

SAGA NILSSON

HEALING SPACES

- How can architecture help in the recovery from eating disorders?



HEALTHCARE

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The environment in which we spend our time while sick has been proven to have an effect on how fast we recover. Since our surroundings affect us, the spaces in which we heal deserves extra attention. Yet hospital-environments are very rarely seen as something positive or nice. Function and hygiene is prioritized, and the result often is sterile, unwelcoming spaces. This is true even when the need for sterility is lower, for example while treating mental health issues.

This study investigates how architecture could support recovery for people struggling with eating disorders. The study has been conducted through literature studies and an interview with Stina Claesson, responsible for the eating disorder unit in Borås. A question about safe spaces for people with eating disorders was also posted online, to get some input from the user group. The results of these theoretic studies were then implemented on a design proposal for a new type of facility, where the activities currently taking place in hospital-environments could take place instead.

The resulting design proposal is a building with a focus on materiality and tactility, with an emphasis on a connection to nature

as well as a warm and safe atmosphere. Elements such as a café and a lecture space are also proposed to remove some of the stigma surrounding eating disorders, and to invite and educate the public.

A facility like the one proposed could also contribute to the greater society by ensuring that everyone has access to education about mental health, as well as access to a safe space, regardless of school or other social factors.

During the Corona-epidemic, mental health has become an issue for many people. Worst off are the people already struggling with mental health issues, who risk a worsening of their condition due to factors such as isolation or stress. This is why it's more important than ever to put an emphasis on the environments where we tend to our mental health. The lessons learned in this thesis can hopefully be implemented outside of this study's focus.

Keywords : Healing architecture, Eating disorders, Mental health, Biophilic design, Healthcare architecture