

TRAUMA-INFORMED DESIGN PRINCIPLES | DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES AT-A-GLANCE

These design opportunities, in no particular order, are a sampling of evidence-based interventions to consider when designing trauma-informed spaces – actual design recommendations should be based on the particular project, program, and context.

Clear access and wayfinding	Entrances are easy to find and locate throughout the property and building design with clear wayfinding signage
Provide access to nature	Access to nature is linked to promoting positive health impacts, joy, healing, solace, and reflection.
Flexible, adaptable spaces	Ability to adjust spaces increases sense of safety, comfort, and purpose.
Offer a variety of spaces	Offering different types and sizes of spaces accommodates varying degrees of socialization and comfort.
Provide movable furniture	Provide lightweight furnishings that give users the choice to rearrange the space.
Design for acoustical privacy	Limit or mitigate loud noises (e.g. building equipment, big events, etc.) and prioritize users' acoustic privacy.
Offer positive distractions	Design features that alleviate stress and elicit positive reactions, feelings, and hold attention.
Provide inclusive furniture	Space and furnishings are welcoming to all.
Design for property security	Building provides security measures throughout the property.
Design for visual safety & privacy	Provide appropriate security measures and allow users to make some adjustments as needed.
Provide predictable spaces	Organizations of rooms and spaces are intentional, easy to understand and predict, and navigate by users.
Design unobstructed sightlines	Unobstructed views, ample lighting, soft and wide corners throughout the property exterior, interior spaces, and corridors.
Offer spatial openness	Perceived sense of open space available that allows residents to choose their path based on their level of comfort.
Use high quality materials	Durable materials show quality and care for residents
Offer artful features	Art can create belonging and connection, foster empowerment, and serve as an outlet for self-expression.
Strive for visually simple and clear design	Simple, uncluttered, and clean design features achieve organized and visually balanced spaces.
Consider natural materials	Natural materials draw connections to nature, support a healthier environment for people, and promote a sense of calm and clarity.
Use cool color choices in common areas	In common areas, consider blues, greens, and purples which have calming effects.
Light-filled spaces	Maximize natural daylight as much as possible in all spaces.
Provide clear circulation paths	Provide barrier-free, visual transparency and wider-than-usual corridors where appropriate

Refer to the following section for tactical interventions to implement according to the spatial program type.