



Interior design psychology

The relationship between people and their surroundings is a curious one. With so much of our time being spent indoors, the space we inhabit can affect our moods and behaviours. Lighting, colour, and even item placement can affect the emotions and behaviours of the occupants, therefore it is important to consider when practising interior design.

Orientation and focus.

It is an important consideration when designing an interior, what the room will be used, the feeling that is wanted from the inhabitants of the room, and where their attention is wanted as it can greatly affect the focus and feel of the space. The orientation of a room dictates the focus and feeling of those who occupy it. Directing someone's focus in a specific direction can have a large impact on how the room is used. If a room is made to keep your attention on one particular thing, then the furnishings of the room might be oriented in its direction. Examples of this are lecture halls and churches. Chairs directed to face a singular direction, limited distracting decor, and a focal point at one end of the room, a screen or speakers stand, all draw attention and make the room more of a working and learning environment and in, certain circumstances, a more formal space. Though this is the case in most instances, informal focus spaces, such as cinemas and theatres, are also commonplace as they encourage focus on the subject of interest and minimal distraction for those choosing to be there. Contradictory to that, a room designed with the intention of relaxation and informal conversation, a break room or Café, for example, uses seating orientated to face each other, space for movement, and soft lighting to give a sense of calm and comfort. This layout promotes conversation and sharing. Though more commonly used for informal purposes, this technique can be used to produce a conversational, idea sharing space like a business meeting or classroom discussion.

Space and ownership.

The idea of territory is an outdated social concept, in psychology, however, it is still a valid and important point of thought. Our relationship with space can directly impact our behaviours and the use of said space. It is often found that the more people occupying the space, the less we feel ownership over it and the more negatively we feel toward the space and the people inside it. This can cause issues in working and learning spaces as being their insights negative emotions and a disassociation with the environment. We have seen this become a notable issue in the post-covid era we find ourselves in. The effects, mentally, of working from your own home, your personal and comfortable space, have left many anxious and uncomfortable returning to a work or school environment. We have been in control of our little world, working with our comforts and privacy and now many of us no longer wish to return to those professional environments. A common workaround for this, in the example of office or school environments, is the allocation of a desk or workspace. While not a new concept, this gives individuals a feeling of ownership over a small, isolated, space that we can decorate with personal items to make us more comfortable while spending time in the environment. Many companies have combined this with allowing many staff to work from home and in-office on varying days, allowing staff to return to the normality of office work at their own pace.