



DESIGN ANALYSIS 7: HEALING ENVIRONMENTS

Functional and Holistic Medical Practices

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(Fig. 1)

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE

"Functional Medicine is a systems biology–based approach that focuses on identifying and addressing the root cause of disease. Each symptom or differential diagnosis may be one of many contributing to an individual's illness."-

Institute of Functional Medicine (IFM, 2018)

When my oldest sister left her lucrative, independent Anaesthesia practice in Buckhead to join the practice of her best friend, an esteemed functional medicine doctor, (also in Atlanta), we were very intrigued. She is always very exacting in her choices, and this was no exception. Betsy (my sister), explained to us all what functional medicine was, and how her approach to the application of the medical process would be an incorporation of her extensive, traditional medical training as well as what she learned from her education in the field of functional medicine. I must admit that I was very apprehensive, having no previous experience with functional, integrative, and holistic medicine. But her explanation and answers to all of our (many) questions, the passion that she has for her practice, and the multitude of successes that her patients have had were enough for me to really embrace the field. I typically gravitate to practices that incorporate these methods for my own health care decisions. (AFM, 2018)



(Fig. 2)

PLANETREE MODEL

When Angelica Thieriot founded Planetree in 1978, she did so because of the gaps in care she saw in the world of medical care. The Planetree model can be applied to many aspects of healthcare, including Acute and Critical care, long-term care, emergency medicine, outpatient care, ambulatory care and community health centers. (Planetree, 2018)

This model incorporates a list of components designed to support patient-centred medical care. The components are

- Human Interaction
- Family, Friends, & Social Support
- Information and Education
- Nutrition and Nurturing Aspects of Food
- Architectural and Interior Design
- Arts and Entertainment
- Spirituality
- Human Touch
- Complementary Therapies
- Healthy Communities (Casamassima, 2018)

Since my move to Savannah, Georgia, I've been searching for a functional/integrative medicine practice to establish myself a patient of. I found a practice nearby, Vitality Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine. Their front seating area is calm, inviting, and well designed. I'm appreciative of the various textures that have been incorporated into the furniture & flooring.

The walls are a muted greige (a combination of grey and beige), it is just as clean as any other facility, but what I would call "non-institutional" (It also smells much better.)



(Fig. 3)



HALLWAY AND COMMON AREAS

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- The hallway, although long, is far from stagnant and clinical. The only suggestion I have is a potential grab bar, along one wall.
- The cream-coloured trim-work compliments the muted sage of the walls, however it can seem dull and dirty. I suggest that a paler cream or a warm white be used instead.
- The flooring is non-slip and comfortable under foot. There isn't a lot of change needed there.

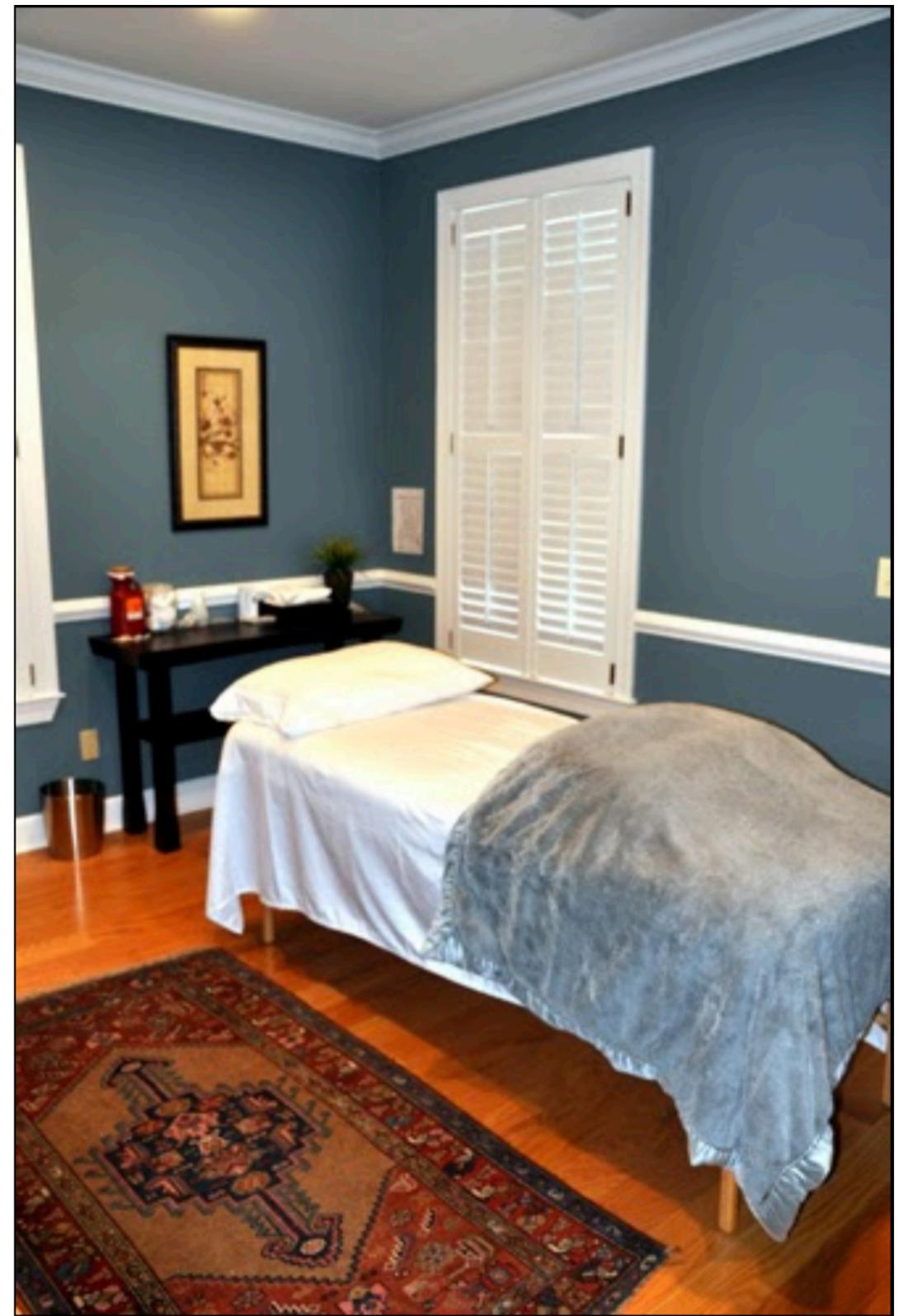
(Fig. 4)



This is a comfortable, non-clinical area for toilets. The incorporation of a small, potted plant is a warm, natural touch. (Fig. 5)



*(Figs.
6 & 7)*

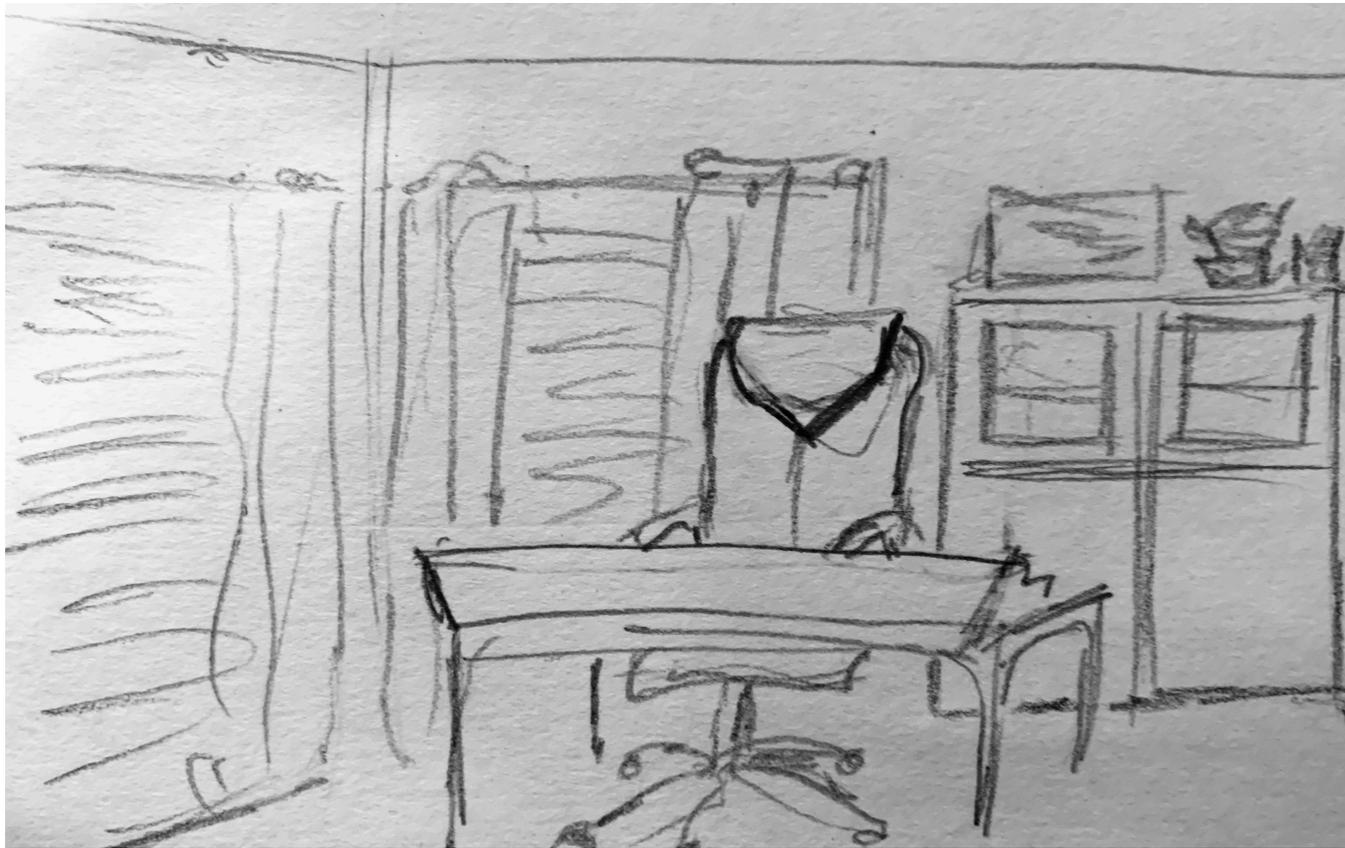


These are areas for acupuncture and therapeutic massage. The rooms are painted a warm, steel blue, and the introduction of this tone of wood flooring with a rug is also a textural change. The table is adequate height for the different services being administered, and the textures are comforting. The artwork, however, is in need of a change. I feel that there needs to be a discussion in the future, regarding the selection of decor for these rooms.



(Figs. 8 & 9)

The only area that I feel is in any way “clinical” is the consultation room. The desk, although very stylish, doesn’t fit the rest of the warm, inviting decor. I suppose that the openness may have been appealing in the selection of it. However the hard edge is distracting and I really (very personal bias here) loathe glass tables and desk-surfaces. All of my years as a teacher and aunt have made me understand the need for wood, stone, or another solid surface. Glass has too much upkeep for finger prints.



(Figs. 10 & 11)

By using a more solid desk, it is less stressful for patients to look at. I did a quick online search to Design Within Reach and found a nice, sleek desk, keeping in line with the colours and textures already in use within the space.

(Admittedly, this is probably only my issue, I just really dislike glass surfaces for tables and desks.)



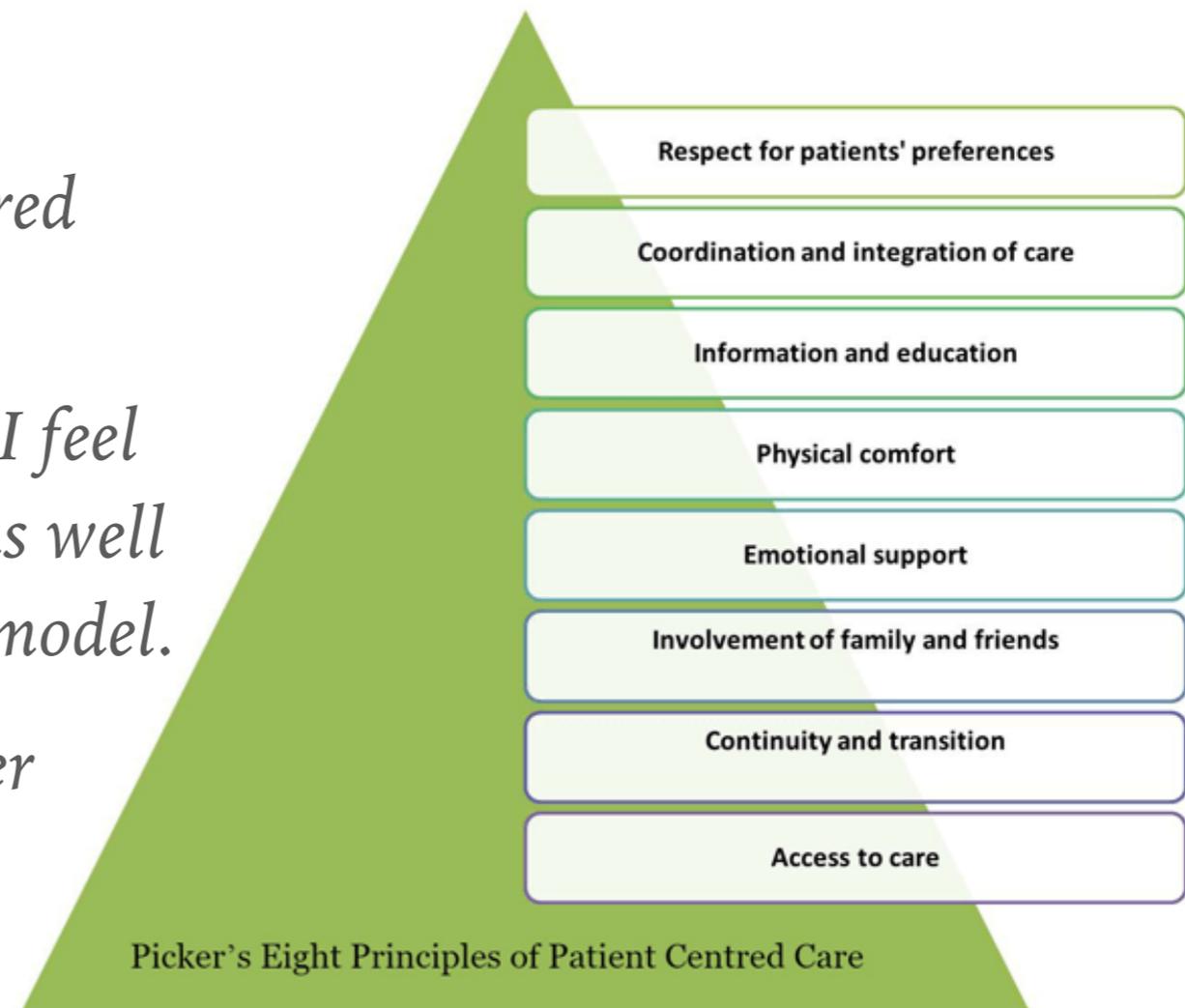
(Fig. 12)

In conclusion, in the US, healthcare is market driven. So, how can we bring about a solid reform to “traditional”, western medicine? My personal opinion is the only way to accomplish this is by talking about our actual preferences for care with the medical practitioners we visit, as well as seeking out care from those type of facilities and practices that treat us the way we expect, with dignity, care, innovation, and amazing, patient-driven design.

I found this while researching Patient Centered Care.

It's called Picker's Eight Principles of PCC. I feel that this encompasses the needs of patients as well as the focuses the approach of the Planetree model.

(Planetree, Inc. is a collaborator of the Picker Institute, Europe.)



(Fig. 13)

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IMAGE CITATIONS BY FIGURE NUMBER

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2. The symbol of Atlanta Functional Medicine created by Kelly Bailey for the use of AFM, Elizabeth Board, MD.
3. Property of Vitality Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine.
4. Property of Vitality Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine.
5. Property of Vitality Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine.
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10. Sketch of proposed revised desk area. By Kelly Bailey
11. http://www.dwr.com/workspace-desks-tables/airia-desk/2197149.html?lang=en_US#lang=en_US&start=8
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