

# CO-DESIGNING QUIET ROOMS FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH. A PARTICIPATORY PERSPECTIVE ACROSS FIELDS

Arianna Mazzeo, HCT College

## ABSTRACT

*The mental health of youth has become a critical focus in educational and community settings. Quiet rooms, co-designed with students and artists specifically to provide a tranquil environment, play a significant role in supporting the mental well-being of young individuals. This article explores the design principles, benefits, and implementation strategies of quiet rooms, emphasizing their positive impact on youth mental health and in particular students of university across the world.*

**Keywords:** Co- Design, Quiet Rooms, Mental Health

## INTRODUCTION

Youth today face unprecedented levels of stress and anxiety, driven by academic pressures, social challenges, and digital distractions. Creating safe and calming environments within schools and community centers is essential for fostering mental well-being (Ulrich, 1984). Quiet rooms offer a sanctuary where young individuals can decompress, reflect, and regain emotional balance. This article examines the theoretical foundations and practical applications of designing effective calm rooms (Kaplan, 1989).

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

### Psychological Benefits of Quiet Spaces

- Reduced anxiety and stress levels
- Enhanced emotional regulation and coping skills
- Improved concentration and academic performance

### Theories of Environmental Psychology

- **Attention Restoration Theory (ART):** Natural environments can restore cognitive functions and reduce mental fatigue.
- **Biophilia Hypothesis:** Human beings have an innate connection to nature, which can be leveraged to improve psychological health.

## Design Principles of Quite Rooms

- Location and Accessibility
- Strategically placed within schools or community centers for easy access
- Ensuring privacy while maintaining safety

## Interior Design Elements

- **Color Schemes:** Use of soft, muted colors to create a soothing atmosphere
- **Lighting:** Incorporation of natural light and adjustable soft lighting
- **Furniture:** Comfortable and flexible seating arrangements
- **Nature Integration:** Use of plants, natural materials, and nature-themed decor
- **Sensory Considerations**
- **Sound:** Soundproofing to reduce external noise; inclusion of calming soundscapes or white noise
- **Smell:** Use of subtle aromatherapy with calming scents like lavender or chamomile
- **Touch:** Textured materials that provide tactile comfort, such as soft fabrics and stress-relief objects

## Technological Integration

- Minimal use of technology to avoid overstimulation
- Availability of mindfulness and relaxation apps

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### Stakeholder Involvement

Engaging students, teachers, parents, and mental health professionals in the design process. Gathering input through surveys and focus groups

### Training and Education

Providing training for staff on the purpose and use of calm rooms. Educating students about the benefits and appropriate use of the space

### Maintenance and Evaluation

Regular maintenance to ensure the room remains a clean and welcoming space. Ongoing evaluation and feedback collection to assess effectiveness and make improvements

## CASE STUDIES

### Example 1: Dubai University

Description of the design and implementation process  
Student feedback and observed benefits

### Example 2: Canada Hospital

Integration of community resources and collaboration  
Impact on youth engagement and mental health outcomes

## DISCUSSION

### Challenges and Solutions

- Addressing budget constraints through community partnerships and grants
- Overcoming stigma associated with using mental health resources
- Future Directions such as libraries and hospitals

## CONCLUSION

Quite rooms represent a valuable addition to the toolkit for supporting youth mental health. Thoughtful design, informed by psychological theories and stakeholder input, can create spaces that significantly enhance the well-being of young individuals. As the need for mental health support continues to grow, calm rooms offer a promising approach to fostering a healthier, more resilient youth population. This article outlines the essential aspects of designing quite rooms, emphasizing their importance for youth mental health. By incorporating evidence-based design principles and involving stakeholders, these spaces can provide significant benefits, helping young people navigate the complexities of modern life with greater ease and resilience.

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