ENVIRONMENT
WAITING ROOM
BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD. —Gandhi
Think about a waiting room from the visitor’s perspective. By name, it’s a room for waiting. But by function it’s much more than that. For some visitors it’s a worrying room. To others, a gathering room. It can be a consulting room, a meeting room or a planning room. And to the youngest of us, it’s a playroom.

The waiting room must, by design, accommodate all. It needs to allow for the most private of conversations, while providing comfort at the most vulnerable points in a person’s life. The waiting room is almost always the beginning of the healthcare experience. As such, it is essential that this environment must be carefully thought through. And like every environment, consider the user first.
UNDERSTAND

How do you come to understand the needs of waiting room visitors? Our researchers are people who have experienced waiting rooms as patients, partners in care and through the eyes and ears of caregivers. They focus on ethnographic research to understand how people use a waiting room. Observation is the beginning. Observation is key. Take Joe, for example, whose wife just had breast cancer surgery. This is his story.

\[ \text{The largest change often begins with the smallest, simplest observation.} \]

“At first I was all alone in the waiting room, reading the paper, trying to keep an eye out for any information. As my kids and their little ones joined me, we pushed and pulled chairs around to try and keep us all together while we waited. And waited and waited. Nurses came and went and there was no word. Finally, late that day, the doctor came and gave us an update. He announced to what seemed like everyone in the waiting room that she was having complications. Because the kids were running around I couldn’t concentrate on the doctor’s words so I didn’t understand all he was saying. I felt like the whole situation was out of control.”

Accounts like Joe’s, and hundreds of others, aid in our attempt to understand the expectations placed on the waiting room. More importantly, these stories further the understanding of the user’s needs within their environment.

ACCESS

\[ \text{Visitors huddled around a single electric outlet to charge their phones and laptops. No areas for internet access.} \]

COMMUNICATION

\[ \text{Visitors continually checked with the nurse’s station inquiring if they were next or asking if their loved one was okay.} \]
OBSERVE

SEEN THROUGH THE RESEARCHER’S PERSPECTIVE.

ACCOMMODATION

Saw diverse users from young families to elderly couples. Other than a couch, there were no options for bariatric visitors.

COMFORT

People continue to rearrange furniture to create personal/private space. Visitors had nothing else to do other than wait. No art or windows with views to soften environment.

DIVERSITY

Saw many different kinds of waiting from short-term to several hours in many different locations (hallways, cafes, etc.) with multiple family members.

COMFORT

No area nearby for private conversations/counseling. Caregiver conversations were done in the open with strangers near and able to listen.

PRIVACY

No area nearby for private conversations/counseling. Caregiver conversations were done in the open with strangers near and able to listen.

ACCOMMODATION

Saw diverse users from young families to elderly couples. Other than a couch, there were no options for bariatric visitors.
SYNTHESIZE

PROCESS
After returning from the field, researchers and designers work together to turn observations into insights. Insights to ideas. And ideas to reality.

COMMUNICATION
Private, more intimate spaces promote one of the most productive activities in a waiting room—communication.
CONTROL
Options like Internet access offer visitors control of their time, access to information, education and the comfort of email communication with family and friends.

STRESS REDUCTION
Soft space diversions, warm color tones, ambient lighting, soothing art and windows with “green” views all help reduce stress and anxiety.

COMFORT
Hospitality stations with bottled water, coffee and other refreshments help visitors feel more at home and stay closer to loved ones.

FLEXIBILITY
To accommodate people of all sizes, shapes and reasons for waiting, a greater variety in seating options and greater flexibility in seating arrangements is needed.
PROTOTYPE

Let's build it. Creating a waiting room that accommodates the different kinds of waiting and different kinds of people must, at some point, go from ideas to paper to prototype. And this is that point. Together, we build the space and put it to work in a real world setting. Then take a close look at how specific users interact with the environment and how specific product solutions can bridge the gap between needs and wants.

A waiting room needs:

• Privacy in a public space
• Flexibility to accommodate different types of waiting and users
• To provide comfort in uncomfortable situations
• To support learning and education within the boundaries of the space

PARTNER IN CARE

How does a partner in care use the space? Does it provide them with comfort? Does it offer them privacy? Does it actively help them to pass the time?

In a waiting environment, partners in care need:

• To have clear sightlines to the caregiver’s station for visual cues
• To actively educate themselves and communicate with the outside world
• A place to call home while waiting for news or loved ones

NEIGHBOR™

Taking into account the user’s needs as well as the needs of the environment, researchers and designers together imagined Neighbor. The Neighbor Collection’s high back allows for private conversations in a public space. With multiple configurations, The Neighbor Collection can be used to create a comfortable “room within a room” allowing for families to circle the wagons to be close.
When so much is invested into an effort, it is natural to want to make sure that what you are doing is working. That’s why evidence-based design is taking a front-and-center position in almost everything we do. And as its role evolves, so does the concept of measurement.

Our toolkit of qualitative and quantitative approaches include the disciplines of anthropology, environmental psychology and sociology. Measurement happens in natural work settings, simulation exercises and controlled randomized trials. We use surveys, interviews, behavioral and workflow analyses, time-motion studies and productivity studies.

No matter the approach, we are drawing from – and adding to – a wealth of valuable knowledge. And we’re continuing to work towards environments that best promote healing.

In a waiting room, consider:

- Wait time
- User satisfaction: communication, comfort, amenities
- Infection control
- Different types of users/waiting
PLANNING IDEAS

From research to realization, it's time to create. Here are a few planning ideas, thought starters and plans to inspire your next project.

PRODUCTS FEATURED
Dune™ Table
Loria™ Lounge Seating

PRODUCTS FEATURED
Amaris™ Seating
Await™ Bench
Kami™ Single Chair
Mitra™ Tables
PRODUCTS FEATURED
Exchange™ Table
Opus™ Casegoods
Sieste® Seating
Think® Stool

PRODUCTS FEATURED
Mitra Tables
R2® 5100 Series Seating
PLANNING IDEAS

PRODUCTS FEATURED
Enea™ Café Table
Enea Stools
Fusion Architectural Panels
Groupwork® Café Tables
Jenny® Lounge Chairs
Mingle™ Guest Chairs
Opus Casegoods
Think Task Chair

PRODUCTS FEATURED
Custom Whiteboard with Imaging
Outlook Sequoia™ Seating with Glider
Outlook Sequoia Tables
Ripple™ Benches
PRODUCTS FEATURED
- Fusion Architectural Panels
- Mitra Drum Tables
- Mitra Seating

PRODUCTS FEATURED
- Crew™ Guest Chairs
- CopyCam® Image Capturing System
- Opus Casegoods
- RoomWizard™ Scheduling System
PLANNING IDEAS

PRODUCTS FEATURED
Asana™ Lounge Seating
Brook™ Seating
Dune Tables
Groupwork Table
Mingle Seating
Opus Casegoods
Rave™ Seating

PRODUCTS FEATURED
Mitra Drum Table
Montage® Caregiver Station
Neighbor Seating
Sorrel™ Single Chair
PRODUCTS FEATURED
- Circa™ Seating
- Custom Silk-Screen Whiteboard
- Dune Tables
- Groupwork Table
- Neighbor Seating
- R2® 5000 Series Seating

PRODUCTS FEATURED
- Dune Table
- Jenny Seating
- Soft Leaf®
- Sieste Seating
THE 30-YEAR PLAN

Think back 30 years. Many of the healthcare facilities in this country were built even longer ago – in the fifties and sixties. And many of these facilities haven’t changed. Even though much about healthcare and the way it’s delivered has.

So here we stand, once again trying to predict a future of healthcare 30 years from now. Not only do we need to predict this uncharted territory, we need to plan for it. Mentally, physically and spatially. Growth and change are inevitable. And there are no crystal balls. So this anticipated change demands flexibility.

While we know we can never predict the future, we understand the need to create spaces that enable ways of healing that are flexible, and anticipate growth and change over time. This is not only to achieve caregiver’s efficiency, but to manage the experience of patients and partners in care.

Our goals are not unattainable. Or outlandish. They are to improve on the intangibles. To improve the delivery of care. And at the heart of all of this, to promote healing and help patients get better faster.

This is why we do it. And we know this is why you do it too. Together we can make the difference today, tomorrow and for the next generations.

Let’s take this opportunity together and make the most of it.
THERE'S POWER IN NUMBERS

Nurture would like to thank our many partners for their continued dedication to promoting healthy environments. A special thanks to design collaboratives such as the Center for Healthcare Design and Planetree, technology partners like Cerner and patient-centered design firms across the nation. These are the strong connections that continue to change healthcare for good.