
- Color
- Pattern
- Form
- Materiality
Neurodiversity

Audible

Visual

Universal Experience

Cognitive

Social

Environmental

Physical
Spectrum of Needs

- Hot
- Loud
- Bright
- Crowded
- Movement
- Rough
- Cold
- Quiet
- Dim
- Alone
- Still
- Soft
An Individualized Approach

**Choice:** User feedback that helps determine a space’s set-up and selections

**Flexibility:** Spaces and furnishings that can change and adapt throughout the day

**Variety:** Different types of spaces that support a range of needs
Neurodiversity Toolkit

Site
Circulation
Interior
Workspaces
Collaboration Spaces
Amenities
Equipment and Furnishing
Work / Study Spaces Free from Audible Distractions
Doors / Frames Contrast with Surrounding Walls
Circulation paths with views to outside
What’s Next?
Air Temperature

25 °C in the floor

20 °C outside
What's Next?
“We humans often assume that what is, had to be that way.

In reality, virtually everything in our built environment is the way it is because someone designed it that way.”

- Dr. Richard Jackson, former Director of the CDC’s National Center for Environmental Health