

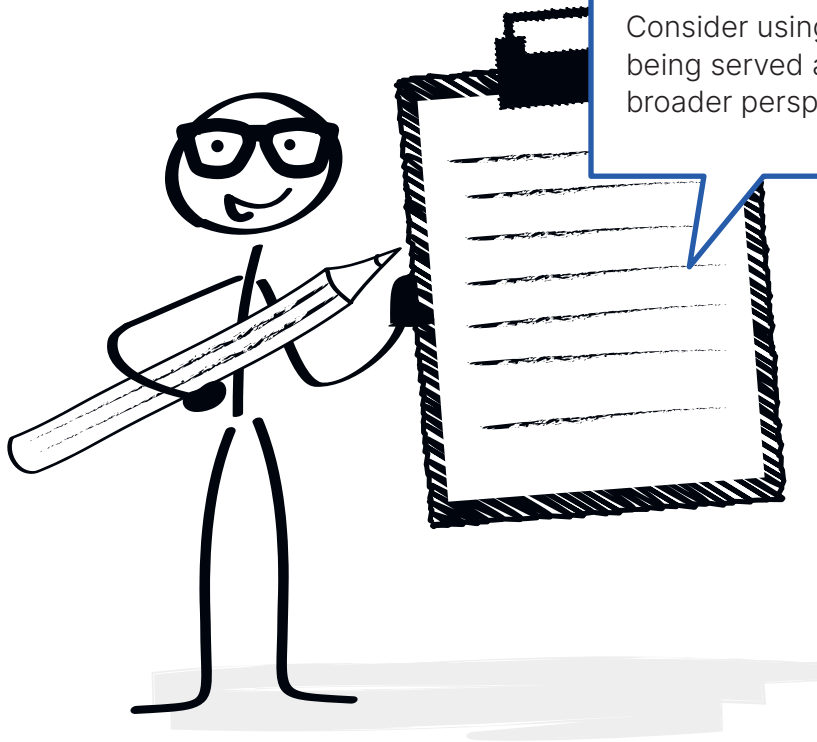
Physical Environment Assessment Tool

This tool is intended to be used as a self-assessment of your organization's clinic environment. It begins with large-scale environmental considerations such as public spaces (e.g. waiting rooms and hallways) and private spaces (e.g. exam rooms and bathrooms). Then, the tool moves into more specific small-scale environmental considerations that, when approached tactfully, can create an enhanced experience in the overall look and feel of the clinic environment.

Throughout this tool, you will answer questions about what you see, hear, smell, feel, and experience. Use the space in the far right column to make note of contextual information, thoughts, and ideas for improvement.

This tool was developed based on the major concepts of patient-centered healthcare design with influence from adolescents themselves.

Consider using this tool with adolescents being served at your organization for a broader perspective on the environment!



Large-Scale Environmental Considerations

1. Public spaces (such as waiting rooms or hallways)

Managing the patient experience by curating sight, sounds, smells, and touch can be beneficial for improving the patient experience.

NOISE MANAGEMENT	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
What do you hear? (Noises, music, television, white noise, etc.)	
Is the space too loud?	
Is the space too quiet? (Can someone hear private conversations?)	
Would adding sound machines or music be beneficial?	
Would adding sound machines or music be beneficial?	

THERMAL COMFORT	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Is the space too hot or cold?	
Do you have an option to sit in the sun or a shaded area?	
Do you have an option to sit away from direct air vents?	

OLFACTORY COMFORT

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Are there any smells? Are they overpowering?	
If an air freshener is being used, is it hypoallergenic?	

VISUAL APPEAL

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Does the space look clean?	
Does the space look welcoming?	
Are there comfortable and diverse seating options?	
Are there ties to nature? A window, artwork, or indoor plants?	

2. Private spaces (such as exam rooms)

Patients often spend minutes alone in a patient room, waiting for their providers. Consider creating and posting a QR code that links patients to an online repository of resources they can access from their phones (while waiting in the exam room or after they have left the clinic).

VISUAL APPEAL	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Are the rooms clean?	
Are there intimidating technologies or examination items on display?	
Is the space too quiet? (Can someone hear private conversations?)	
Are there educational materials or interactive devices in clear sight? <i>Be careful to not over-decorate with information-rich content; this can be overwhelming, and clutter may increase patient anxiety.</i>	
How many informational items are within your sightline? (Include brochures, posters, flyers, QR codes...)	
What colors are used? (Natural colors like blues and greens help calm patients)	

NOISE MANAGEMENT

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Can you hear people in the adjoining rooms or hallways?	
Is the space too loud?	
Is the space too quiet? (Can someone hear private conversations?)	
Would adding sound machines or music be beneficial?	
Would adding sound machines or music be beneficial?	

3. Bathrooms

When possible, bathrooms that are gender neutral or multi-gender friendly help many patients feel more comfortable. They also assist with decreasing wait times and provide increased privacy for the patient.

NOISE MANAGEMENT	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
What noises do you hear outside?	
Does it feel private?	

OLFACTORY COMFORT	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
If an air freshener is being used or provided, is it hypoallergenic?	

VISUAL APPEAL	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Is the bathroom clean?	
Are there multiple stalls with ADA accessibility?	
Are there multiple sinks?	
Is there a mirror?	

HIDDEN SERVICES

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
<p>Are any additional resources available in the privacy of the bathroom/stalls?</p> <p><i>Bathrooms are opportunities to provide hidden services such as anonymous question submission and advertisements for local programs and resources. Some clinics have even created a sample labeling system for patients to confidentially notify providers they are in a dangerous situation (e.g., Clinics provide black and red sharpies to self-label urine samples; the red sharpie is used if the patient is experiencing violence or danger at home).</i></p>	

Small-Scale Environmental Considerations

These questions may apply to public spaces (e.g., waiting rooms), private spaces (e.g., exam rooms), and bathrooms. Consider the application of each in the various spaces of your clinic.

ACCESSIBILITY	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Is appointment/policy-related information provided in both auditory and visual formats for visitors with hearing or visual disabilities?	
Is seating offered at a variety of heights? <i>If not, consider keeping extra seating cushions on hand to boost seat height.</i>	
Is the check-in desk wheelchair accessible? How about the tables in the space?	
Are the patient walkways free of trip hazards and wide enough for patients with mobility assistive devices to comfortably move through the space?	

AUDITORY & VISUAL

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
<p>What kind of music or auditory stimulus is being played?</p> <p><i>Music should be free of profanity but could be pop-culture oriented to appeal to adolescents.</i></p>	
<p>Are videos played on screens offered in multiple languages? Be considerate of your patient population.</p> <p><i>Patients may spend 10-minutes or less in the waiting area; videos should be short.</i></p>	
<p>Do you use closed-captioning to make messages accessible to patients who are deaf or hard of hearing?</p>	
<p>Are posters displayed in the space colorful and easy to read?</p> <p><i>Posters should include non-discrimination postings and confidentiality policies.</i></p>	
<p>How is the artwork representative, inclusive, and adolescent-inspired?</p>	

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Are materials available in a take-home (or mobile) format for the adolescents to access outside the clinic?	
Are accessible educational materials available for patients with disabilities?	

PAINT & ARTWORK

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
What color is the room? <i>Natural colors evoke calmness; try to avoid red and dark colors.</i>	
Do any walls, rooms, or ceilings need to be repainted?	
Is there any local artwork present? (Murals, canvases, posters, sculptures, etc.)	

NATURAL FEATURES (BIOPHILIA)

Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Does the space have any water features? (An indoor waterfall, fish tank, video of a babbling brook, etc.)	
Does the space have any biophilia? (Desk plant, window to nature, plant wall, etc.)	
Does the space have any ties to nature? (Nature-related artwork, natural materials used, windows to the outdoors, etc.)	



Biophilia

As a concept: the innate human tendency to interact or be closely associated with other forms of life in nature.

In practice: including nature- and naturally-inspired items in design (plants, waterfalls, etc.)

Exposure to water and plants is beneficial for stress reduction and can reduce anxiety. Water features may also provide white noise, improving perceptions of privacy. When plants and water features are not available, consider artwork and color palettes that mimic natural scenes.

LIGHTING	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Is there natural light in the space?	
<p>Does artificial light used mimic natural light?</p> <p><i>5000-6000 Kelvin can be a natural substitute for daylight (check light boxes).</i></p>	
Does the space have any “fun” lighting? (Lava lamp, skylight, floor lamp, etc.)	

FURNISHINGS	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Are furnishings (seating options) comfortable?	
Are furnishings free of stains and tears?	
Is task lighting provided for patients to read or work while they wait?	
Are personal thermal comfort devices, such as movable fans, provided?	

ENTERTAINMENT	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
Are WiFi passcodes easily accessible and posted in the waiting room?	
<p>Are phone charging stations present?</p> <p><i>This may help patients use their phone during and after appointments (to call a ride-share, contact family or friends, browse media, scan QR codes, etc.).</i></p>	

PROVIDERS	
Questions	Notes, thoughts, and ideas
<p>Are adolescents able to <u>confidentially</u> contact their providers before or after their appointment?</p> <p><i>For example, texting abilities could make adolescents more comfortable asking questions and engaging in the healthcare process.</i></p> <p><i>This differs from submitting a question through platforms like MyChart (which is often accessible by parents/guardians).</i></p>	