From Cast-out to Community: Identifying Barriers in Design that Keep LGBTQ+ Youth from Accessing Homeless Shelters

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From Cast-out to Community: Identifying Barriers in Design that Keep LGBTQ+ Youth from Accessing Homeless Shelters

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Thesis, M.Arch Candidate 2019

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There is a gap in homeless youth services in the United States. A vulnerable population, LGBTQ+ individuals comprise nearly 40% of all homeless youth and are particularly susceptible to repeated victimization, trauma, and violence from their community. Current shelters re-traumatize and fail to address the needs of this unique population triggering an extreme aversion to the institutional design aesthetic that many of these services inhabit. LGBTQ+ youth enter a cycle of homelessness and disengagement that perpetuates into adulthood as a result. Why do existing shelters fail to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ homeless youth?

Utilizing a series of diverse theories including the Trauma Informed Care model (TIC), architectural theory, case studies, and psychological theory, five domains for why homeless youth shelters fail LGBTQ+ youth are identified and expanded upon. From this an architectural program comprising a kit of parts is created to guide future design of homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelters to resolve identified issues. The success or failure of the implementation of the design guidelines will be measured through the creation of an assessment tool. Titled the Empathy Through Design Assessment Tool, it will be refined through being used on an LGBTQ+ friendly youth shelter before then being applied to half a dozen other youth shelters to see how many incorporates these design guidelines.
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Terminology:

Aesthetic - Refers to the attractiveness and perceived value of a physical space. Oftentimes institutional architecture is considered a negative aesthetic that actively pushes homeless individuals from seeking services to previous traumas.

Choice - Refers to the ability of a homeless LGBTQ+ youth to affect change not only in their own life but in the world around them. Similar to autonomy.

Chosen Family - a group of individuals who deliberately chose one another to play an important role in their life.¹

Community - Refers to the social fabric as well as physical spaces that allow LGBTQ+ youth to find social and emotional support among peers and guardians.

Emergency - Generally organized into dormitory style wards comprised of individual sexes for those without the ability to pay for housing.²

Empathy - A tool comprised in this thesis directed towards identifying barriers in homeless youth shelters and correcting them through a kit of design parts influences by (ETD) Assessment research into 5 primary domains.

Empowerment - Refers to the ability to apply skills towards a task. In the broader LGBTQ+ homeless youth context, it influences how confident one feels in themselves. Many homeless LGBTQ+ youth report feeling the opposite of competency due to prolonged trauma.³ Similar to competency.

Homeless - Anyone who lacks permanent or fixed housing who lives in a place not meant for habitation or in shelters for less than 90 days.⁴

Homeless Youth - Those youth who lack a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence.⁵ New York State defines anyone homeless under the age of 25 as in this category.⁶

⁶ Meghan Henry, Rian Watt, Lily Rosenthal, and Azim Shivji. Housing and Urban Development. Estimates by
Identity - Refers to how an LGBTQ+ person sees themselves. Issues with how youth services see and potentially reject identity causes considerable issues with LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

Intersectionality - When an individual has multiple defining characteristics that overlap and potentially exclude them from a group.7

LGBTQ+ - Acronym whose letters stand for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Queer. LGB refers to sexual orientation and same sex attraction. TQ refers to gender identity when a person’s self expression does not match the gender they were assigned at birth. The Acronym is often seen with fewer or more letters (IAA2S) depending on use. I = intersex, A = asexual or androgynous, and 2S = 2 spirit, a term used among some Native American groups.8

Resident - Name for a homeless youth living in a shelter and utilizing the services provided. Also referred to as Client, Guest, Consumer. Note, there is some debate on what the correct term to refer to an individual seeking services (in large part due to connotations behind certain words) and as a result different service providers adopt different terms.

Runaway Youth - Youth who have left the home without a parent’s permission for 1 or more days.9

Street Youth - Youth who have spent at least some time living on the streets without a parent.10

Systems Youth - Youth who become homeless after aging out of foster care or exit juvenile justice system.11

Traditional Shelter - A homeless youth shelter not designed with the specific needs of the LGBTQ+ youth population in mind.

Transitional - From dormitory style wards to single room occupancy, housing arrangements where some/all of the cost is covered and residents receive services. Can also be referred to as transitional housing.12

Trauma-Informed– A program, organization, or system that realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery. Seeks a path that actively resists re-traumatization. Five major components of TIC are safety, choice,
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Trauma-Informed Design (TID)</td>
<td>A concept gaining momentum as architects and interior designers work to integrate principles of trauma-informed care into design. The goal is to create welcoming spaces that feel safe and provide some degree of privacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Throwaway Youth</td>
<td>Youth who have been asked, told, or forced to leave home by parents or caregivers with no alternatives provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Design (UD)</td>
<td>Framework that promotes environments that “may be accessed, used, understood, and used, without need for adaptation, modification, or assistance.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>The period between childhood and adulthood. Within the context of this thesis, youth will be defined between the ages of 10-24. 24 is chosen as it represents when the brain has finished developing.</td>
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15 Runaway and Homeless Youth – Federal Definitions. Youth.gov

Introduction

For most people the self is a fragile and vulnerable entity; we wish therefore to envelop ourselves in a symbol-for-self which is familiar, solid, inviolate, unchanging. (Cooper, 1971, 45.)

Architecture energetically reflects societal aspirations, values, and attitudes. Rarely is the same intensity directed towards those who inhabit the interstitial spaces, the homeless who reside within an architecture defined by poverty. Those who may most benefit from good design are those most removed from it.

A homeless person as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is anyone who lacks permanent or fixed housing who lives in a place not meant for habitation or in shelters for less than 90 days. A particularly vulnerable part of the population is unaccompanied homeless youth who New York State defines as those below the age of 25. In the U.S. roughly 550,000 youth under the age of 24 will be homeless for longer than a week. Between 35-40% of these homeless youth self identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or gender queer (LGBTQ+).

While lesbian, gay, and bisexual denote sexual orientation, transgender and gender queer denote a gender identity different than what was assigned at birth. Despite a growing body of scientific and medical research supporting LGBTQ+ identities, a lingering stigma leads to discrimination in society and

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18 Sam Davis. Designing for the Homeless. [Pg. 23]
19 Housing and Urban Development. Expanding Opportunities. [Pg. 1]
20 Meghan Henry, Estimates of Chronically Homeless [Pg. 1]
a disproportionate representation among homeless youth.\textsuperscript{23} Homeless LGBTQ+ youth report high levels of external threats, violence, and hostility from their family and community. The fear of losing their home combined with these other traumas often lead to anxiety, depression, and hopelessness.\textsuperscript{24}

The traumas experienced by LGBTQ+ youth at home often perpetuate in the very homeless youth services designed to help them.\textsuperscript{25} Roughly 50\% of LGBTQ+ youth in shelters reported being physically assaulted because of their identity.\textsuperscript{26} Discrimination and hostile attitudes towards LGBTQ+ youth are not uncommon due in part to a majority of social workers receiving no training on how to help this unique population.\textsuperscript{27} In addition, the majority of religious based groups (who comprise roughly 60\% of all services) deny service if the youth’s LGBTQ+ status is revealed perpetuating a cycle of rejection.\textsuperscript{28}

Because of the perpetuation of traumas, homeless LGBTQ+ youth develop a strong aversion to accessing services and associate the often utilitarian and institutional architecture with the trauma. As a result a cycle of victimization and homelessness perpetuates into adulthood.

Breaking the cycle requires designing a space informed by the traumas LGBTQ+ youth have experienced. Programmatic design oriented towards a sense of community and free expression of identity is required to build and strengthen resiliency among those being helped. The space itself must be as Clare


\textsuperscript{26} Ernst Hunter. What’s Good for the Gays is Good for the Gander: Making Homeless Youth Housing Safer for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth. [Pg. 46, 543-557]


\textsuperscript{28} Ernst Hunter. What’s Good for the Gays is Good for the Gander: [46, 543-557]
Cooper wrote a ‘symbol-for-self’ where the worth of the individual is reflected by the energy of architectural design that surrounds them. This requires a new approach to homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

An approach that holds a lot of potential is the Trauma Informed Care (TIC) model. TIC is an applied version of psychological theories in the human service field that assumes individuals have a history of trauma. TIC identifies re-traumatization (when a situation or environment resembles an individual’s trauma) both intentionally and unintentionally as a major impediment to accessing resources and healing. The five principles of trauma informed care according to TIC are safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment. All of these are critical requirements to homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

Trauma-informed design (TID) is a concept that is gaining in popularity among architects where principles of TIC are incorporated into design to make spaces more welcoming, safer, and easier to access. Elements of TID have been examined when it comes to adult homelessness. In addition, elements of TIC have been used for children services. For example, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) advocacy group has created several assessment forms based on TIC that places like homeless youth shelters can use to improve how welcoming they are of LGBTQ+ youth. Another group, True Colors United, released a 2019 study titled ‘At The Intersections’ representing a collaboration of dozens of services that work on the behalf of LGBTQ+ youth and highlighting the experiences and suggestions for improvement from formerly homeless LGBTQ+ youth. Where TID has been examined for adult homelessness and TIC examined for youth services, trauma informed design for homeless LGBTQ+ youth has yet to be studied.

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32 The Trauma Informed Organizational Assessment. Ace Connections (Accessed on November 4th, 2019.)
33 At the Intersections. A collaborative Resource on LGBTQ Youth Homelessness 2019. [Pg. 8]
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Trauma Informed-Design can be combined with Self-Determination Theory, architectural theory, LGBTQ+ community centers, and precedent shelters to organize an architectural program comprising a kit of parts that identify and resolve these issues into 5 principle categories. These principle categories include community, empowerment, choice, aesthetics, and identity. Finally, a self-assessment of the success of homeless shelters in promoting LGBTQ+ youth services can be measured using a self-assessment tool inspired by TIC. The tool can be refined by examining how effectively it encapsulates traditional and LGBTQ+ friendly youth shelters using the design considerations listed.

Problem Statement

The problems are that LGBTQ+ homeless youth lack a community space helpful to recovery and growth (the need for community), that existing homeless youth shelters do not prioritize respectful/professional boundaries and skill building (the need for empowerment), that there is the removal of privacy and self-direction spatially and programmatically that inhibits growth (the need for choice), that gendered methods of programmatic design coupled with a disregard of interpersonal boundaries actively harm LGBTQ+ youth and decrease their likelihood of engagement (the need for identity), and that the institutional aesthetics of traditional shelters can perpetuate disengagement and a feeling of not being safe (the need for aesthetic).

By identifying why these elements are critical to the success of LGBTQ+ homeless youth, design guidelines comprising a kit of parts are assembled to aid service providers when creating these spaces in the future. In addition, an assessment tool (titled Empathy Through Design) is created to evaluate how effectively homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelters meet the needs of its residents.
Literature Review

Formation of the Five Domains

Five domains provide structure to an architectural program comprising a kit of parts. The formation of these five domains comes from collecting and combining information from five distinct sources whose research touch on the lives of homeless LGBTQ+ youth. The five sources include the Trauma Informed Care model who specializes in what traumatized children need, the LGBTQ+ community whose research specializes in what this minority population needs, the Self-Determination Theory in Humanistic Psychology that specializes in what motivates people to seek resources and grow, architectural theory which specializes in the needs for the spaces we inhabit, and precedent research into existing youth shelters which highlights the success and failures of practically applying theories into the real world.

![Diagram of Resources](image)

Figure 1. Sources of Information on Informing Why There Are Issues With Existing Youth Shelters

The first source of information comes from the Trauma Informed Care (TIC) model. TIC is an applied version of psychological theories in the human service field that assumes individuals have a history of trauma. TIC identifies re-traumatization (when a situation or environment resembles an individual’s trauma) both intentionally and unintentionally as a major impediment to accessing resources.

35 What Is Trauma Informed Care? University of Buffalo, Buffalo Center for Social Research.
and healing. The five principles of trauma informed care according to TIC are safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment. The theory supports through research and case studies that satisfying these five requirements can dramatically improve resiliency to future trauma.

The second source of information comes from LGBTQ+ community centers and the services they have provided in response to the needs of the community. Common themes among community centers include an importance of history and identity, a need for creative self-expression, and the desire to have a community space where people can gather. LGBTQ+ community centers have gone the furthest in creating a recognizable aesthetic and iconography that homeless LGBTQ+ youth may identify with. Incorporating elements of the community center into shelter design may help to foster a sense of relatedness and growth for individuals who have been marginalized.

The third source of information comes from Self-Determination Theory (SDT). A branch of humanistic psychology, SDT asserts that all individuals are intrinsically motivated to seek autonomy, relatedness, and competency as a means of growing and healing. Relatedness is the human need to interact and feel connected to others as well as experience caring from other people. Autonomy is the urge to be in control over one’s own life. Competency is how individuals eek control over the outcome and experience mastery. Promoting the ability of homeless LGBTQ+ youth to fulfill these needs will improve their desire to seek change and grow out of the cycle of homelessness.

The fourth source of information comes from the theory of architecture. While all design considerations included incorporate some aspect of architectural theory combined with cultural context, the three objectives of architecture listed by Marcus Vitruvius Pollio in the 1st century BCE is of particular note in its application towards homeless shelters. Vitruvius argues that all buildings should have three attributes consisting of firmitas (structure), utilitas (program), and venustas (delight).

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38 Sam Davis. *Designing for the Homeless*. [Pg. 111]
Historically, emergency and shelter housing has prioritized durability and structure well above delight or beauty. The institutional aesthetic that defines so many of the traditional shelters has been associated with a lack of beauty often combined with the lack of care or importance. Focusing on venustas can mean inspiring through architecture and creating a place of value far removed from architecture of poverty that haunts so many of these locations.

The fifth source of information comes from precedent research into existing homeless youth shelters. Three repeated elements of poor shelter design included a lack of privacy for residents in the shelter, an overly institutional feel that repulsed people from engaging in the services offered by the shelter, and an overall lack of safety when inside the shelter. The lessons learned from more than a dozen shelters incorporate into the research creating some guidelines for what may work and what has already been attempted. Focusing on precedent research can go a long way to making shelters more inviting.

Each source of information highlights the needs of LGBTQ+ homeless youth as well as why existing systems currently fail them. As there is overlap between each of the sources, themes from each can be combined into five domains. These five domains will guide research and solutions as they attempt to shine light on the primary reasons why youth shelters fall short in assisting LGBTQ+ youth. The five domains are the need for community, the need for empowerment, the need for choice, the need for identity, and the need for aesthetics.

**Resources**

1. The Trauma Informed Care Model (TIC)
2. LGBTQ+ Community Research
3. Self-Determination Theory
4. Architectural Theory
5. Precedent Research

Figure 2. How the 5 sources of information form 5 domains in which to organize information.
The Need For Community

Community provides the social fabric and physical space for a person to succeed. The primary reason why LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately represented among homeless youth is because their community exposes them to greater risk of physical and mental trauma due to rejection as well as threats and physical violence. The harmful affects are compounded by a loss of community and sense of place. The stigma of being LGBTQ+ perpetuates a cycle of neglect. Many youths have experienced housing insecurity before being homeless along with challenges developing healthy attachment strategies and coping mechanisms with parents. Because of this, homeless youth in need will not seek out existing services that threaten their identity and sense of self. These experiences make it hard to be a part of a community needed to thrive.

Social psychology and Peplau’s Theory of Interpersonal Relationships emphasize the importance of community for the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ homeless youth. Looking at the relationship between nurses and patients, Peplau found that the health and recovery of the patient was tied to their relationship to the nurse and wider community. The more a patient felt integrated into the social dynamic surrounding them, the better their recovery. Community is the bedrock of support and stability providing an outlet for emotion and means of healing and recovery. Establishing a community is critically important for LGBTQ+ youth who are traumatically removed from their existing family/community and in need of healing.

Existing homeless youth shelters fail in large to provide LGBTQ+ youth with a sense of community. For example, a recent study looking at social workers found negative attitudes and hostility towards LGBTQ+ homeless youth with one in four indicating they received no training on how to help this unique population. As homeless LGBTQ+ youth have already dealt with the pain of rejection, they

39 Laura E Durso, Serving Our Youth. [Pg. 4-5]
40 Sam Davis. Designing for the Homeless. [Pg. 14-20]
42 Christi E. Bell and Raul A. Salcedo. Designing a Measure: Measuring Social Workers’ Attitudes Towards LGBT
are unlikely to seek resources that are apathetic to challenges they face. The problem is made worse when considering the role religious organizations play in providing shelter services in the United States. A Baylor University research paper found that religious services were responsible for providing more than 60% of the total homeless shelter services in 11 cities. While there are notable exceptions of Christian charities providing services for LGBTQ+ homeless youth, the majority provide services contingent on the youth’s LGBTQ+ identity not being discussed and there are several examples of denial of service when a youth’s LGBTQ+ status was revealed. An additional study revealed that roughly 50% of LGBTQ+ youth in shelters reported being assaulted because of their identity. Finally, both government forms of funding for youth shelters (The Runaway Youth Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) do not specify anti-discrimination against LGBTQ+ shelters and at current no government funds, federal policies or programs are directed to meet the needs or protect homeless LGBTQ+ youth. As a result, existing youth shelters not only do not provide a sense of community, but instead perpetuate a state of isolation and risk increased harm towards LGBTQ+ youth staying at such a location.

Historically in the United States, LGBT community centers have served as places for community building and well as for youth desperate for a place to call home. While beneficial, LGBT community centers are few and far between with only 251 spread across 19,519 cities in the US. In addition, while these centers offer a respite, it is not guaranteed that they will have medical, psychological, or general services that LGBTQ+ youth seek.

There is precedent for homeless LGBTQ+ shelters acting as a central point for youth to gather. The Assisted Care and After Care Facility run by the Larkin Street Youth Services in San Francisco,

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Youth in Child Welfare. [Pg 41.]
44 Ernst Hunter. What’s Good for the Gays is Good for the Gander: [Pg. 46, 543-557]
46 David Artavia. How to Find Your Local LGBT Community Center. Pride.
47 CenterLink LGBT Community Center Member Directory. CenterLink, the Community of LGBT Centers.
California is an example where community is incorporated as a part of a healing environment\textsuperscript{48}. Housing for homeless LGBTQ+ youth with HIV and Aids, the facility a lounge, community courtyard, and community kitchen to bring in homeless LGBTQ+ youth and provide assistance. The Larkin Street Youth Service facility also emphasizes through design how critically important it can be for homeless LGBTQ+ youth who have intersecting identities. For example, an individual who identifies as LGBTQ+, who has HIV/Aids, and who is a part of a minority group will have three unique and distinct challenges that can only be served when spaces to gather are created for that person.\textsuperscript{49}

Design considerations for community are focused on not re-traumatizing the residents through careful considerations including decorations, line-of-sight, and choice within a space. In addition, literature on nature and calming colors influences how windows and boundary conditions are treated. Lastly, the definition of community is expanded to include those in an LGBTQ+ youth’s life that typically get overlooked, including pets as well as family that may be attempting mediation.

A sense of community is the most pressing need for LGBTQ+ homeless youth and the first step in bringing individuals off the street and providing services that prevent future cycling into homelessness. As traditional youth shelter services as well as LGBTQ+ communities centers are not guaranteed to provide these critical services, a lack of community is a major reason why homeless LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately represented among homeless youth and why they are less likely to seek services and perpetuate a cycle of homelessness into adulthood.

The Need For Empowerment

Where as community provides the social fabric and physical space, empowerment is about identifying and resolving traumatic experiences in order to facilitate the growth and resiliency LGBTQ+

\textsuperscript{48} Sam Davis. \textit{Designing for the Homeless}. [Pg.117, 118]
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youth will require moving forward with their lives. How empowered a person feels affects how likely they are to engage in activities that will help them grow and feel satisfied. Their perceived ability to seek control over their outcome as well as feel mastery over tasks will help LGBTQ+ youth move health and wellbeing.

Humanistic psychology argues that individuals are driven towards optimal challenges in life. This drive is the bedrock behind why people grow, experiment, and try new things. Competency underlies empowerment and is a gauge that determines how likely we people are to feel like they can succeed at a task. Humanistic psychology goes on to argues that people determine their worth based off of a self-assessment of competency.50 Removing competency, as is often experienced by homeless LGBTQ+ youth who are forced into homelessness, is a massive obstacle on the road to recovery. A loss of competency is often tied to acting out and can increase the chance of criminal behavior and the perpetuation of homelessness.51 Simply put, the more competent a person is, the more empowered and resilient they will be towards new experiences.

Existing homeless shelters fail to offer the services required to help LGBTQ+ youth become empowered. Some services required by LGBTQ+ youth include case management, drug treatment, trauma informed guidance, food, clothing, and sustained safe sleeping arrangements.52 In addition, there are few creative outlets to help LGBTQ+ homeless youth contextualize their experiences and provide opportunities for exploration and growth. Oftentimes the problem has to do with space. Many historic shelters lack the spaces necessary for supportive health/mental health services and do not offer competency-building systems like peer counseling.53

A recent report by True Colors United point to a lack of social services designed to meet homeless LGBTQ+ youth where they are and provide support to help them face what they are struggling


52 Sam Davis. *Designing for the Homeless.* [Pg. 14-20]

53 Sam Davis. *Designing for the Homeless.* [Pg.111]
with. While the True Colors United report does a laudable job of listing the programmatic elements within a space, they go into no detail about the design of the space or how it might be best utilized to provide services. Helping LGBTQ+ homeless youth feel more empowered will require designing spaces that meet the programmatic needs already determined while being engaging and exciting in their own right.

The Trauma Informed Care model used in human services is an approach that recognizes that most individuals will come into an experience already traumatized. Beginning with an understanding that challenging early life experiences make engaging in resources difficult, the goal of TIC is provide supportive services that recognize the trauma, work to stop re-traumatizing experiences from occurring, and then begin building the skillsets that will allow people to become increasingly resilient over time.

Design considerations for empowerment are centered on removing roadblocks to accessing services as identified through TIC as well as precedent research. There is a focus on creating more engaging service centers as well as designing for a sense of value through decoration and color theory. In addition, a one-stop-shop model where all services are housed in a single location and as a result is easier for youth to access can provide them with the resources they need without too much complication.

Providing a sense of empowerment in homeless LGBTQ+ youth is crucial for growth and resiliency. Considering the approach outlined through TIC for assisting traumatized LGBTQ+ homeless youth, special attention has to be paid to not re-traumatizing the population while providing for a sense of mastery over their environment.

54 At the Intersections. A collaborative Resource on LGBTQ Youth Homelessness 2019. [Pg. 8]
The Need for Choice

The need for choice is about returning a sense of ownership to one’s life. Through healing through trauma and becoming empowered in a physically safe space, an individual can begin to take authority over themselves and their surroundings. An important step in transitioning out of the homeless shelter system and into permanent housing, restoring a sense of choice is critical for LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a branch of humanistic psychology that asserts that all individuals are intrinsically motivated to seek autonomy. That is to say, having control over one’s environment is necessary to growing and healing. Research indicates that when the ability of a person to chose is removed from them, they become considerably less interested and motivated to pursue something. In addition, research in criminal justice reform point towards the adverse affects prison can have on the emotional wellbeing of those incarcerated. While a homeless youth shelter may seem far removed from a jail, they are strikingly similar when considering how both adversely affect one’s ability to be autonomous.

Statistically an LGBTQ+ homeless youth will have multiple run ins with institutional services that strip them of any sense of control or choice from their life in exchange for basic services. According to the National Conference of State Legislators, 33% will be a part of the foster care system, and 50% will have been in juvenile justice. Even those who stay out of institutions will still experience a stripping down of choice the moment they step into a youth homeless shelter. It is not uncommon for homeless youth to experience strictly regimented schedules, limiting movement, and sleeping arrangements where there is little to no sense of privacy. The removal of privacy and self-direction inhibits the growth of homeless individuals and denies them the ability to feel capable of handling their own lives. The Adverse

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Childhood Experiences (ACE) advocacy group has created several assessment forms based on the Trauma Informed Care model specifically designed to assess and prevent some of the examples often seen in youth shelters and services as seen above.  

An aspect of SDT that can inform design is intrinsic verses extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic tasks are those where a youth will do an activity because of a reward. For example, a youth may submit to handing over possessions when entering a shelter if they are given a place to sleep and a meal. Many traditional shelters are set up with this transactional system in place. Intrinsic motivation in contrast are activities that a youth will do because of the joy or fun of doing it. Intrinsic motivation has been led to improved learning and growth. By utilizing the idea of choice to promote intrinsic motivation, a shelter can better help youth push towards their own growth.

While the traditional shelter setup is to have everyone occupy a single location with little privacy in terms of space, noise, site, or smell, designers have begun to note that these conditions do not help the homeless. Such settings did little to provide sound sleep or a sense of wellbeing. The use of individual rooms (Single Room Occupancy, or SRO) is becoming increasingly viable as advancements in technology and room design allow for smaller personal living areas. Gran Sultan Associates in particular showed through multiple designs how compact, personal spaces could provide people the privacy they deserved without feeling too cramped or claustrophobic. By keeping the space for individual rooms compact, more space could be given over to communal and support services. While an excellent step in the right direction, little research has been done into how this can be employed to improve a sense of choice among homeless LGBTQ+ youth in shelters.

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60 At the Intersections. A collaborative Resource on LGBTQ Youth Homelessness 2019. [Pg. 8]
61 L David, Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan), Learning Theories.
62 Davis, Designing for the Homeless, Architecture That Works. [Pg. 24, 25]
The Need for Identity

Identity provides the glue that holds together a sense of community, empowerment, and choice. It can be one of the most painful and rewarding challenges an LGBTQ+ homeless youth faces as it can be responsible for being kicked out of their house as well as whatever violence and persecution they face. Identity in its definition exists as both an internal trait as well as an external representation. Simply put, emphasizing a youth’s identity is one of the most powerful ways to assist LGBTQ+ homeless youth on their road towards breaking the cycle of homelessness and moving on to permanent housing.

A 2018 Gallup Pole estimates that 4.5% of the US population identifies as LGBTQ+. An umbrella term, LGBTQ not only refers to the groups identified by individual letters (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Gender Queer) but also to other minority groups including intersex and asexual. Developmental Psychology points to LGBTQ+ being a genetic part of a person that develops naturally over time. Advancement in the field of Psychology of Sexuality & Gender reveal that gender identity is on a spectrum. Where as transgender may refer to a male who identifies as a female or a female who identifies as a male, gender queer (also known as gender nonconforming) is a far more expansive term that attempts to give a single word to the dozens of gender identities. Simply put, respecting the identity of a homeless LGBTQ+ youth is critical to providing aid.

Existing youth shelters do little to support the identity of a homeless LGBTQ+ youth. As roughly 60% of homelessness services are religiously based, it is not uncommon for homeless LGBTQ+ youth to be denied basic services if they reveal their identity. What this does is perpetuate a cycle of rejection, re-traumatize the youth, and dramatically reduce the chance that a youth will seek services to help them in the future. A side effect can be the development of a strong aversion to religious or

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66 WPATH. *Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender nonconforming People*. [Pg. 4]

67 Ernst Hunter. *What’s Good for the Gays is Good for the Gander*: [46, 543-557.]
institutional architecture that would make it difficult for homeless LGBTQ+ youth to access if housed in these building types. Even if existing youth shelters are opening and welcoming to LGBTQ+ youth, there can still be traumatizing experiences that occur because of traditional gendered methods of programmatic design. A heavy reliance on separating youth into gendered sleeping and showering rooms can be re-traumatizing to gender fluid and transgender youth as well as be a potential source of threats and violence from other homeless youth who find their identity intolerable.

A good example of supportive spaces includes LGBTQ+ community centers. Designed to support and celebrate the identity of those who use the community center, the LGBTQ+ community center works to create a safe space where people can take refuge from the fear and anxiety that comes with being different from society’s expectations. While beneficial, LGBT community centers rarely offer emergency youth shelter or transitional living options for LGBTQ+ homeless youth. In addition, as they are spread few and far between, these resources are not always available to youth who may need them.

Design considerations for identity considers the intersecting aspects that make up a person and how they are represented within the spaces homeless LGBTQ+ youth inhabit. Designing beyond the gender binary as well as for play aids in reinforcing self-expression and an identity that many youth may still be struggling with. In addition, how a youth’s identity can be reflected and changed by them in the spaces they inhabit is of importance.

Though a source of pain, identity is also an incredible source of resiliency. Through supporting identity in design considerations, an individual youth who has suffered considerably because of their identity can begin using it to grow and heal from past trauma.

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68 David Artavia. How to Find Your Local LGBT Community Center. Pride.
69 CenterLink LGBT Community Center Member Directory. CenterLink, the Community of LGBT Centers.
The Need For Aesthetic

Aesthetic provides the visual confirmation that the spaces people inhabit reflects their own personal worth. Forms, colors, and design have the power to harken deep into memory, providing meaning and value at levels barely perceptible to those experiencing them. The need for aesthetic is the need to value the spaces that homeless LGBTQ+ youth inhabit to the same degree that they are valued. Simply put, our surroundings are a symbol for ourselves.\(^\text{70}\)

Individuals are affected by the places they inhabit in deeply profound and meaningful ways. For example, the lack of contact with nature for people has been shown to increase rates of local crime.\(^\text{71}\) Another example is that people often associate their surroundings with a traumatic event, making it challenging to engage in those surroundings at a later point.\(^\text{72}\) Developmental Psychology agrees with these findings, stating that throughout childhood and adult life, there is a need to feel competent and have that competency reflected in the world around them. It has been found that the state of poverty has its own architectural palette that causes people to associate their surroundings with an inability to escape as well as hopelessness.\(^\text{73}\)

The history of homeless shelters in the United States has followed an out of site and out of mind philosophy for nearly a century.\(^\text{74}\) With governments giving up responsibility of overseeing homeless shelters to charitable organizations after the World War II, the aesthetics of homeless shelters remained a reflection of how the homeless were seen by society. The vast majority of traditional homeless shelters offer sameness and monotony in color and design.\(^\text{75}\) Rather than being an accidental part of design, the

\(^{70}\) Clare Cooper, *The House as a Symbol of Self*, [Pg. 45]


\(^{72}\) Anne Marie, T. Sullivan M.D. *Recovery From Trauma: Helping to Put Lives Back Together*.


\(^{74}\) Davis, *Designing for the Homeless, Architecture That Works*. [Pg. 25]

\(^{75}\) Davis, *Designing for the Homeless, Architecture That Works*. [Pg. 25]
de-humanization that occurs when staying at shelters was lauded as a deterrent mechanism to stop people from being homeless in the first place.\textsuperscript{76}

Such unfortunate philosophies did not take into consideration the causes of homelessness and rather has allowed those who are not homeless to distance themselves from and blame/stigmatize the homeless population as somehow deserving their fate. Regardless of how one feels about the causes of homelessness, the experiences of the homeless in shelters in undeniable. It is not infrequent even today for there to be reports of sleep deprivation, flu and disease transmission, physical assault, and a lack of necessary services to help homeless escape the crushing cycle.\textsuperscript{77} Safety is another major concern. These issues are prevalent in youth shelters as well.

Design considerations for aesthetic include moving away from institutional design and more towards the iconography associated with the home. Designing between visual complexity and uniformity are considered as the need for a sense of order is contradicted by a need to break up monotony. Safety and predictability verse surprise are also further explored to provide guidelines on how plan out a space.

Historical precedent and psychological theory show there exists a general aversion towards institutional architecture among the homeless.\textsuperscript{78} As a result, unless special attention is paid to how spaces are designed, homeless LGBTQ+ youth may not access the resources housed within a youth shelter. At the present moment, there is little being done to address how the aesthetics of youth services may affect those accessing the services requiring a recontextualization of shelter aesthetics.

\textsuperscript{76} Davis, \textit{Designing for the Homeless, Architecture That Works}. [Pg. 26]
\textsuperscript{77} Davis, \textit{Designing for the Homeless, Architecture That Works}. [Pg. 27]
\textsuperscript{78} Netta Weinstein et. al. \textit{Seeing Community for the Trees}: [Pgs. 1141–1153]
Contemporary Shelter Program & Services

A contemporary youth shelter may incorporate dozens of services and unique spaces. Understanding these services and spaces is required before creating a kit of parts that is effective at removing the barriers LGBTQ+ youth face when trying to access shelters.

Historically, early homeless shelters were spartan in regard to programmatic elements. They were designed to warehouse the homeless and maximize the utility of the space to provide as many beds as possible.\(^79\) The modern shelter movement emerged in the 1980’s and recontextualized the homelessness from a narrative of personal failure to one of individuals struggling and requiring assistance to get better. Using shelters as one-stop drop-in centers where services for homeless congregate at a single location became increasingly popular. As a result, homeless shelters exploded programmatically to incorporate dozens of unique spaces tailored to different needs and services for the homeless. This model of care originally designed for homeless adults as seen through effective examples like the Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles, also began being applied to youth shelters.\(^80\) While a step in the right direction, providing youth services in a way similar to adults did not take into effect the unique challenges facing homeless youth, resulting in barriers.\(^81\) Regardless, incorporating services either on-site or off-site for youth is critical in helping them break the cycle of homelessness.

Just like any other young person, an LGBTQ+ youth arriving at a homeless shelter will require considerable resources, time, and attention to thrive. Immediately there will be the need to eat, sleep, clean up, and store in a safe place whatever the youth brings in. After that, there are the physical, emotional, and psychological needs often served through sanctuary spaces, clinics, and places to play. Finally, there are the development and growth needs that include case management, practical skill development, and resiliency training. The longer a youth is willing to stay in the shelter and off the street,

\(^79\) Sam Davis. *Designing for the Homeless.* [Pg. 25-28]
\(^80\) Sam Davis. *Designing for the Homeless.* [Pg. 32-34]
\(^81\) Eric R Pedersen Ph.D., Joan S Tucker Ph.D, Stephanie A Kovalchik Ph.D. *Facilitators and barriers of drop-in center use among homeless youth.*
the greater the opportunity for providing assistance. The emergency shelter dorms form the heart of many youth shelters. Figure 3 and 4 highlight the interactions between emergency forms and services.

Figure 3. Bubble diagram highlighting various spaces often seen in youth shelters.

Figure 4. The Joan Kroc Center at the St. Vincent de Paul Village in San Diego. Note, first and second floor plans color coded to match service types illustrated in Figure 3.
The spaces and services offered by a homeless youth shelter are dependent on the size of the shelter as well as the dependencies that exist between spaces. Figure 5 highlights these dependencies.

![Figure 5](image)

**Figure 5.** A comparison of different sized shelters and the services they offer at the shelter. Note, purple represents a service typically seen while pink is a service sometimes seen.

Two considerations that play a critical role in shelter design are degrees of privacy and supervision. Figure 6 highlights where spaces fall when graphed according to these two factors.

![Figure 6](image)

**Figure 6.** Services graphed according to whether they require staff supervision and privacy. From a staffing and privacy standpoint, services can be graphed to show what will require more attention from staff and what will need to be designed to provide more privacy for residents.

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82 Sam Davis. *Designing for the Homeless.* [Pg. 103-104]
How spaces within a shelter interact with one another is an additional consideration. Figure 7 highlights synergy in spaces as seen through precedent research into homeless youth shelters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public/Private</th>
<th>Who Will Use</th>
<th>Adjacencies to Other Types of Spaces</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td>- Lobby/Checkin</td>
<td>- OBGYN Services</td>
<td>- Sexual Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Checkups/General Care</td>
<td>- Drug Treatment</td>
<td>- Administering Treatment</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gym</td>
<td>- Playground</td>
<td>Physical Need</td>
<td>- Clothing Donation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A safe place to smoke/vape</td>
<td>- Storage, Pet (Kennel)</td>
<td>- Storage, Goods</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Therapy</td>
<td>- Case Management</td>
<td>- Bank</td>
<td>Activity Based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Garden</td>
<td>- Kitchen</td>
<td>- Meditation Room</td>
<td>- Beauty Parlor/Barber Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meditation Room</td>
<td>- Meditation Room</td>
<td>- Meditation Room</td>
<td>Skills Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Job training/Resume Support</td>
<td>- School Program</td>
<td>- Tutoring</td>
<td>- Civic Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leadership Training</td>
<td>- GED Training and Testing</td>
<td>- Computer Labs</td>
<td>- Educational Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Educational Workshops</td>
<td>- Educational Workshops</td>
<td>- Educational Workshops</td>
<td>Meeting Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outdoor Courtyards</td>
<td>- Entry</td>
<td>- Interior Community Spaces</td>
<td>Sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emergency Shelter</td>
<td>- Transitional Living</td>
<td>Staff Desk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Services compared to public/private, who will use, adjacencies to other spaces, and use. Note that purple represents a strong correlation while pink a weak correlation.
Compared to non-LGBTQ+ youth, LGBTQ+ youth have their own specific challenges that result in even less participation in youth shelters. Figure 8 below highlights common spaces in shelters and the unique barriers faced by youth and LGBTQ+ youth as compiled in the literature review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spaces</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Barriers Faced by Youth</th>
<th>Barriers Faced by LGBTQ+ Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Courtyard</td>
<td>A transition point between street and shelter</td>
<td>Courtyards designed with limited means of leaving, feeling trapped</td>
<td>Fear of crowds and possible threat they pose, violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance Lobby</td>
<td>Check in for services and shelter</td>
<td>No permeability from street, fear of what is inside</td>
<td>Anxiety created by institutional architecture and being trapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation Room</td>
<td>A private space to calm down or mediate between youth and parent</td>
<td>Space can be claustrophobic and unfriendly, utilitarian and bare</td>
<td>Verbal/physical violence from parent, a lack of recognition of their struggle or identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-In</td>
<td>The counter where staff interface with homeless when they come in</td>
<td>Correlation between poor design and poorly run/unsafe shelter</td>
<td>Drab design that permeates a feeling of hopelessness, fear of denial of service due to identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennel</td>
<td>A place to store pets while a homeless person accesses the shelter</td>
<td>Pet being taken away while housed</td>
<td>Heightened fear and anxiety of losing connection to pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>A place to store larger items that cannot be brought into the shelter fully or may pose a health/safety risk</td>
<td>A lack of storage space for their belongings</td>
<td>Having their belongings thrown away for not matching expected gender norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining</td>
<td>Provide meals for homeless, typically morning and evening</td>
<td>Utilitarian and institutional feel can lead to people not accessing services</td>
<td>Large congregation spaces can be threatening and intimidating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuary Space</td>
<td>As most non-profits are religious, this is a space for religious activities</td>
<td>Don't want to have food and sleep contingent on attending a religious service</td>
<td>Often trauma of religious spaces can lead to a strong aversion to accessing shelter resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens</td>
<td>A place to grow vegetables, teach skills, and community space</td>
<td>Either does not exist or not provided access to a potentially useful space</td>
<td>Either does not exist or not provided access to a potentially useful space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Where food is cooked for homeless youth. Typically requires as much space as the dining area</td>
<td>Typically, no opportunity to engage and assist</td>
<td>No ability to participate and claim some measure of ownership over preparing food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Storage</td>
<td>Storage for large number of supplies used in kitchen</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Offices</td>
<td>Office rooms, storage rooms, and private spaces for staff, can second as service spaces as well</td>
<td>Claustrophobic, feeling of being trapped</td>
<td>Claustrophobic, feeling of being trapped, fear of being harmed or forced to go back to parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom/Showers</td>
<td>A place to wash up/clean</td>
<td>Vulnerability and threat of violence</td>
<td>Gender identity and binary bathroom conflict, anxiety and fear of being assaulted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter</td>
<td>Space with beds for those staying a couple of nights</td>
<td>No privacy</td>
<td>Threats of violence, retaliation, no privacy, noise, stuff being stolen, gendered beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Living</td>
<td>Housing for individuals moving from homelessness into more permanent housing</td>
<td>Having to follow rules</td>
<td>A lack of creativity and self-expression. A fear of being trapped, gendered beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Spaces</td>
<td>Places where those using the shelter can hang out outside of the spaces set aside for beds</td>
<td>Drab</td>
<td>Not enough types of places, drab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Spaces</td>
<td>Spaces where services are provided</td>
<td>confining, non-existent</td>
<td>Lacking privacy/respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Space Program of homeless shelters and the challenges faced by youth and LGBTQ+ youth in approaching and accessing these services.

Through examination of contemporary LGBTQ+ homeless youth and general youth shelters, the unique challenges regarding the programmatic elements of shelter design emerge. In addition, some light is shown onto the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth in these spaces. As influenced through the five research domains, a kit of parts comprising design guidelines can now begin to be assembled.
### Design Guidelines - Overview

Below is a synopsis of all suggested design guidelines comprising the kit of parts. Individual parts can be viewed in the design guidelines that appears after the synopsis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Designing for Community</th>
<th>1. Meeting Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Designing to Mitigate Crowding</td>
<td>Rooms with spaces for windows can make the room feel more open. How furniture is arranged, and the amount of furniture can affect a resident’s sense of safety and perceived crowdedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1. Designing for Privacy</td>
<td>An open space with clear sightlines can help a space feel less crowded and more open. Bits of visual interest including wall art and windows can act as a distraction and reduce stress and a sense of crowding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2. Designing for Boundary Conditions</td>
<td>Uniformity and repetition can help to make larger spaces feel less crowded and more welcoming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3. Designing for Vertical Communication</td>
<td>A space designed for longer-term residents will be smaller, more private, and require less observation while a space for short-term or drop in homeless LGBTQ+ youth will be large, less private, and more easily observable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4. Designing for Proper Lighting</td>
<td>There should be larger public spaces than smaller private spaces as this generally reflects the population interacting with homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.5. Designing for Proper Lighting</td>
<td>Community or meeting spaces may often serve as the transitional point between increasingly private and secure parts of the shelter. As a result, they should incorporate higher visibility to allow those considering using the shelter to see what is occurring beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.6 Designing for Exposure to Nature</td>
<td>Attempt to place meeting spaces at boundary conditions as this can assist with providing a sense of meaning and value to the space, act as a wayfinding point for those navigating the shelter and offer opportunities for those staying at the shelter to feel more autonomous and independent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.7 Designing for Exposure to Nature</td>
<td>Example of boundary conditions include between inside and outside, between spaces incorporating nature and those not, and between rooms uniquely decorated and those that follow the general decorations of the building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.8 Designing for Exposure to Nature</td>
<td>Examples of boundary conditions can incorporate the privacy of residents in transitional living to include inside private space to outside private space, inside private space to outside public, and inside private space to inside public space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Unique Social Spaces</td>
<td>Utilizing a more public first floor and more private second floor can create a number of unique meeting spaces for LGBTQ+ youth residents to actively engage or disengage when they want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>Consider site lines between public and private as well as between private and private as well as rooms that allow for visual line of sight without sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>Lighting should not flicker, hum, or buzz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>The quality of light as determined by the CRI and color temperature can impact the perception of the space and alter mood and behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>Rooms with more natural light appear less crowded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>Windows, even with blinds, can help a space appear less confining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>Rooms with lower levels of illumination can have a small effect on mitigating the sense of crowding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>The presence of nature in any form is beneficial over the lack of it in a community space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>Having indoor plants and sightlines to outdoor plants provides an important biophilic function by connecting the residents to the natural world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. On-Site Kennel</td>
<td>Landscape paintings of nature can have a beneficial effect as it reminds individuals of nature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Place the kennel sized to conservatively support one animal per five homeless LGBTQ+ youth within easy access to those staying overnight in the shelter. Provide access to the animal through a path of egress that is open to the homeless LGBTQ+ youth at all times. Block line of sight of the kennel from the street.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.3. Shelter Size</th>
<th>1.2.2. Mediation Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space for beds comprise roughly 50%+ of overall space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room to help the most amount of people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size allows for organizations to come and community events external to the running of the shelter to take place here</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services can have dedicated space allowing for materials to be left on site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks feeling increasingly institutional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowds can be an issue as homeless youth are generally apprehensive of crowds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher upfront cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks creating a “Not in my back yard” backlash in the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.2.2. Mediation Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place Mediation Room within line of sight of a staff office or desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide two separate entrances into the space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide external windows or internal lites to open the space up and make it feel less private while still providing acoustical privacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.3. Determining Shelter Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each person is different, and no two people have the same ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each room visited by a resident can be used, understood, and accessed without need for the room to be modified or include specialized solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each room visited by a resident should be tolerant for error, low physical effort, flexible in its use, and equitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep ambient noises that are overwhelming or unnecessary to a minimum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Designing for Empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Univ. Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Designing for Universal Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While vital, health services are among the most challenging for homeless LGBTQ+ youth to engage in and should be designed with permeability when initially trying to access, privacy when waiting, and sightlines/multiple exits for individual exam rooms. Straightforward layouts with linear predictable corridors are important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative spaces typically take up a lot of square footage but can be combined if within a more private area with plenty of observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal growth spaces need to feel open (incorporating sight lines, natural elements, windows, etc.) as LGBTQ+ youth have traumas associated with institutional aesthetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public skill development spaces have in the past represented spaces where LGBTQ+ youth have felt incompetent or ridiculed and should be designed to calm and relax youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space should be given over to private skill development that typically involves youth who have been a part of the shelter or transitional living for some time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the LGBTQ+ homeless youth shelter is large enough to support services on site, then use a mall like configuration to provide multiple services off a continuous hallway or corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sightlines are critical as it provides a calming sense when the space is visually navigable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that the corridor is well lit, feels open through high ceilings and wide corridor width, and includes permeability into services for people to see before partaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize services with more public and immediate needs closer to entry with more private services further back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materiality and lighting can be used to invite people in, to make large spaces seem smaller and more intimate, and to define corridors from service areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2. Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1. Designing for Overlapping Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2. Designing for a Mall of Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid deep hued colors like red, orange, or yellow as they may arouse negative emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize blue, green, and purple as they can have a calming effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize lighter colors for walls to help the space feel larger and reduce the risk of crowding and density related anxieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color Uniformity among multiple elements in a room can help to create a sense of harmony and reduce cluttering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual interest can distract from a space feeling crowded and alleviate stress, improve comfort, and improve mood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.3. Perceptions with Interior Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Designing with Color Theory in Mind</td>
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</table>
| 2.3.2 Designing with the Need for Decoration | Attention should be conveyed to what art symbols to ensure negative feelings are not aroused through the meaning. Cultural sensitivity is key.  
Landscape paintings are associated with improvements to mood and can double as a natural view in places where there are no windows.  
Colorful, culturally diverse artwork helps to create an inclusive atmosphere.  
Incorporate living items into the decoration of a shelter including things like fish and plants. Provide opportunities for homeless youth to participate in their care. |
| 2.3.3 Designing to Create a Sense of Value | Being in a place that is valued increases a person’s sense of value.  
If a homeless youth shelter is clean and pleasant it will be rated as being more professional, believable, and easier to seek help from.  
Design so that it is easier for staff to avoid clutter, stacks of boxes, and supplies that are distracting or irritating.  
Design for ease of fixing lights and other things when they are broken as well as ease of sweeping, dusting, and mopping as these affect the perception of the space dramatically.  
Design for signage spacing where program rules and rights can be listed.  
Design with sound in mind for things like calming music in certain entry rooms.  
Design with comfortable soft seating, rocking chairs/gliders, or quiet rooms in mind. |
| 3.1.1. Designing for Self-Reliance | Through a series of spaces or design features provide residents with the ability to alter sensory experience levels including light levels, sound levels, smell, and texture.  
Task lights and reading lamps are an excellent way to allow residents to have a sense of control over their surroundings. Blinds in social areas or where there are windows can help.  
Emphasize personal space as in individual chairs with arms, choice in where and with whom to sit, quiet areas, and engaged areas.  
Limit use of fragrances in enclosed areas as an imposing odor from another is worse than the lack of a pleasant odor.  
Provide the ability to lock bathrooms.  
Ramp up self-reliance in areas where residents are trusted more.  
Spaces for mentoring and for residents to store things for cleaning and helping in shelter. |
| 3.1.2. Designing to Promote the Illusion of Choice | Consider providing more than one way to get from point A to point B.  
Multiple orientations of seating in a space.  
The ability to choose which bed in a shelter to use.  
Sense of choice by going to several different destinations.  
Freedom of movement, often deprived of them when outside.  
Views outside. |
| 3.1.3. Designing for Permeability | Design the entry to be open and public in feel.  
Consider bulletin boards listing classes and activities as these help to shine light on what happens in the shelter during the day.  
Entrance should include a permeable façade that allows for visual access from outside to indoors.  
Natural lighting humanizes spaces.  
Include a coat or storage room to allow youth to check in their belongs and receive them when they leave.  
Open lobby allows for supervised mediation between guardians and youth.  
The design of the front desk is critical as it conveys significant meaning to those entering.  
Space for more than a single staff person is important in larger shelters.  
Open lobby allows for supervised mediation between guardians and youth. |
| 3.2. The Entrance |  |
A single station where a staff member can monitor both a lobby and a courtyard that people use to wait.

An entry must respond to the cultural differences in how people respond to trauma.

How working with trauma survivors impacts staff should be considered in space layout.

An open and friendly atmosphere that also allows with places in which to retreat.

Create some variation to break the strong institutional feel typically associated with entry spaces.

Having places to retreat and designing for staff fatigue is important.

If there is a large space for emergency shelter beds, attempt to break up the space into smaller communities.

Include not only male and female dorm communities, but also special need dorms roughly equal in size to the male and female.

Consider playfulness in corridor design through an emergency shelter by breaking up long linear paths.

Include dorms for individuals outside the male/female binary or who have mental/physical challenges.

Provide storage choices for youth.

Provide the ability to lock spaces to ensure their belongings are safe.

Provide task lighting to allow youth a sense of control over lighting in their area.

Storage units can also act as barriers between beds providing additional privacy for youth.

Storage units can provide aesthetic benefit to how an emergency shelter is perceived helping it to feel less institutional.

Instead of one large centralized meeting space, establish different sized rooms that groups of various sizes can meet. Many rooms can be quite small, occupy ends of corridors, or otherwise form little nooks.

Decorate rooms with unique colors to create unique places throughout a shelter.

Add cultural relevancy into design and utilize décor and materials that are responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of the youth in the shelter.

Provide bulletin to schedule meeting times.

Clearly present list of rules and policies governing use of space if applicable.

If possible, allow for varying degrees of privacy with rooms including some where the door can close.

Maintaining culture competency is an aspect of design that continues well beyond designing the building.

Design for unisex bathrooms with shower stall as either the primary option for shelters or have them available for use as a secondary option for those who do not fit the binary.

Have a special dorms section in an emergency shelter for those who either do not identify as male or female or who may not feel safe in either location.

Have spaces that are friendly to LGBTQ+ that include services like mental health counseling, healthcare referrals, safe hormones for transgender youth, OB/GYN, HIV/AIDS Testing and Counseling, support group for Trans and Queer sex workers, and peer counseling.

Keep away from gendered color coding for spaces.

Consider how larger community spaces can be utilized for a greater percentage of the day to provide spaces for play.

Consider private exterior courtyards for outdoor gym equipment or playground.

Congregate multiple spaces together that have similar requirements, IE. Television and computer services in a space that can be monitored.

Consider providing space for services that allow youth to express themselves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.2.2. Designing for Self-Expression</th>
<th>Easiest spaces programmatically include rooms for art or dance. Providing a sound isolated room can help youth play instruments or work on spoken word poetry without the noise disrupting the experience of others. A space and equipment for a recording studio can provide youth with an often sought out service for self-expression and identity. Barber shop/Beauty Parlor provides space for self-expression and acceptance among LGBTQ+ youth.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1. Designing for Transitional Living and Single Room Occupancy (SRO)</td>
<td>Provide space in design to display rules of how the space is to be used for residents. Allow spaces for decoration and self-expression within the rooms. Try to keep the view of the bed away from the entry or the kitchen spaces as this will make the space feel far smaller if the bed is visible. Design features planned ahead can help keep down cost of replacement for furniture and appliances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1.1. Designing Away from Institutional</td>
<td>Emphasizing elements of regional architecture to create a sense of sanctuary and safety while embedding the building within the local context helps to remove the sense of institutional architecture. Breaking up large interior spaces can help to personalize and humanize them on a scale that residents of the shelter can better approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1.3. Designing Between Visual Complexity and Uniformity</td>
<td>While shelters need to be kept aesthetically pleasing and not intuitionally sparse, visual complexity should be kept to a minimum and only employed in spaces where it is designed to benefit the experience of the room for LGBTQ+ homeless youth. Visual complexity reduces the attractiveness of a space and is exhibited through irregularity, detail, dissimilarity, and quantity of objects, variations in color/contrast. Too much visual complexity can increase stress and anxiety. Visual interest designed with trauma-informed care in mind includes regularity, detail, similarity, an appropriate quantity of objects, the symmetry and regularity of their arrangement, and coherent variation in color and contrast. Visual interest can serve as a distraction from perceived crowding and stress. A land or waterscape painting can serve as a connection to nature is calming. Sight lines should unobstructed as much as possible to reduce perceived crowded and stress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1.4. Designing with Interior Materials in Mind</td>
<td>Resist strong monotone colors. Using material change in flooring to denote private/public spaces. There is a balance between hardiness associated with institutional architecture and the ‘home’ aesthetic that must be reached to provide an overall welcoming space. While concrete block/ceramic tiles are hard and durable surfaces, they feel institutional and should be mitigated in some way. Consider a hardier gypsum board that is more resilient to impact and ware/tare. Note that plastic laminate finishes on counters or furniture, which typically winds up in shelters, chip frequently. Solid wood or linoleum/vinyl is preferable to plastic laminate. The more complex the furniture is, the greater the chance it will break. Arms are the most vulnerable part of chairs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2.1. Designing for Predictability Over Surprise</td>
<td>Materiality should for the most part be kept predictable along with the layout. Providing clear signage and as much line of sight as possible through the building will go a long way to helping LGBTQ+ youth not feel trapped or crowded within the space. Predictability is greater than surprise. If surprise elements are included, make them culturally relevant and empowering. Hallways should be open and promote a sense of easy access. If possible, have corridors single loaded with windows on one side or with services on the other open to the corridor and with windows visible.</td>
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Provide clear sightlines when working with hallways as there can be a safety concern with LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

Consider wayfinding a critical component for navigating through shelter spaces and incorporate it into the overall design.

5.2.2. Designing for Lighting and Security

The building should be accessible for people with hearing/visual/mobility issues without placing them in poorly lit or visually unsafe areas.

Bathrooms and the space outside the building should be well lit.

The program facility should incorporate a security system with individuals coming in and out being monitored. Future changes to how the shelter are secured can be influenced by discussions between staff and LGBTQ+ youth staying at the shelter.

The environment outside the program is well lit.

A balance should be found between the need to have some spaces be well lit and the need to reduce the feeling of a space being crowded through lowered light levels.
Design Guidelines

Overview

The literature review consolidates around five domains (community, empowerment, choice, identity, and aesthetic) and a set of design guidelines consisting of a kit of parts are created. Based on an analysis of contemporary shelter programs and services, homeless shelters for LGBTQ+ youth can differ dramatically from one another depending on a number of factors. As a result, the proposed design guidelines are supposed to function as a kit of parts to be selected and chosen depending on what the situation requires as well as the available resources. These design guidelines can be incorporated into an existing shelter to make it friendlier to LGBTQ+ homeless youth or be incorporated from the start in a youth shelter specifically for LGBTQ+ youth. Ultimately, the design guidelines form the basis for the Empathy Through Design Assessment Tool.

The primary purpose of emergency youth shelters is to provide short-term emergency housing lasting from a day to a month. Homeless LGBTQ+ youth often find themselves spending longer amounts of time away from guardians necessitating more than just emergency beds. It is becoming increasingly common for shelters to include long-term transitional housing options for those between the ages of 12-25 for the homeless LGBTQ+ youth community. The upper limit of 25 is typically used because the majority of homeless LGBTQ+ youth are in that range. For example in New York State, 88% of homeless youth are between 18-25. Utilizing the majority of available long-term transitional housing beds, the 18-25 population is considered because the structure is critical for establishing important life skills and building the confidence to be on one’s own ensuring the youth do not return back to homeless. The lower limit of 12 is determined by the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth recounting when they became homeless.

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83 Meghan Henry, *Estimates of Chronically Homeless* [Pg. 1]
aware and able to articulate their identity leading to alienation and rejection by their family.\textsuperscript{84} With these considerations in mind, the kit of parts will reflect the needs of youth within the 12-25 age range.

Another basic assumption for the purpose of these design guidelines will be that the youth shelter location is fixed. Prior to making this assumption, transient housing options usable by youth were explored. For example, Craig Gillier explores various ways that the needs of homeless youth can be served without there being a fixed location.\textsuperscript{85} While proposing a flexible example to stationary services, the majority of proposals offered by the author do not involve service outreach. Another alternative to the fixed location is the pop-up store approach used by some retail chains. The LGBTQ+ Community Center in Austin Texas follows this approach where every month the center travels to a new Austin City Council District.\textsuperscript{86} While this model solves the issue of accessibility and provides a suite of resources for the LGBTQ+ population, it does not provide the shelter and transitional housing options that are a core part of homeless youth shelters. A kit of parts for a transient LGBTQ+ youth shelter could be explored by others at a later point.

\textsuperscript{84} Jaimie Seaton. \textit{Homeless Rates for LGBT Teens Are Alarming, But Parents Can Make a Difference.}
\textsuperscript{86} QWELL Community Foundation. \textit{How Can We Help Every LGBTQIA+ Austin Resident Live Their Best Life?} (Accessed Online November 9\textsuperscript{th}, 2019)https://www.qwellaustin.org/outpost/
1. Addressing The Need For Community

A sense of community and family in an LGBTQ+ homeless youth center replaces the lost family that rejected and expelled the youth from their home. Within LGBTQ+ culture, it is not uncommon for youth to adopt a ‘chosen family,’ or a group of individuals who deliberately chose one another to play an important role in their life. Ultimately, creating a sense of community is not only important for the tangible programmatic elements that will assist individuals, but also help to create the intangible sense of belonging lost when forced out by family.

1.1 Meeting Spaces

Having a variety of meeting spaces for LGBTQ+ youth to be able to gather is a critical component of homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelter design. As dictated through precedent research into existing homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelters as well as LGBT community centers, the meeting spaces form the heart and soul of the shelter. Depending on the type of meeting space, the location may be open to the public, private for those using the shelter, or a mix of both. Below are design guidelines when designing meeting spaces in LGBTQ+ homeless youth shelters.

1.1.1. Designing to Mitigate Crowding

Purpose: To design community spaces that alleviate traumatic fear of crowding.

Description: High levels of victimization and violence against LGBTQ+ youth in homeless shelters creates a barrier to care through a perceived negative reaction to crowding. Crowding can be defined as an emotional response to density within a space and can relate to the number of people in a space as well as

as the amount of elements in a space. A sense of crowding destroys the feeling of community because it re-traumatizes the youth and makes them draw back into a fear response. Crowding is typical in homeless shelters because the design of said shelters typically employs a high level of social density through large, open style dormitory spaces. Because of this, how a room is laid out can have a significant impact on how a person will perceive the space and whether or not they will use it.

Example: Several design considerations to prevent a sense of crowding are illustrated in figure 9 below. Providing sightlines throughout the room from the entrance is one of the most important as it allows a youth entering a confined space to see everything. Having line of sight blocked can create fear and anxiety. Furniture placement is another consideration as too much or not enough diversity in sitting options can make a place feel small and less inviting. Materiality and uniformity among objects in the room can also go a long way to make the room feel more inviting and less crowded.

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Figure 9. An example showing how the configuration of a community room can create or alleviate a sense of crowding. Note that furniture placement in option 2 allows for sitting along with a view, sitting with others with a view, a place to talk to another across from a table, and a group seating area.

Guidelines:

- Providing space for windows can make the room feel more open.
- Quantity and arrangement of furniture can affect a resident’s sense of safety and perceived crowdedness.
- An open space with clear sightlines can help a space feel less crowded and more open.
- Bits of visual interest including wall art and windows can act as a distraction and reduce stress and a sense of crowding.
- Uniformity and repetition can help to make larger spaces feel less crowded and more welcoming.

1.1.2 Designing for Privacy

Purpose: Privacy plays a fundamental role in terms of security, purpose of room, size, and location.

Description: How a community space may be used depends upon how private the room is meant to be. In turn, privacy directly relates to access control for youth using shelter services as well as the ability for staff to monitor the space if required. With homeless LGBTQ+ youth, privacy is a double-edged sword. While there is a need for private spaces (as homeless LGBTQ+ youth will often have little privacy through the existing shelter system), private spaces can often be perceived as placed of danger and entrapment. As a result, how the space is designed, especially in more private and secure settings, is extremely important as improper design may lead LGBTQ+ youth to not seek services.
Figure 10. Varying Levels of Privacy at LGBTQ+ Homeless Youth Shelters. Note that the more private a space is, the fewer in number as well as smaller in square footage it will be.

Example: The Lark-Inn Youth Shelter in San Francisco California highlights how varying levels of privacy effect the location and size of meeting spaces. With the public entrance at street level on the far right, homeless youth accessing services have some of the largest community spaces. These spaces have a lot of monitoring by staff. As an off the street homeless youth moves into the emergency shelter, they gain access to an additional smaller community space. Finally, if accessing the shelter for more than a month, they may be able to move into the transitional living wing of the shelter (called ‘Gateway’ in this shelter.) where they gain access to the most private (and small) community space.
Figure 11. The Lark-Inn Youth Shelter (Davis, 94.) People entering the shelter go from left to right, moving through increasingly secure and private spaces (access control highlighted by red circles) before eventually arriving at the transitional shelter.

Guidelines:

- A space designed for longer-term residents will be smaller, more private, and require less observation while a space for short-term or drop in homeless LGBTQ+ youth will be large, less private, and more easily observable.
- There should be more public spaces that are larger than small private spaces as this generally reflects the population interacting with homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelters.
- Community or meeting spaces may often serve as the point of transitional between public and private parts of the shelter. They should incorporate permeability to allow prospective homeless youth a visual of what is occurring beyond. This goes a long way to reducing the fear and anxiety many homeless LGBTQ+ youth have in existing shelters. Exterior courtyards providing easy visibility in is a popular option as it also offers an interstitial space between the street and shelter.
1.1.3. Designing for Boundary Conditions

Purpose: Careful placement of meeting spaces to create greater perceived value.

Description: Boundaries represent a transition between different conditions. Within city planning, this can be seen in examples like New York City where the Hudson River and Central Park create sudden and dramatic changes in the urban landscape. The example illustrates how boundary conditions are often seen as possessing a value in their own right and as a result are considered highly desirable. Precedent research highlighted several homeless youth shelters where meeting spaces were placed at a variety of boundary conditions. The reasoning was that in addition to the perceived value inherent to the space, the boundary conditions would often help provide site lines that put residents at ease, a sense of openness and freedom of movement, and a marker for navigation around the building.

Example: The Assisted Care and After Care Facility of Larkin Street Youth Services for LGBT youth highlight how boundary conditions are handled to maximize the experience of homeless LGBTQ+ youth.\(^90\) Faced with a limited amount of natural light, the design carved out a small central courtyard to create opportunities for light as well as for residents staying in the upper floors to access the common spaces visually below. A result of the decision to create additional boundary conditions are that the majority of the meeting spaces hover around these transitions providing way finding points as well as natural gathering points for those accessing services at the facility.

\(^{90}\) Sam Davis. *Designing for the Homeless, Architecture That Works.* [Pg. 118]
Figure 12. The Assisted Care and After Care Facility of Larkin Street Youth Services (Davis, 118.)

Guidelines:

- Attempt to place community spaces at boundary conditions as this can provide additional value to the space, act as a wayfinding point for those navigating the shelter, and offer opportunities for those staying at the shelter to feel more autonomous and independent.
- Example of boundary conditions include between inside and outside, between natural spaces and other, and between uniquely decorated spaces and those that follow more uniform decorations.
- Boundary conditions can play on and include inside private space to outside private space, inside private space to outside public, and inside private space to inside public space.
1.1.4. Designing for Vertical Communication

Purpose: Arrangement of community spaces in vertical orientations can help homeless LGBTQ+ youth engage and disengage from spaces more easily.

Description: Shelters that are more than a story in height offer opportunities to provide a series of dynamic community spaces. The need for multiple options comes from the desires of an LGBTQ+ sheltered youth, who may be struggling with feelings of anxiety, depressions, and being trapped. Offering opportunities through sight lines and sound while providing the resident with multiple options of engagement help a youth can find the ideal location for them. In particular, vertical communication visually and audibly is important for emergency shelter and transitional living youth. The ability to actively engage or disengage from a community space can help restore a sense of control around them.

Example: Figure 13 shows a theoretical 2 story atrium with youth services available for walk in youth as well as community spaces on the private floor for youth staying at the shelter. The 1st floor acts as a transition between the street outside and the services inside. Person 1 represents any youth who has decided to come in for services. They may or may not stay at the shelter. Person 2 is in a room audibly removed from the atrium. They can view the outside and decide whether or not to engage in what is going on in the atrium. Person 4 can hear what is going on, but lacks a line of sight visually to everyone but other shelter residents using the private 2nd floor spaces. Person 3 and 5 are in a private part of the building, but can interact visually and audibly with those in the public area below.
Figure 13. A theoretical example of an open, two floor atrium with several meeting options. For the example, the first floor is publicly open for walk ins while the second floor is private to youth staying at the shelter.

Guidelines:

- Utilizing a more public first floor and more private second floor can create a number of unique meeting spaces for LGBTQ+ youth residents to actively engage or disengage when they want.
- Consider site lines between public and private as well as between private and private as well as rooms that allow for visual line of sight without sound.
1.1.5. Designing for Proper Lighting

Purpose: Proper artificial lighting and daylight can have a restoring effect for those who are traumatized.

Description: Considerable research has been done into the beneficial effects of natural light when observing conditions like seasonal effectiveness disorder. In addition, trauma-informed design highlights that the willingness of a person to engage with services depends in part on the artificial lighting as it can affect the perceived value and safety of a space.\textsuperscript{91} Natural lighting and window space along walls helps a space feel more spatially available as well as feel less crowded. Artificial light can have similar benefits if the quality of the light and color temperature is carefully considered. In addition, light levels in a community space can be reduced to help the space feel less crowded and more open. An additional note, lighting should not buzz, flicker, or hum, as these actions are linked to decreased value of space and the perception that the shelter is poorly run and as a result not safe.

Guidelines:

- Lighting should not flicker, hum, or buzz.
- The quality of light as determined by the CRI and color temperature can impact the perception of the space and alter mood and behavior.
- Rooms with more natural light appear less crowded.
- Windows, even with blinds, can help a space appear less confining.
- Rooms with lower levels of illumination can have a small affect on mitigating the sense of crowding.

\textsuperscript{91} National Council for Behavioral Health. June, 2019. (Accessed November 16\textsuperscript{th}, 2019.)

1.1.6 Designing for Exposure to Nature

Purpose: Providing exposure to nature, natural elements, and visual stimuli that invoke nature can have a calming and revitalizing effect on homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

Description: There is a link between an individual’s exposure to nature and their state of mind. In particular, nature is beneficial in that it promotes tranquility, enhances self-esteem, promotes peace, and improves a sense of mastery of the environment. When incorporated into a community space for LGBTQ+ homeless youth, nature can take on many forms. The most straightforward are views from community spaces directly out into nature. As many youth shelters are located within urban areas, incorporating nature may be more challenging. That being said, the amount of natural elements is not as important as not having any. For example, a single potted plant can provide a benefit. In addition, landscape artwork can also help to achieve a similar calming and healing effect. Indoor plants should be hardy and in most cases tolerant to low light conditions.

Example: Using the same theoretical atrium from figure 13 above, a series of natural elements are added to highlight how they can be incorporated into a space. As highlighted in 1 direct sightlines to nature outside the building is preferred as it also lets light in. Providing this access in a more secluded spot can create a place for meditation and quieter group activity. If there is a highly visible centralized location as with 2, placing a single large natural element can serve people in a number of different locations simultaneously. Realistic fake plants can serve a similar function in low light conditions as highlighted in 3. Finally, have more than one natural element as highlighted in 4 provides a beneficial effect.

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92 Netta Weinstein et. al. *Seeing Community for the Trees: The Links Among Contact With Natural Environments, Community Cohesion, and Crime*. [Pages 1141–1153]


94 Netta Weinstein et. al. *Seeing Community for the Trees: The Links Among Contact With Natural Environments, Community Cohesion, and Crime*. [Pages 1141–1153]

Figure 14. A theoretical example of an open, two floor atrium with several meeting options. Natural elements are highlighted in green.

Guidelines:

- The presence of nature in any form is beneficial over the lack of nature in a community space.
- Having indoor plants and sightlines to outdoor plants provides an important biophilic function by connecting the residents to the natural world.
- Landscape paintings of nature can have a beneficial effect as it reminds individuals of nature.
1.2. Unique Social Spaces

The requirements of LGBTQ+ homeless youth necessitate unique social spaces that do not entirely function as community spaces but may still take on a number of similar characters. Two examples that repeatedly come up in literature are an on-site kennel and mediation space. Both spaces are specifically designed with the wellbeing of the homeless LGBTQ+ youth in mind with particular focus on not re-traumatizing the youth.

1.2.1. On-Site Kennel

Purpose: Providing off-site or on-site kennels can aid the roughly 1 in 5 homeless youth who may have a pet and who would otherwise not access these services.

Description: According to a survey done of homeless youth in Los Angeles, California, 23% of homeless youth had a pet.96 Despite the research that shows how owning a pet can convey significant health benefits psychologically for individuals, the majority of shelters are not designed to handle pets.97 As a result, many homeless youth will not seek shelter support as it would involve having to abandon a close personal relationship a re-traumatize the youth through the act of abandonment. Based on existing research, it is assumed that LGBTQ+ youth, who have already struggled with being abandoned by the community, will be particularly susceptible to not abandoning their pets in order to receive services. As a final consideration, having animals on site can help those homeless LGBTQ+ youth suffering from trauma recover. Allowing youth to help take care of a house animal may be really beneficial to restoring

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confidence. If the pet can not be stored on site, then consider a partnership with a local pet rescue to temporarily house the pet while the homeless youth is in the shelter. Regardless, providing access from the homeless youth to their pet is key.

Example: Using the theoretical two story atrium from above, a kennel location is placed to the right of the main entrance. The location of the kennel is based on the fear of homeless youth that their animal will be taken from them. As a result, location and access are critical. The kennel needs to be in a space where a homeless youth feels capable of retrieving the animal and leaving with minimal physical barriers while also not being visible from the streets. The setup needs to convey that the animal will not be locked away and as a result closable doors are not ideal. This can be challenging as excited animals can generate a lot of noise. Consider having kennels accessible around a corner to help reduce noise and sightlines from outside. While determining an exact number of kennels to meet the expected demand is not possible, it is guessed based on research that there will need to be one cage for every five residents of the emergency shelter with the number decreasing the colder the climate.

Figure 15. Location of Kennel in relation to the entrance. Note the red dashed line signifies a quick and easy path of egress out.
Guidelines:

- Try to provide either an on-site or off-site kennel available for use by homeless youth.
- Place the kennel sized to conservatively support one animal per five homeless LGBTQ+ youth within easy access to those staying overnight in the shelter.
- Provide access to the animal through a path of egress that is open to the homeless LGBTQ+ youth at all times.
- Block line of sight of the kennel from the street.

1.2.2. Mediation Space

Purpose: To provide a space where homeless LGBTQ+ youth and their guardians can talk in a place that feels safe and secure to the homeless youth.

Description: Bringing together guardians with homeless LGBTQ+ youth and restoring a sense of community and family with the youth is an ideal circumstance. There are often numerous barriers, including past traumatic experience and anxiety, experienced by both sides. As a result, it is important to provide a mediation room where guardians and youth can talk to one another in a safe, calming environment. Visual line of site to shelter staff, calming visual stimuli to look at, and multiple means of leaving the space are all ideal considerations. In addition to being its own space, a smaller community or social work space can be co-opted to serve the purpose of mediation space as long as it takes these design considerations in mind.

Example: Using the theoretical two story atrium from above, a mediation room is located to the left of the main entrance. The mediation room includes two exits as well as a clear line of sight from staff into the room. Both measures are done to help the homeless LGBTQ+ youth feel safe when talking to
potentially confrontational guardians. In addition, a view to the main entrance as well as outside can help the youth not feel trapped and vulnerable in the space.

Figure 16. Location of Mediation Room in relation to the entrance. Note the red dashed line signifying the guardian path and the blue dashed line signifying the youth path.

Guidelines:

- Place Mediation Room within line of sight of a staff office or desk.
- Provide two separate entrances into the space.
- Provide external windows or internal lites to open the space up and make it feel less private while still providing acoustical privacy.
1.3. Determining Shelter Size

Purpose: Determine the size of the required shelter and community that will form around it.

Description: The size of the shelter will influence how the community of homeless LGBTQ+ youth form around it. Shelter sizes range considerably from those offering only a few beds in smaller communities to those offering more than 70+ individual bedrooms as seen in the Joan Kroc Center at the St. Vicent de Paul Village in San Diego. Shelter size reflects a combination of demand and available funds.

In his exploration of youth and adult homeless shelters, Sam Davis covers a few examples of how programmatic needs for youth-oriented shelters can help serve the needs of those using the services. In particular, the author highlighted the need for administration (intake, offices, storage), services (rooms for classes, one-on-one therapy, medical), group spaces (eating, playing, relaxing), and private spaces (individual rooms for those staying at the shelter longer term) that feel open and not oppressive. Not every shelter will include a full suite of services with some being nothing more than bathrooms, offices, and a large area for sleeping. Below are three general considerations when determining the size of shelter.

- 1. Demand, calculated through interviews with care providers and a gaps in homelessness needs assessment. This number is often a rough estimate.
- 2. Distribution of beds between emergency and transitional housing beds, calculated through the age of individuals within the homeless LGBQ+ youth populations and what services they are most in need of.
- 3. Square footage available, calculated through available funds, services being considered, and population goal.
Examples: Three examples representing small, medium, and large sized homeless LGBTQ+ shelters along with the pros and cons of each are shown below. Number of beds and % overall space dedicated to beds are based off of research of existing shelter sizes.

Small Size: 6-30 beds

- Space for beds comprise roughly 70%+ of overall space
- Costs less
- Less space available for beds
- Can feel more welcoming like home and less institutional
- Less staff required for supervision
- Easier to place in community without backlash.
- Room for fewer services/doubling up of rooms.

Figure 17. The Larkin Youth Shelter – Occupying a small amount of space, the shelter gives considerable room to the emergency shelter and transitional housing area.

Medium Size: 31-59 Beds

- Space for beds comprise roughly 60%+ of overall space
• Sweet spot where the number of beds works well with the amount of staff who need to be hired and the room available for services.

• Can offer a wing for supportive services and staff while still providing a separate space for emergency shelter and transitional living LGBTQ+ youth.

• Large enough to incorporate spaces strictly dedicated to medical services.

Large Size: 60+ Beds

• Space for beds comprise roughly 50%+ of overall space

• Room to help the most amount of people

• Size allows for organizations to come and community events external to the running of the shelter to take place here

• Support services can have dedicated space allowing for materials to be left on site.

• Risks feeling increasingly institutional

• Crowds can be an issue as homeless youth are generally apprehensive of crowds.

• Higher upfront cost

• Risks creating a “Not in my back yard” backlash in the community.
Guidelines:

- Size of homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelter determined by demand for beds in the community, the distribution of emergency shelter vs. transitional living beds, and square footage available as dictated by location and available funds.
- The larger the facility, the smaller overall amount of space is given over to beds and the more services can be provided.
- The larger the facility, the more challenging to get community support in favor of it.
- Based on existing precedent studies there is a sweet spot of around 40 beds where the costs of staff, the services that can be provided, the location, and the overall cost per bed provided are at their most economical.
3.1. Determining Shelter Location

Purpose: A brief overview highlighting factors to consider when choosing a shelter location.

Description: The location of the LGBTQ+ homeless youth shelter is critical as the ability for youth to access services and the nature of the community where the shelter is housed plays a critical role. While not a design consideration per say, the following gathered notes can help to provide the right setting for building a strong community around and within the shelter.

An ideal location can be determined when considering the confluence of several factors. First, determine the location of known homelessness camps and map them along with the existing youth homeless shelters. Second, layer over areas where there is severe economic disparity to show hot beds of where homeless youth may congregate. Third, look for locations that meet the square footage requirements and whether or not a vacant property one with an existing building matches the intended program. Finally, measure the distance from potential sites to government and nonprofit sources of aid including the Department of Human Resources and local LGBTQ+ community centers.

Guidelines:

- Consider availability, as it when sites are available that meet the programmatic requirements at a cost within budget.
- Consider accessibility, as in how close nearby resources are as well as methods of public transportation. An additional consideration is secure parking for service providers.
- Consider safety, as in what is the neighborhood like during the day and at night and is it in an area that is considered safe? In addition, how well-lit is the neighborhood?
- Consider aesthetic, as in if the existing building being used looks more institutional than like a home and if a new build is in a location surrounded by institutional architecture.
2. Addressing the Need for Empowerment

Traditional shelters answer the question of where a person will sleep for a night, not why they are homeless or what can be done to prevent them from being homeless in the future. Breaking the cycle of homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth requires providing the right programmatic elements and services designed with trauma informed care considerations in mind. Successful spaces can help to restore a sense of authority in oneself, a sense of competency in one’s tasks, and a return of the feeling of empowerment.

2.1. Designing for Universal Design

Purpose: To create inclusive spaces for those LGBTQ+ homeless youth with diverse needs and limitations

Description: In addition to struggling with past traumas that may limit access to shelters, LGBTQ+ youth may also struggle with disabilities like light/sound sensitivity, blindness, deafness, mobility issues, and other struggles that limit use of a shelter. As inaccessibility easily becomes unwelcoming in the eyes of an LGBTQ+ homeless youth, making sure that design is inclusive of these considerations is important. Universal Design (UD) is defined as making environments as usable as possible regardless of age, ability, or situation. Universal design covers seven core principles including equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and size/space for approach and use. Combined with a simple, linear, and easy to navigate space, a sensory or motor challenges will find the shelter to be far more accommodating if Universal Design is considered.

Example: Figure 20 below highlights a theoretical community space that takes into consideration a number of different applications of universal design on the space.

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Figure 20. An example highlighting how elements of Universal Design can be incorporated in the design of a homeless LGBTQ+ shelter.

Guidelines:

- Each person is different and no two people have the same ability.
- Each room visited by a resident can be used, understood, and accessed without need for the room to be modified or include specialized solutions.
- Each room visited by a resident should be tolerant for error, low physical effort, flexible in its use, and equitable.
- Keep ambient noises that are overwhelming or unnecessary to a minimum.
2.2. Services

Helping to empower homeless youth are a variety of non-profit and governmental services that typically congregate at larger shelters if there is room available. Having services located in one place (the drop in center approach) makes it easier for a spread out community to receive assistance.\textsuperscript{101} That being said, the design and approach towards how services are provided can go a long way to improving participation among homeless LGBTQ+ youth towards seeking these services and breaking the cycle of homelessness. If services cannot be provided on-site, then ensuring these guidelines apply to off-site shelters can still be useful.

2.2.1. Designing for Overlapping Services

Purpose: Designing spaces that allow for overlapping services provides the maximum utilization of space for the minimum amount of square footage and cost during construction.

Description: Utilizing the same space for multiple purposes reduces the overall square footage that must be given over to services. That being said, LGBTQ+ youth represent a unique population in that in addition to the typical programmatic considerations there is also the high degree of trauma experienced by these youth that make overlapping services particularly challenging. Figure 21 highlights some of the issues LGBTQ+ youth have in certain service spaces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Services Provided</th>
<th>Barriers With LGBTQ+ Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill Training</td>
<td>Job Placement, Resume Support, School Programs, Job Training, Tutoring, Civic Engagement, Sex and Safer Sex Education, Leadership Development</td>
<td>History of trauma associated with schools and institutional assistance leading to extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{101} Pedersen, Eric R Ph.D. Tucker, Joan S. Ph.D., Kovalchik, Stephanie A Ph.D. Facilitators and barriers of drop-in center use among homeless youth. Published online 2016 May27. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.03.035 (accessed November 16, 2019) 
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4958549/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Based Learning</th>
<th>Training, GED Training and Testing, Computer Labs, Educational Workshops, General Education</th>
<th>aversion to learning in these spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garden, Kitchen, Meditation Room, Clothing Donation, workshop space</td>
<td>Activity based learning opportunities typically not available for homeless LGBTQ+ youth in shelter system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Wellbeing</td>
<td>Health Clinic, Therapy, Case Management</td>
<td>Issues with denial of gender identity, sexual identity, lifestyle, stigma of accessing services and HIV/AIDS, generally seen as unsafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty Services</td>
<td>Smoking Lounge, Kennel, Bank, Courtroom, Classroom, Dining Room, Mediation Room, Sleeping Rooms</td>
<td>Fear of violence and assault from other homeless LGBTQ+ youth as well as fear of being trapped in these spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Expression</td>
<td>Beauty Parlor/Barber Shop, Music Recording, Art Space</td>
<td>Spaces for self expression needed but typically not provided in shelters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21. Types of spaces and challenges LGBTQ+ homeless youth face when attempting to access these services.

Because of the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ homeless youth, old systems of consolidating services for space efficiency have to be rethought to be maximally beneficial. To that end, combining service space with a trauma-informed design approach along with the specialized desires for privacy and community seen in the LGBTQ+ community can be used to create a new model for overlapping services.

Example: Figure 22 highlights how overlapping services can be achieved in an LGBTQ+ homeless youth shelter as based off of the unique barriers faced by the youth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Space</th>
<th>Services Occupying the Same Space</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Design Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Space</strong></td>
<td>Exam room, substance abuse services, Sex and Safer Sex Education, OBGYN Services</td>
<td>Fear of being seen accessing services, fear of the services themselves, fear of the spaces</td>
<td>Multiple exits, plenty of windows, private and public waiting area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative Space</strong></td>
<td>Beauty Parlor, Barber Shop, Small Skill Development, Music Recording, Art Space</td>
<td>Lack of space, equipment, and supervision</td>
<td>Limited access, supervised, Designed for supervision, Designed for supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Expression Community Space</strong></td>
<td>Self-Expression Community Space</td>
<td>Lack of space and event programming</td>
<td>Culturally Relevant Decoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Growth Space</strong></td>
<td>Meditation, Therapy, Case Management, Mediation</td>
<td>Rooms are often closed off, claustrophobic, cluttered, crowded, and institutional in feel</td>
<td>Spaces need to be more private with interior windows if possible, clear sightlines, and multiple exits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Skill Development Space</strong></td>
<td>Educational learning, job training, basic skills development, Activity based learning workshop space</td>
<td>Fear of bullying, learned helplessness and frustration from past experiences</td>
<td>Limited class size, lots of supervision, art, color, and links to nature in spaces, windows, many exits - Use dining space as...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines:

- While vital, health services are among the most challenging for homeless LGBTQ+ youth to engage in and should be designed with permeability when initially trying to access, privacy when waiting, and sightlines/multiple exits for individual exam rooms. Straightforward layouts are key.
- Creative spaces typically take up a lot of square footage but can be combined if within a more private area with plenty of observation.
- Personal growth spaces need to feel open (incorporating sight lines, natural elements, windows, etc.) as LGBTQ+ youth have traumas associated with institutional aesthetics.
- Public skill development spaces have in the past represented spaces where LGBTQ+ youth have felt incompetent or ridiculed and should be designed to calm and relax youth.
- Space should be given over to private skill development that typically involves youth who have been a part of the shelter or transitional living for some time.
2.2.2. Designing for More Than One Service at a Center

Purpose: Designing a one-stop-shop of homeless youth services in larger shelters can help to consolidate everything LGBTQ+ homeless youth need to get the services they require.

Description: Consolidating services around homeless shelters has grown in popularity over the past few decades taking on the term ‘one-stop-shop.’ By bringing all services that benefit homeless into one area, the likelihood that homeless will use the services dramatically increase. For homeless LGBTQ+ youth, creating a safe and inviting place to receive services is critically important. There has been significant success with a mall of services design where a large central corridor provides access to a number of different services.

Figure 23. The PATH Regional Facility for homeless services in Los Angeles, California. Note the color coding reflects the categories of overlapping services for LGBTQ+ homeless youth (Davis, 123.)

Marked as a ‘2’ in figure 23, a large well-lit central corridor with high ceiling marks the central promenade. On either side, spaces are given over to various homeless outreach services. Large glass windows similar to an actual mall provide clear visibility in and give the sense that one is shopping for
services.\textsuperscript{102} A major benefit of the space is that someone coming off the street can be an observer of others before participating themselves. While a good example of a mall of services design, the PATH Regional Facility is missing many of the types of spaces required specifically for LGBTQ+ youth.

Example: A closer example to a mall of services for homeless LGBTQ+ youth comes from the Drop-In Center for homeless youth in San Francisco.

![Diagram of the Drop-In Center](image)

Figure 24. The Drop-In Center for homeless youth, San Francisco. Note the long, curved entryway on the left side of the building and the multiple service spaces extending from that. (Davis, 85.)

The Drop-In Center more public services right at the entry along Sutter Street and more private services further back. The long corridor on the left side of the building acts as the transition between public and private services. Bright colors, wood interior flooring, and lighting are used to highlight the transition between spaces within the mall of services.

\textsuperscript{102} Davis, \textit{Designing for the Homeless, Architecture That Works}. [Pg. 124, 125]
Guidelines:

- If the LGBTQ+ homeless youth shelter is large enough to support services on site, then use a mall-like configuration to provide multiple services off a continuous hallway or corridor.
- Sightlines are critical as it provides a calming sense when the space is visually navigable.
- Ensure that the corridor is well lit, feels open through high ceilings and wide corridor width, and includes permeability into services for people to see before partaking.
- Organize services with more public and immediate needs closer to entry with more private services further back.
- Materiality and lighting can be used to invite people in, to make large spaces seem smaller and more intimate, and to define corridors from service areas.

2.3. Perceptions with Interior Design

Decoration, artwork, and perceived care in a youth shelter go a long way to recognizing the traumas experienced by homeless LGBTQ+ youth and creating an environment that is calming and welcoming. Adding visual interest, removing the stigma of institutional architecture, and creating pleasant interior spaces are all goals when attempting to reach out to homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

2.3.1 Designing With Color Theory in Mind

Purpose: Colors can play a big role in shaping how we experience a space.

Description: Colors have long been used to affect mood and create feelings in spaces. The field of Color Psychology finds that how individuals respond to color has a great deal to do with gender, age, and cultural contexts.103 Within contemporary Western culture blues, greens, and purples are thought to have

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a calming effect on individuals where as deeply hued warm colors like yellow, orange, or red, are thought to potentially arouse negative emotions and be overwhelming. Trauma-informed design suggests a number of guidelines that may be helpful for those who have experienced trauma and as a result can be applicable in future LGBTQ+ homeless youth shelter designs.

To help against the feeling of crowding, lighter colored rooms can help spaces feel larger and more open. That being said, stark white or even light beige can have negative connotations as they are often associated with an institutional aesthetic. Color uniformity as well can go a long way to unite various items in the room and make the space feel more open, cleaner, and less cluttered.104

Example: The Committee on Temporary Shelter serving Vermont released a guide illustrating how some of the principles of trauma-informed design could be incorporated into color theory. To highlight the improvements that can be made by paying careful attention to color (among other things,) they demonstrated their point by releasing a graphic. Figure 25 highlights a poor example of trauma-informed design on the left and one that utilizes trauma-informed design principles on the right. Note the uniformity of color among various elements in the graphic as well as the inclusion of soothing colors. Color theory can be deployed throughout a homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelter, only to be broken when making a particular point like in creative spaces or certain community spaces tailored towards the intersectionality of culture and identity.

50.)

Figure 25. Color Theory demonstrated between a do-not (on the left) and a do (on the right.)

Guidelines

- Avoid deep hued colors like red, orange, or yellow as they may arouse negative emotion
- Emphasize blue, green, and purple as they can have a calming effect.
- Utilize lighter colors for walls to help the space feel larger and reduce the risk of crowding and density related anxieties.
- Color uniformity among multiple elements in a room can help to create a sense of harmony and reduce cluttering.

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2.3.2 Designing with the Need for Decoration

Purpose: Designing with decoration in mind can help LGBTQ+ homeless youth struggling with trauma to better engage with the shelter and be more comfortable, at ease, and positive.

Description: Where as color theory attempts to provide a sense of order through uniformity, decoration is a way to provide occasion pops of color and interest. Trauma-informed design suggests utilizing decoration as a way to give something for anxious youth to focus on to better help them navigate spaces within homeless youth shelters. Landscape paintings have been found to provide a connection with nature and work well when actual windows overlooking nature are not possible. In addition, culturally appropriate artwork tailored towards the LGBTQ+ youth community has been found to help create a sense of home and belonging. Finally, considering living things like fish or plants as decoration both provide a calming connection to nature but also allows for homeless LGBTQ+ youth to participate in taking care.

Example: Along with wall mounted pieces of artwork, consider wall coverings. With the ability to cover entire walls, wall coverings can turn otherwise drab spaces into dynamic color ranges that calm and relax those moving through the space. A single wall covering can be a marker to help homeless LGBTQ+ youth orient in a shelter space.

Figure 26 & 27. Examples of digital wall coverings of nature from the Company Level, Digital Wallcoverings.

Guidelines:

- Visual interest can distract from a space feeling crowded and alleviate stress, improve comfort, and improve mood.
- Attention should be conveyed to what art symbols to ensure negative feelings are not aroused through the meaning. Cultural sensitivity is key.
- Landscape paintings are associated with improvements to mood and can double as a natural view in places where there are no windows.
- Colorful, culturally diverse artwork helps to create an inclusive atmosphere.
- Incorporate living items into the decoration of a shelter including things like fish and plants. Provide opportunities for homeless youth to participate in their care.
2.3.3 Designing to Create a Sense of Value

Purpose: A place designed to make being neat and cleaning easy helps individuals who are apprehensive of a shelter see it as a place of value that they would want to enter.

Description: Being in a place that looks like it is valued increases a person’s sense that they themselves are valued. For LGBTQ+ homeless youth who have lost so much, there is a deep need to be valued and to have a space that reflects that. Typically however, youth shelters are utilitarian in design and often do not have enough space or individuals to help maintain it properly.

Designing against an architecture of poverty requires designing for ease of cleaning and replacement of broken fixtures and furniture. Providing additional storage space to help reduce clutter in spaces where homeless LGBTQ+ youth will travel helps to resolve a lot of the negative effects clutter creates. In addition, a sense of value can come from small token gestures. Having wall space available near entries to rooms allows for rules and rights for residents to be listed. Having seating that is soft as well as quieter spaces for those using the shelter services can help homeless youth who feel less than others have the same sense of belonging and worth. Suggestions from homeless youth shelters including rocking chairs/gliders as well as calming music in certain spaces.

Guidelines:

- If a homeless youth shelter is clean and pleasant it will be rated as being more professional, believable, and easier to seek help from.
- Design so that it is easier for staff to avoid clutter, stacks of boxes, and supplies
- Design for ease of fixing lights and other things when they are broken as well as ease of sweeping, dusting, and mopping as these affect the perception of the space dramatically
- Design for signage spacing where program rules and rights can be listed.
- Design with sound in mind for things like calming music in certain entry rooms.
- Design with comfortable soft seating, rocking chairs/gliders, or quiet rooms in mind.
3. Addressing the Need for Choice

Through their environment and experience, homeless LGBTQ+ youth internalize a state of learned helplessness reinforced by the standard highly controlled and regimented shelter experience. The inability to act perpetuates homelessness from childhood into adulthood. Helping LGBTQ+ homeless youth means breaking the cycle of homelessness by restoring a sense of choice and autonomy. While options are limited within a homeless shelter, there are still ways that design can help to strengthen one’s sense of autonomy and intrinsic motivation. The entrance, emergency shelter sleeping, and small changes to the environment can all help youth feel that they have some control over their lives and decisions.

3.1 Mastery Over Environment

The ability to choose as well as the perception of choice goes a long way to making what would otherwise be an institutional aesthetic feel individualized and personable. Being able to change aspects of one’s environment reminds youth of the choice they once had and strengthens a connection to being independent. When choice is not an option, providing the illusion of choice can be just as powerful.

3.1.1. Designing for Self-Reliance

Purpose: While balancing the needs for safety and comfort of the majority, provide ways for individuals to express self-reliance and control over their surroundings.

Description: Furniture is one of the easiest ways to provide residents with a sense of choice. Emphasizing individual chairs with arms allows a person to have the privacy of sitting by themselves with functionality included. Expanding furniture to provide a variety of seating options depending on the number of people and desired privacy increases a sense of autonomy and choice even more. Being able to alter light levels is another important feature. Localized light sources like task lighting and reading
lamps are excellent ways to allow residents a greater sense of control over their immediate area. Window blinds can also be helpful as they allow youth the ability to regulate the amount of natural daylight and view that they want.

Proper bathing facilities and a stern limit on strong fragrances can provide a neutral olfactory experience that is considered better than having to struggle with the strong smells of others. In addition, bathrooms should be lockable when possible as this can provide a considerable sense of self-reliance (even if the staff have an additional copy of the key.) For longer term shelter and transitional living LGBTQ+ youth, providing space for youth to give back to the shelter can be important in restoring a sense of choice. For example, having space for peer-to-peer mentoring and access to cleaning supplies can provide youth an opportunity to help out in the shelter and earn allowance.

Guidelines:

- Through a series of spaces or design features provide residents with the ability to alter sensory experience levels including light levels, sound levels, smell, and texture.
- Task lights and reading lamps are an excellent way to allow residents to have a sense of control over their surroundings. Blinds in social areas or where there are windows can help.
- Emphasize personal space as in individual chairs with arms, choice in where and with whom to sit, quiet areas, and engaged areas.
- Limit use of fragrances in enclosed areas as an imposing odor from another is worse than the lack of a pleasant odor.
- Provide the ability to lock bathrooms.
- Ramp up self-reliance in areas where residents are trusted more.
- Spaces for mentoring and for residents to store things for cleaning and helping in shelter.
3.1.2. Designing to Promote the Illusion of Choice

Purpose: When balancing the need for safety and security limits freedom of choice within a shelter, the illusion of choice can be deployed through design with similar positive affect.

Description: Due to the inherent limitations of a shelter, there will be spaces private and closed off from residents. If designed poorly, then residents may feel caged in and stuck where they are. If designed with the resident’s autonomy in mind, then the illusion of choice when moving through a shelter can be just as powerful as choice. Simply put, the illusion of choice is about emphasizing what choice exists while minimizing the choices that do not.

The illusion of choice deals a lot with navigation and visual line of sight. One of the easiest ways to improve the illusion of choice is to have more than one way to get to a common destination. Simply being able to enter a space from different routes provides a sense that a space is far more open than it actually is. In addition, having a corridor with more than one destination creates a sense of choice when navigating the space. Highlighting what choices exist through architectural design and lighting can bring a resident’s attention away from places they cannot access and towards places they can.

Once arriving at a destination, having the option to sit or sleep where they like provides a sense of choice even when they are limited to being within a particular space. Providing headphones or ways to cancel out sound or light when sleeping provides an opportunity for youth to disengage from their surroundings when they want. Also, views of nature creates a sense of choice as they can remind homeless youth of their life outside the shelter, and reinforce that it was their decision to seek shelter.

Example: The theoretical shelter shown before can illustrate some of the concepts of designing around the illusion of choice. Both the community space and day room provide multiple ways of accessing the same space. A cross between corridors and the entry area both provide the idea of choice by allowing the
youth multiple options. Private/secure spaces do not draw attention to themselves.

Figure 28. Using the theoretical shelter design from earlier, illusions of choice are demonstrated in the plans.

Guidelines:

- Consider providing more than one way to get from point A to point B.
- Multiple orientations of seating in a space.
- The ability to choose which bed in a shelter to use.
- Sense of choice by going to several different destinations.
- Freedom of movement, often deprived of them when outside.
- Views outside.
3.2. The Entrance

The entrance to an LGBTQ+ homeless youth shelter needs to be designed with the potential youth in mind. Knowing that the youth will be unsure or suspicious of how the place operates as well as come in with a great deal of past trauma from previous shelters should direct the design. In shelters, an entry serve as intake, reception, and as a waiting lobby. It serves as the first point of contact between the staff and youth and as a result needs to convey qualities of refuge and sanctuary. A fear of losing choice and being trapped will have to be overcome through a design that is reassuring and welcoming.

3.2.1. Designing for Permeability

Purpose: Permeability in the shelter entrance design is critical as the entry acts as the first point of contact in building trust between the shelter staff and homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

Description: Many homeless LGBTQ+ youth who arrive at shelter are unsure or suspicious of how the place operates. Based on previous experience, they want to know it is not a prison. They will want to understand what lies beyond the lobby and see other people accessing services in a clean and reassuringly designed space.

An open and public entry creates sightlines from the street to the front desk suggesting the opportunity for choice, which is the cornerstone of dignity. A permeable façade with many windows and a welcoming entry in an architectural style straying from institutional is a strong positive statement to youth considering a resource. Visual access between outside and the enclosed communal spaces symbolically defines social connections. Homeless on the street can see their peers protected and safe in sanctuary and through that connection may want to seek assistance themselves. A permeable façade also allows for natural light which can humanize a space.
Features in an entry can go a long way to making unseen areas feel more accessible and friendly. For example, a coat/storage/kennel space can allow homeless LGBTQ+ youth to store their possessions safely while touring or accessing resources. In addition, wall space to list a clearly visible bulletin board can shine light on the activities that occur in the shelter during the day. Also, using the entry as a transportation hub for ferrying homeless youth to services outside the shelter can create a mix of use in the space that those interested in using the shelter can observe and feel confident is safe.

Example: Figure 29 shows the reception desk at a large emergency shelter in California. Note that sightlines are kept open, raised ceiling helps the space feel larger, and a lot of space is given over to a large curved front desk that draws the eye of anyone entering to that space. Large windows provide permeability allowing people outside to see what is going on inside.

![Figure 29. An example of a reception desk in an emergency shelter in California.](image)
Guidelines:

- Design the entry to be open and public in feel.
- Consider bulletin boards listing classes and activities as these help to shine light on what happens in the shelter during the day.
- Entrance should include a permeable façade that allows for visual access from outside to indoors.
- Natural lighting humanizes spaces.
- Include a coat or storage room to allow youth to check in their belongs and receive them when they leave.
- Open lobby allows for supervised mediation between guardians and youth.

3.2.2. Designing for Approachability

Purpose: An approachable front desk and entry form the first impression homeless LGBTQ+ youth make of a shelter and the staff, leading to their entry or disengagement from the shelter.

Description: The design of the front desk as well as the path from entry to the front desk is an important consideration. The front desk is critical for its symbolic importance of conveying professionalism, cleanliness, and a well staffed facility. These are critical considerations for homeless LGBTQ+ youth who will be very skeptical of shelter services. Large, long, and open front desks with room for more than one receptionist when applicable signify that a space is well staffed. The design of the front desk can be expressive, departing from the greater visual uniformity of the shelter to express highlights of individuality and expressiveness. When designed carefully, the front desk is approachable and signifies the true barrier between the outside world and the services located further in the shelter.

The design of the entry should also take into consideration the staff. Having a safe space in which to retreat is not an uncommon feature as it can also second as a respite space for staff on break or a place to
quarantine a person until a heated situation de-escalates. Having front desk computers not be visible from the entry area ensures privacy for residents. Variations in ceiling height can be employed to subconsciously signal the boundary between public and private spaces. As a final consideration, an entry must respond to the cultural differences in how people respond to trauma as well as their experiences from the community they fled. By understanding the trauma, the design of a better space can emerge.

Example: The theoretical shelter shown before can illustrate some of the concepts of designing around a more approachable front entrance.

Figure 30. Using the theoretical shelter design from earlier, individual features that can improve a shelter entry experience are highlighted.
Guidelines:

- The design of the front desk is critical as it conveys significant meaning to those entering.
- Space for more than a single staff person is important in larger shelters.
- Open lobby allows for supervised mediation between guardians and youth.
- A single station where a staff member can monitor both a lobby and a courtyard that people use to wait.
- An entry must respond to the cultural differences in how people respond to trauma.
- How working with trauma survivors impacts staff should be considered in space layout.
- An open and friendly atmosphere that also allows with places in which to retreat.
- Create some variation to break the strong institutional feel typically associated with entry spaces.
- Having places to retreat and designing for staff fatigue is important.

3.3. Emergency Shelter Beds

Dormitories are the primary design for sleeping spaces in emergency shelters. They are designed with utility in mind in an attempt to provide as many beds as possible within an allowable space. Even in well maintained emergency shelters, hygiene, noise, light, and destruction of furniture are common issues. Traditional dormitories rob youth of any sense of choice, often presenting such a hostile environment that youth will rather try their luck on the street. Emergency shelter beds will be the first place homeless LGBTQ+ youth sleep in all but the smallest shelters. Making these places as comfortable as possible while supporting choice and autonomy in homeless LGBTQ+ youth can go a long way to keeping the youth in the shelter system long enough to receive services that help them break the cycle of homelessness. In addition, it is not uncommon for longer-stay youth to graduate from shelters to transitional living spaces in the same shelter.
3.3.1. Designing for Personability

Purpose: Break up large emergency shelter spaces into smaller ‘community’ dorms in order to provide additional privacy and a sense of community and positive socialization in the space.

Description: The emergency shelter space typically relies on an open floor plan that maximizes the ability of staff to survey the area. While there is definite benefit to this design, the drawbacks are that homeless LGBTQ+ youth do not feel safe and often struggle to sleep at all in the traditionally designed shelter. Designing the shelter space with trauma in mind provides opportunities to remove the institutional aesthetic often associated with these spaces and replace it instead with a space that feels personable.

Personability in an open shelter plan can be created through designing the sleeping space like a town comprised of communities. High walls that block line of sight and most sound form the demarcation between different communities. In this way, a large space becomes several smaller and more intimate locations that promote comradery among those sleeping in the area and improve positive socialization skills. Wayfinding and lighting can be combined at the entrance to these ‘communities’ along with material change to signify the transition between spaces.

Typically there are separate ‘communities’ for males and females. In addition to this, an equal amount of space should be set aside for special needs dorms. This can include individuals who do not fall within the male/female gender dichotomy, or individuals with mental or physical challenges. Simply providing a bed for a person whose identity has resulted in them being reject by family and other shelters can be seen as extending a welcoming hand to gender queer youth.

Example: The Larkin Street Youth Shelter in San Francisco is a good example of how a large institutional space was broken up into a dormitory that feels more welcoming and personable to homeless youth. Breaking up the space created a series of smaller communities that remove the institutional feel of
emergency shelters through the use of angles and variation in corridor design. Angles create enlarged areas outside entry to dorms like a small plaza and the entry to dorms are reinforced by the floor color and material. Light fixtures are used to provide a sense of place by being mounted at the top sides of low walls there by helping to define entry into spaces.

Figure 31. The Lark-Inn for Youth Shelter, San Francisco California.

Guidelines:

- If there is a large space for emergency shelter beds, attempt to break up the space into smaller communities.
- Include not only male and female dorm communities, but also special need dorms roughly equal in size to the male and female.
- Consider playfulness in corridor design by breaking up long linear paths.
- Include dorms for individuals outside the male/female binary or who have mental/physical challenges.
3.3.2. Designing for Autonomy in Shelter Beds

Purpose: Designing emergency shelter beds to include options for choice can dramatically improve the experience of staying at a shelter overnight for homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

Description: The biggest issues faced by homeless LGBTQ+ youth in the emergency shelter sleeping areas include being violated, falling prey to illness, belongings being stolen, being unable to sleep due to noise, being unable to sleep because of lighting, and feeling imprisoned. While some of these issues can be addressed through designing for personability in space, other issues can be resolved by focusing on restoring autonomy when sleeping in shelter beds.

The most common way for this to be done is to include storage as a part of the bed furniture or as a separate unit. Having multiple storage options including the ability to lock things up at night is very important. When designed correctly, a single storage device can act as a cabinet, general storage, headboard, and nightstand. It can include hooks on the side for hanging things like robes or towels. Finally, a storage unit/cabinet can create a sense of individuality in an otherwise utilitarian space. An additional way to provide autonomy in a shelter bed is through control over task lighting. With lights being dimmed at night, homeless LGBTQ+ youth can use task lighting to control light levels in their particular space. Having higher walls and using storage furniture to block line of sight decreases the light pollution causes by task lighting.

Example: The San Francisco Emergency Shelter Dormitories run by the Episcopal Community Services utilizes a gabled storage unit between beds to provide room to hang clothing as well as a variety of locked and unlocked drawers and storage spaces. The stand along storage spaces provide surfaces to work as well. The storage units also looked like a village of houses drawing a distinction between where residents are the feeling oh home. Storage is also provided under the beds.
Figures 32 & 33. Examples of cabinets and storage that maximize one’s autonomy when staying in the emergency shelter beds.

Guidelines:

- Provide storage choices for youth
- Provide the ability to lock spaces to ensure their belongings are safe
- Provide task lighting to allow youth a sense of control over lighting in their area
- Storage units can also act as barriers between beds providing additional privacy for youth
- Storage units can provide aesthetic benefit to how an emergency shelter is perceived helping it to feel less institutional.
4. Addressing the Need for Identity

Traditional youth homeless shelters show a lack of understanding or ability in approaching LGBTQ+ homeless youth in part because of identity. The identities of LGBTQ+ homeless youth often incorporate past traumas, aversion to emergency shelters, and multiple aspects of their identity that have caused them to be denied services in the past. Designing for identity means creating what may be the first truly welcoming space youth have encountered.

4.1. General Approach to Shelter Design

Recognizing identity in homeless LGBTQ+ youth is all about creating the spaces where youth can thrive. These will be spaces where youth can come together, express themselves, and share their experiences with others. Shelters become the place to express a self that was never before accepted, a self that would have only previously brought shame and ridicule. Showing youth that it is ok to be themselves and take pride in their identity can help them achieve the self-affirmation necessary to break the cycle of homelessness. There are some general approaches to shelter design that can be done to recognize identity.

4.1.1. Designing for Intersectionality

Purpose: Through design recognize and promote intersecting identities.

Description: Intersectionality is when an individual has multiple defining characteristics that overlap and potentially exclude them from a group.107 For example, a gay person may deal with homophobia. An African American man may have to deal with racism. A gay African American man will have to deal

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with homophobia, and racism sometimes at the same time. As a majority of homeless LGBTQ+ youth have intersecting identities, incorporating this into design is critical.

![Intersecting Identities Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 34.** Intersecting identities. Parts of a person’s identity can lead them to being excluded. When a history of exclusion exists with multiple parts of an identity, finding a community and space to feel safe and welcome becomes increasingly challenging.

Example: The creative challenge of designing for intersectionality is highlighted by a proposal for a new LGBTQ Youth Center at Pier 40 in New York City.\(^\text{108}\) Considering the diversity of LGBTQ+ youth in the city, the center included a bold floor plan where large cuts broke through the building creating a number of unique meeting spaces of different sizes and shapes. In addition, spaces were proposed to be decorated and reflect different moods and emotions through creative use of colors and patterns.

Figure 35. The Pier 40 NYC LGBTQ+ Youth Center Proposal (Pier 40 Development): Note how the different meeting spaces (highlighted in purple) are sectioned into different sizes and uses allowing for a variety of groups to either share large spaces or break out into their own smaller groups.

Guidelines:

- Instead of one large centralized meeting space, establish different sized rooms that groups of various sizes can meet. Many rooms can be quite small, occupy ends of corridors, etc.
- Decorate rooms with unique colors to create special places throughout a shelter.
- Add cultural relevancy into design and utilize décor and materials that are responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of the youth in the shelter.
- Provide bulletin to schedule meeting times.
- Clearly present list of rules and policies governing use of space if applicable.
- Allow for varying degrees of privacy with rooms including some where the door can close.
- Maintaining culture competency is an aspect of design that continues well beyond designing the building.
4.1.2. Designing Beyond the Gender Binary

Purpose: Awareness of how gender affects design is the best way to prevent re-traumatization of LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

Description: Designing with gender in mind goes beyond bathrooms, though these are important to consider. Designing beyond the gender binary means understanding what those who do not identify with one gender or another need and providing a queer-informed design that responds to those needs. While this may result in more square footage being taken up by redundant spaces, it is critical to creating an environment that respects identity and is welcoming to a traumatized population.

Unisex multi-use bathrooms have been used in Europe for decades and have been growing in popularity in the United States. Regardless of gender, there is a single large bathroom space which includes closeted off water closets that can lock on their own. Everyone shares the same lavatories. The idea can be expanded a little further to provide individuals with a water closet and shower stall, allowing for security and privacy when bathing. These kinds of shared facilities can help reduce the footprint of multiple single occupancy bathrooms while removing the restraints of gendered spaces.

Dorm space in emergency shelters is another space that typically falls on gendered lines. Creating shelters only for boys or girls already removes many of the 40% of homeless youth who may not strictly feel comfortable in one of those two groups. By providing special dorms for individuals who are gender non-conforming, an emergency youth shelter catering to LGBTQ+ youth can be inclusive while still maximizing beds.

Healthcare and clinical spaces are another source of anxiety and trauma for homeless LGBTQ+ youth as services specific to one sex or the other can be perceived as extremely invasive if not handled correctly. OBGYN spaces for transgender men (those whose sex at birth was female and identify as male) are examples of spaces whose interior decoration and reliance on the color pink often turns trans men from receiving services. Similarly, transgender women struggle with checkups from doctors for fear
of judgement of their identity or anatomy. Awareness of how gender effects design is the best way to prevent re-traumatization of LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

Example:

![Figure 36. Two options for unisex multi-use bathroom design that provide services, attempts to maximize space, and removes the issue of gendered spaces from bathrooms.](image)

Guidelines:

- Design for unisex bathrooms with shower stall as either the primary option for shelters or have them available for use as a secondary option for those who do not fit the binary.
- Have a special dorms section in an emergency shelter for those who either do not identify as male or female or who may not feel safe in either location.
- Have spaces that are friendly to LGBTQ+ that include services like mental health counseling, healthcare referrals, safe hormones for transgender youth, OBGYN, HIV/AIDS Testing and Counseling, support group for Trans and Queer sex workers, and peer counseling.
- Keep away from gendered color coding for spaces.
4.2 Self Expression

Prior to leaving the home, many LGBTQ+ homeless youth were forced to hide or repress their identity in part as a means of survival. Having to hide a fundamental and innate part of oneself requires acting against one’s intrinsic nature, leading to stifled affect, depression, and hopelessness. By providing space for self-expression in homeless LGBTQ+ youth shelters, the shelter gives an opportunity for youth to vent frustration, anger, and sadness. The recognition of identity through self expression is an incredible opportunity that shelters can provide as homeless LGBTQ+ youth work towards healing trauma.

4.2.1. Designing for Play

Purpose: Designing spaces to play aids in self-expression, skill development, and helps build resiliency.

Description: Play is a form of self-expression. LGBTQ+ youth are often forced to grow-up prematurely. Between having to fight for the recognition of their identity, struggling with the trauma of rejection, and fending for themselves on the streets, these youth are burdened with responsibilities they would not typically face for years to come. While these experiences can harden anyone, they do not mean that the intrinsic desire for play or self-discovery do not still exist.

Providing youth with the opportunities to play can help develop social and skills, help them be more physical, and problem solve. Play spaces are typically second to other more immediate service needs. That being said, there are ways to re-use spaces and justify play space through a multi-use approach for the space. Play spaces can include a movie room, general recreation space, a basketball court, lounge area, pool tables, and game room. In addition, trauma-informed design suggests the incorporation of child friendly decoration and materials to help create a sense of play.
Example: The Joan Kroc Center for Homeless Youth highlights how spaces can overlap for play. The large central courtyard in the middle of the building was constructed in the Spanish missionary style with views reflecting inward towards the protected center space. The courtyard also functions as a place for play with playground equipment and AstroTurf for various sports. The dining space (labeled 8 in figure 37 and highlighted in figure 38) also serves as a basketball court when it is not being used to serve meals.

Figure 37. First floor plan of the Joan Kroc Center. Note the large central courtyard and basketball/dining space (8 on the floor plans) where play can occur.
Figure 38. The basketball court/dining space.

Guidelines:

- Consider how larger community spaces can be utilized for a greater percentage of the day to provide spaces for play.
- Consider private exterior courtyards for outdoor gym equipment or playground.
- Congregate multiple spaces together that have similar requirements, IE. television and computer services in a space that can be monitored.
4.2.2. Designing for Self-Expression

Purpose: Providing the space for LGBTQ+ homeless youth to express themselves can be psychologically need satisfying and assist them in confronting and resolving trauma.

Description: Self-expression is an aspect of identity that many LGBTQ+ homeless youth have had to hide. Spending years being unable to divulge and share basic aspects of who they are without risk of rejection or violence leads many LGBTQ+ youth to seek out sources of expression. Providing these services can help reduce the chance of youth acting out and provide an avenue for growth and resiliency in confronting the challenges in their lives.

From the programmatic considerations of a shelter, how one can express themselves differ dramatically on the amount of required space and upfront cost. For example, a popular buy costly choice among LGBTQ+ youth is a recording studio. Within a recording studio, youth can have their music made in a way that adds professionalism and value to their creative act. While space and cost limitation may rule out a full studio, consider designing spaces for smaller makeshift studios or sound booths that can achieve a similar result. Oftentimes a recording studio space can also function as a space to practice an instrument or work on poetry and spoken word acts in privacy and without fear of being judged.

Other spaces that can be designed for include beauty/barber shops. Because appearance is something that many LGBTQ+ youth had strictly regulated at home, providing this space can be extremely beneficial as it allows youth to play and seek confirmation in their identity from staff and other youth. It can be a great way for youth to take ownership over their own appearance and express pride in themselves.

Example:
Figure 38b. A single room occupancy (SRO) plan that allows the resident to decorate as they see fit, helping to create a more personable space.

Guidelines:

- Consider providing space for services that allow youth to express themselves
- Easiest spaces programmatically include rooms for art or dance.
- Providing a sound isolated room can help youth play instruments or work on spoken word poetry without the noise disrupting the experience of others
- A space and equipment for a recording studio can provide youth with an often sought out service for self-expression and identity.
- Barber shop/Beauty Parlor provides space for self expression and acceptance among LGBTQ+ youth.
4.3 Transitional Living Spaces

Most youth shelters incorporate transitional living spaces into the shelter design. While emergency shelter beds are for drop ins and those who will most likely stay for a limited time, transitional living spaces are dedicated for those who plan to be in the shelter for months or years at a time. Transitional living often require youth to adhere to rules and schedules centered around them helping to develop skills required after they move on from the transitional living shelter. At the same time, contemporary shelters recognize the increasing independence of these youth and reward their maturity with increased autonomy and ability to change their surroundings.

4.3.1. Designing for Transitional Living and Single Room Occupancy (SRO)

Purpose: Single room occupancy provides the maximum amount of privacy and independence while minimizing square footage and providing a comfortable place to live.

Description: Youth in transitional living will have more freedom, privacy, and self-determination than those dropping into the emergency shelter. They will have an established relationship with the shelter and most likely be providing some assistance to the operation of the shelter by helping out and/or being a peer mentor.

The New York City’s Design Manual for Service Enriched Single-Room Occupancy originally designed for single adult homeless can be used for homeless LGBTQ+ youth. Figure 39 and 40 are two examples of how these rooms can be oriented and configured to maximize square footages that can get as low as around 240 square feet. Each SRO includes distinct spaces for a bathroom, kitchen, and bedroom. They also attempt to use materiality and ceiling height to help create a transition in occupancy use as well as privacy. Two design considerations employed are that the bed is not visible from the entry making the room feel larger, and that the bed is not viewable when using the kitchen.
The ware and tare of materials in SRO spaces can be mitigated through awareness and design. For example, if staff provide residents with clearly marked expectations regarding the space and what they are allowed and not allowed to do, then less damage will occur to furniture and appliances. Design features like having the window blinds between two panes of glass may increase the initial cost, but it will dramatically reducing the need for them to be repaired or cleaned in the future. The design can also take into consideration the use of electronic keys. That way it is easy to replace a lost key or enter an SRO in case of an emergency. \textsuperscript{109} Last but not least, providing the youth with the ability to decorate their space goes a long way to providing a sense of identity and belong.

Example:

Figure 39. A single room occupancy (SRO) plan designed as part of the New York City’s Design Manual for Service Enriched Single-Room Occupancy. \textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{109} Sam Davis. \textit{Designing for the Homeless}. [Pg. 4]
\textsuperscript{110} Sam Davis. \textit{Designing for the Homeless}. [Pg. 106]
Figure 40A Floor plan of SRO mapped out.

Figure 40B Line of sight from the door as well as the kitchen is blocked to the bed, helping to make the space feel larger.
Figure 40C From public (green) to private (red) represents a gradual transition while moving through the space.

Figure 40D A rendering of the interior of the space. Note how changes in materiality help to differentiate the space.
Guidelines:

- Provide space in design to display rules of how the space is to be used for residents.
- Allow spaces for decoration and self-expression within the rooms.
- Try to keep the view of the bed away from the entry or the kitchen spaces as this will make the space feel far smaller if the bed is visible.
- Design features planned ahead can help keep down cost of replacement for furniture and appliances.
5. Addressing the Need for Aesthetic

Humanity assigns value to beauty and internalizes that value as a positive reflection of themselves. Simply put, we feel more valued when in spaces we perceive as valued. The reverse of this can be seen in spaces that are dirty, poorly kept, poorly lit, or otherwise not enjoyable to be in. The architecture of poverty includes design elements typically seen in the interstitial spaces often inhabited by the homeless. Understanding aesthetics associated with a lack of value and not including them when designing a shelter can stop the design from re-traumatizing these individuals when they enter the shelter. Valued space not only assists people in feeling valued, but can also convey a feeling of safety and security.

5.1. The Form of the Shelter

Decades of utilitarian and institutional architecture defining homeless shelters has resulted in homeless LGBTQ+ youth associating these spaces as dangerous, dirty, and of low value. Creating a place that will draw in homeless LGBTQ+ youth requires being aware of aesthetic design considerations and understanding the value of an innate positive association with visual reminders of the home.

5.1.1. Designing Away From Institutional

Purpose: An exterior shelter design that does not re-traumatize LGBTQ+ homeless youth by avoiding an institutional aesthetic.

Description: Institutional architecture in the United States is often associated with things like nursing homes, jails, civic buildings, and hospitals. For the most part it is associated with utility and function over the experience of the space. Oftentimes it can be designed with the intent of many people moving through the area and with emphasis on access and security. Homeless LGBTQ+ youth will
disproportionately experience institutional architecture and often pair it to negative experiences including juvenile detention, shelters that have rejected them based on their identity, hospitals, and other service providing spaces (Figure 41). Familiar places can lead to positive feelings of safety, contentment, and happiness.\textsuperscript{111}

The Joan Kroc Center at St. Vincent DePaul in San Diego CA is an excellent example mentioned in the book of a larger scale youth center designed to be inviting, safe, and a place to grow (Figure 42).\textsuperscript{112} The building relies on the Spanish missionary style and the sense of protection it provides to make an otherwise institutional space feel more like a home. Movement between spaces include arched openings that harken back to local residential architecture. A homeless youth seeing the shelter from the outside would not see a closed off building, but rather an inviting an architecturally interesting space that embodies a sense of value they long for.

Emphasis on aesthetics associated with community and home can be included not only in the exterior of the building but in the interior as well. The Contra Costa County Adult Shelter is a good example of a space that draws attention away from the institutional feel of the space by creating a small village of places and services within a larger facility (Figure 43, 44). Because domestic architecture cannot be achieved on a grand scale, it is achieved in miniature through corridors designed to look like boulevards and different services residing in ‘houses’ along the paths of travels. The Larkin Street Youth Shelter in San Francisco does a similar thing where a large emergency shelter dormitory is split up into different ‘communities’ that utilize materiality and lighting to create small humanizing spaces in a large cold room.

\textsuperscript{111} Claire Cooper. \textit{The House as a Symbol of Self}. \\
\textsuperscript{112} Sam Davis. \textit{Designing for the Homeless}. [Pg. 4]
Examples:

Figure 41. The exterior of a homeless shelter in Rochester NY. The design of controlled access and little permeability is indicative of shelter design and the institutional aesthetic.

Figure 42. The exterior of the Joan Kroc Center at St. Vincent DePaul in San Diego CA.
Figure 43. The Arnett House Exterior, Rochester NY. Using an existing home, the shelter makes use of familiar themes of home in design to create a warm and welcoming environment.

Figure 44. Photo of the ‘houses’ and lighting used to help break up the large institutional space into smaller more personable spaces.
Guidelines:

- Emphasizing elements of regional architecture to create a sense of sanctuary and safety while embedding the building within the local context helps to remove the sense of institutional architecture.
- Breaking up large interior spaces can help to personalize and humanize them on a scale that residents of the shelter can better approach.

5.1.2. Determining New Vs. Existing Buildings

Determining whether or not to go with a new building or existing can play an important role in how homeless LGBTQ+ youth interact and feel about the building. Because of this, what follows is a brief listing of the pros and cons associated with new/existing as well as some ways they influence the push away from institutional aesthetic.

| Pros of Existing Building | -There are a lot of options out there that might meet your needs  
|                          | - Cost is less than a new build  
|                          | - There may be an opportunity for state and national historic tax credits |
| Cons of Existing Building | -May be challenging to meet programmatic requirements  
|                          | -May possess a more institutional feel and as a result push potential youth away |
| Pros of New Building      | -Allows you to create a space tailored to the needs of the community and the programmatic elements you want to include |
- Planning ahead of time can result in decreased operational costs over the course of the life of the building.
- It is easier to create a unified aesthetic matching the goals and approach when constructing from scratch.

| Cons of New Building | - The most costly option requiring significant initial investment
|                      | - Finding a suitable location to build may be more challenging and require demolition of an existing structure

Figure 45. Table of pros and cons associated with new/existing buildings and how they relate to a series of factors including institutional aesthetics.

5.1.3. Designing Between Visual Complexity and Uniformity

Purpose: Shelters need to be aesthetically pleasing, not institutionally sparse emphasizing uniformity over unnecessary complexity.

Description: Trauma-informed design released several considerations when designing spaces for those who have had traumatic experiences. Wanting to prevent future re-traumatizing through design, they emphasize visual uniformity and consistency drawing links between predictability and appositive affect.

Guidelines:

- While shelters need to be kept aesthetically pleasing and not intuitionally sparse, visual complexity should be kept to a minimum and only employed in spaces where it is designed to benefit the experience of the room for LGBTQ+ homeless youth.
- Visual complexity reduces the attractiveness of a space and is exhibited through irregularity, detail, dissimilarity, and quantity of objects, variations in color/contrast. Too much visual complexity can increase stress and anxiety.
• Visual interest designed with trauma-informed care in mind includes regularity, detail, similarity, an appropriate quantity of objects, the symmetry and regularity of their arrangement, and coherent variation in color and contrast.

• Visual interest can serve as a distraction from perceived crowding and stress

• A land or waterscape painting can serve as a connection to nature is calming.

• Sight lines should unobstructed as much as possible to reduce perceived crowded and stress.

5.1.4. Designing with Interior Materials in Mind

Purpose: The materials that comprise the inside of the shelter affect how a space feels and how often damaged or worn parts will have to be replaced.

Description: There is a balance between hardiness of material to stand repeated use and abuse and the institutional feel often associated with such materials. For example, concrete block is durable but is not considered a domestic architectural material. While gypsum board is, it is easy to punch through and damage. Plastic laminate is another material that often finds its way into shelter design and is notorious for chipping and falling apart. Solid wood or linoleum/vinyl is preferable based on how they hold up in shelters but is typically more costly.

Careful consideration should be given to colors. In particular, LGBTQ+ youth at shelters which had strong monotone colors (particularly in orange and yellow) reported them being overwhelming in the space. In addition, blues, greens, and purples are culturally associated with calming and easing one’s mind.

Guidelines:

• Resist strong monotone colors.

• Using material change in flooring to denote private/public spaces.
There is a balance between hardiness associated with institutional architecture and the ‘home’ aesthetic that must be reached to provide an overall welcoming space.

While concrete block/ceramic tiles are hard and durable surfaces, they feel institutional and should be mitigated in some way. Consider a hardier gypsum board that is more resilient to impact and ware/tare.

Note that plastic laminate finishes on counters or furniture, which typically winds up in shelters, chip frequently. Solid wood or linoleum/vinyl is preferable to plastic laminate.

The more complex the furniture is, the greater the chance it will break. Arms are the most vulnerable part of chairs.

5.2. Safety

Creating a space that feels safe to traumatized LGBTQ+ homeless youth is a challenge for shelters as some of the youth may have been traumatized from shelters in the past. There is a difference between actually being safe and feeling safe, as many youth may struggle to feel safe even when they are actually safe. Certain design considerations can be employed to help reduce anxiety and fear in residents using the shelter.

5.2.1. Designing for Predictability Over Surprise

Purpose: Working elements into design that re-assure the resident that they have an understanding of the shelter space.

Description: Trauma is often paired with a fear of the unknown. The design of spaces within a shelter can go a long way to alleviating that fear through predictable repetition of elements like sconces or other forms of lighting/decoration, or through clear signage that informs the person where they are.
Wayfinding markers like artwork, natural elements like plants, sculpture, or variation in materiality can help youth get a sense of where they are in relation to where they want to go.

Guidelines:

- Materiality should for the most part be kept predictable along with the layout.
- Providing clear signage and as much line of sight as possible through the building will go a long way to helping LGBTQ+ youth not feel trapped or crowded within the space.
- Predictability is greater than surprise. If surprise elements are included, make them culturally relevant and empowering.
- Hallways should be open and promote a sense of easy access. If possible, have corridors single loaded with windows on one side or with services on the other open to the corridor and with windows visible.
- Provide clear sightlines when working with hallways as there can be a safety concern with LGBTQ+ homeless youth.
- Consider wayfinding a critical component for navigating through shelter spaces and incorporate it into the overall design.

5.2.2. Designing for Security

Purpose: Security aids in creating a sense of safety and providing a space for homeless youth to heal.

Description: The setting of past traumatic events can threaten to re-traumatize LGBTQ+ youth in the shelter. Paying attention to the security and safety of the building can go a long way to mitigate these feelings. In particular, lighting levels are an easy way to help youth feel safer in a space.

Example: The Arnett House planned for opening in 2020 is a transitional shelter for LGBTQ+ youth in the city of Rochester NY.
Figure 46. 1st Floor Plan of the Arnett House. Note that proper lighting will be included along the exterior as well as cameras to help monitor those entering and leaving the shelter.

Figure 47. A rendering of the interior. Note the use of natural light as well as well lit community spaces.
Guidelines:

- The building should be accessible for people with hearing/visual/mobility issues without placing them in poorly lit or visually unsafe areas.
- Bathrooms should be well lit.
- The program facility should incorporate a security system with individuals coming in and out being monitored. Future changes to how the shelter is secured can be influenced by discussions between staff and LGBTQ+ youth staying at the shelter.
- The environment outside the program is well lit.
- A balance should be found between the need to have some spaces be well lit and the need to reduce the feeling of a space being crowded through lowered light levels.
**Assessment Tool**

From 5 domains came 30 individual parts comprising 180 guidelines. The guidelines are further processed into 120 questions that formed the core of the assessment tool. The assessment tool is given the title “The Empathy Through Design” (ETD) Assessment tool because the tool attempts to understand and assist homeless LGBTQ+ youth as well as differentiate it from other tools used to assist traumatized and at-risk populations. The complete ETD assessment tool is listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Guidelines: Respond to each question with either a Yes, No, or Na</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Designing for Community | 1. Meeting Spaces | 1.1.1. Ability of Community Spaces to Mitigate Crowding | 1. The primary community rooms include windows.  
2. There is visual uniformity and repetition in the space.  
3. There are visually interesting things to look at in the space.  
4. It is easy to navigate around furniture.  
5. The room includes sightlines from the entry to all parts of the room. |
| | 1.2. Designing for Privacy | 1.2.1. Meeting Spaces | 6. If square footage allows there is at least one public and one private community space.  
7. If square footage allows there is at least one large meeting space and one smaller meeting space.  
8. The public community space incorporates high permeability allowing a person to see a lot from the space. |
| | 1.3. Designing for Boundary Conditions | | 9. Meeting and community spaces are placed at boundary conditions. |
| | 1.4. Designing for Vertical Communication | | 10. If two or more floors are available, are both incorporated into a 2 story community space?  
11. If square footage allows, are there options for community spaces that include some that provide protection from sight and sound? |
| | 1.5. Designing for Proper Lighting | | 12. Community spaces incorporate daylight via windows, light tubes, or some other means.  
13. Community spaces with windows include blinds or other ways of altering incoming light levels.  
14. Community spaces incorporate varied light sources that are not harsh or single source.  
15. Artificial light provided in the space can be modulated via a dimmer, multiple sources, or other means.  
16. Interior lights do not flicker, hum, or buzz. |
| | 1.6. Designing for Exposure to Nature | | 17. Natural outdoor elements including things like rocks, trees, etc. are visible from within at least one community space.  
18. Community spaces incorporate indoor plants.  
19. Community spaces incorporate landscape or naturalistic paintings. |
| 1.2. Unique Social Spaces | 1.2.1. On-Site Kennel | | 20. Either an on-site or offsite shelter is provided.  
21. On-site shelters do not block access to pets during the day/night.  
22. If on-site, line of sight to kennel from street is blocked.  
23. A space (stand alone or incorporated into another space) is provided for mediation. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.2.2. Mediation Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. The mediation room provides more than one exit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. The mediation room provides line of sight to calming/engaging artwork, naturalistic decorations, or other engaging visual stimuli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. The mediation room provides line of sight from staff area into the space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>26. Total Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Each room visited by a resident can be used, understood, and accessed without need for the room to be modified or include specialized solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Each room visited by a resident is tolerant for error, low physical effort, flexible in its use, and equitable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ambient noises are kept to comfortable levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Access is provided to LGBTQ+ friendly health services either on or off-site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Health services can provide privacy for those waiting if requested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Health services have a straightforward layouts with linear predictable corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A personal growth space (for activities like educational, meditation) is included either on or off-site and feels open and includes natural elements either through windows or art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A skill development space is provided either on or off-site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. If there is more than one on or off-site service at a center, a ‘mall’ approach utilizing a large central corridor to shop for services is provided if the shelter is large. If the shelter is small, then options are given to the resident on what services they can choose from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sightlines are provided in corridors and hallways that allow the resident to see a part of the service space (waiting room, etc.) prior to entering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Corridors either on-site or off-site leading to services are well lit, open, and feel spacious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. If there is more than one on or off-site service at a center, services are organized so that more public and immediate need are near the entrance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. If on-site services are provided in a mall like format, materiality and lighting are utilized to help with the transition between public and private services for residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Deep hues like red, orange, or yellow are avoided in large scale use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Blue, green, and purple are used in large scale use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Lighter colored paint are utilized in community walls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Color uniformity is continuous among multiple elements in rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. General spaces are decorated with visually interesting things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Decorations are culturally sensitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Decorations include landscapes and other natural elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Colorful, culturally diverse artwork is utilized throughout the building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Living elements like plants or fish are incorporated into the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The shelter is kept clean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. There is little clutter, stacked boxes, or other supplies laying around out of place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Fixtures, appliances, and furniture are working and not damaged to a point of not being functional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Design allows for signage in easily viewable areas for rules and resident rights to be listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Design isolates at least one space so that soothing music can play.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
28 Total Questions

3. Designing for Choice

3.1. Mastery Over Environment

3.1.1. Designing for Self Reliance

1. Residents have space available where they can alter their sensory experience through things like that affect light levels and sound.
2. Task lights or reading lamps are provided in emergency shelter spaces or community spaces.
3. Furniture emphasizes personal space through things like individual chairs with arm rests.
4. Air handling units prevent odors from consolidating in common spaces.
5. Bathrooms can be locked.

3.1.2. Designing to Promote the Illusion of Choice

6. A least one community space has more than one point of access.
7. If possible multiple orientations of seating in a space are provided.
8. Residents have a choice in what seat/bed they sit/sleep.
9. Residents have freedom of movement between public/common areas.

3.2. The Entrance

3.2.1. Designing for Permeability

10. Entry feels open and welcoming.
11. Space designed for public bulletin board to be easily viewable from entry.
12. Entrance includes a permeable façade that has sight lines from the street.
13. The entryway has natural lighting.
14. Safe storage space is provided for those using services.
15. Front desk has view to all parts of the lobby.

3.2.2. Designing for Approachability

16. Front desk has more than one seat so that multiple staff could welcome in new guests.
17. Front desk is designed to be welcoming and free of clutter with easy access to staff.
18. Entry includes culturally diverse artwork.
19. Options for staff to retreat are built into the design of the entry space.
20. Uniformity in design aesthetic is planned and in place.

3.3. Emergency Shelter Beds

3.3.1. Designing for Personability

21. When emergency shelters are included large open floor plan dorms are broken into smaller more manageable spaces.
22. When emergency shelters are included and gendered, dorms provide options for gender queer youth.
23. When emergency shelters are included, corridors in dorms incorporate playful designs or interesting paths to break up institutional aesthetic and feel.

3.3.2. Designing for Autonomy in Shelter Beds

24. When emergency shelters are included, storage options are available for youth by their bed.
25. When emergency shelters are included, storage spaces can be locked by youth.
26. When emergency shelters are included, task lighting is provided by bed.
27. When emergency shelters are included, bed has barriers on at least 3 sides that block sound and line of sight when sitting on the bed.
28. When emergency shelters are included, storage units are decorated in some manner.

4. Designing for

4.1. General

4.1.1. Designing for

1. There are a variety of smaller spaces where small groups can meet in a semi-private setting.
2. Smaller spaces incorporate some form of artwork that breaks the uniformity in design.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersectionality</th>
<th>3. Spaces are designed along entries to spaces where a bulletin board listing room reservations can be hung.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. There is space to list room rules and regulations where clearly visible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Do any of the semi-private meeting spaces allow for the door into the room to close?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2. Designing Beyond the Gender Binary</td>
<td>6. There is at least one restroom and shower available that is unisex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Beds outside of gender binary are provided for gender queer residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Gendered colors are not used in spaces that can be associated with gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. Self-Expression</td>
<td>10. Spaces within the shelter can be utilizes for a variety of tasks throughout the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. If exterior spaces exist they provide multi-functionality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. There is space provided for electronic entertainment including games, TV, or computers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1. Designing for Play</td>
<td>13. At least one space is provided for youth to express themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. A sound isolation room or other space with recording equipment where some form of sound blocking is provided for youth to play instruments or rehearse performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. A space where things like a barber shop or beauty parlor can occur is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2. Designing for Self-Expression</td>
<td>16. If SRO transitional living is provided, then there is space provided to allow for decoration and self expression within rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. If SRO transitional living is provided, then the bed is not viewable from the entry or kitchen spaces if included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. If SRO transitional living is provided, then materiality is used to help transition between various sections of the SRO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. If SRO transitional living is provided, then the initial investment is made in harderier materials for furniture and appliances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. Tran. Living</td>
<td>19 Points Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1. Designing for Transitional Living and Single Room Occupancy (SRO)</td>
<td>1. Elements of regional architecture are incorporated into the exterior façade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Attempts have been made to remove the institutional aesthetic of shelters placed into existing buildings or have been designed from the start with an aversion to intuitional aesthetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. If needed, large interior spaces have been broken up to create smaller, warmer, and more personable spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Designing Away From Institutional</td>
<td>4. Visual complexity is kept to a minimum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Visual interest is created with a trauma-informed care in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Interior design includes regularity, detail, and similarity among objects in rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Rooms include a coherent variation in color and contrast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3. Designing Between Visual Complexity and Uniformity</td>
<td>8. Sight lines to room exit are not obstructed by decoration or furniture in a room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. The shelter does not include strong, monotone colors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. There are changes in materiality to do not different spaces, like changing floor material between public and private.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Furniture is built well and welcoming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.4. Designing with Interior Materials In Mind</td>
<td>12. Materials associated with institutional aesthetics like concrete blocks or ceramic tiles are kept to a minimum or at the very least decorated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Counters and furniture do not use plastic laminate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. Safety</td>
<td>14. Clear signage is provided throughout the building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1. Designing for Safety</td>
<td>15. Predictability in the arrangement of rooms and services is maintained throughout the shelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predictability Over Surprise</strong></td>
<td>16. Hallways are open and promote a sense of easy access with features like raised ceilings, windows, or lightly colored paint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. Sight lines are provided in corridors between common spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. Decorations are utilized as wayfinding tools for new residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2. Designing for Lighting and Security</td>
<td>19. The building is accessible for people with hearing/visual/mobility issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. Bathrooms are well lit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21. Outdoor spaces associated with the shelter are well lit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22. The shelter incorporates a security system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. Individuals entering or leaving the shelter are monitored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Points Possible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refinement of the ETD Assessment Tool

To help refine the ETD assessment tool and test its validity when applied to LGBTQ+ friendly homeless youth shelters in the real world, the ETD assessment tool was used on a local shelter. The Arnett house run by a Rochester NY non-profit Center for Youth is a transitional living shelter set up within a renovated 2-story home in the city and planned to be opened in 2020. Speaking with individuals familiar with the project and touring the site, the ETD assessment tool was used to evaluate the space. Below are figures highlighting how the space is and how it may look when completed.

Figure 48. Exterior of Arnett Shelter

Figure 49-50. 1st and 2nd floor of Arnett Shelter
Figure 51-53. Renderings of the Shelter
The Arnett House answered ‘yes’ to 81 of the 120 questions. The majority of assessment questions were on point and relevant to the assessment of the shelter. With one exception regarding having sprinkler systems, the assessment covered all aspects of the shelter design. At its best, the ETD Assessment Tool managed to capture the heart of what the shelter was attempting to do.

Limitations affecting the ETD Assessment Tool included the language of the assessment itself. Dozens of changes were made after the review of the Arnett house to allow the scale to better articulate questions and direct those questions towards the shelter. There was also a minor bias in the scale towards larger and more complicated shelters as they could provide the spaces necessary to meet some of the questions. These questions were reworded in the assessment tool to address this bias. A common example was including an ‘off-site’ option where the shelter could answer ‘yes’ to questions if they provide the opportunity for the service off site and if the off site service meets the design needs as specified in the instructions.

The original assessment incorporated a pass/fail mechanic tied to the total number of points (1 point for each ‘yes’ response.) While this allowed for a quantifiable measurement, it ended up doing more harm than good. The tool at the present moment is not tested or verified enough to be a practical tool for assessing how well a shelter has removed barriers to LGBTQ+ youth. While a point total can be useful as feedback for the shelter providers, it should not be used as a way to judge the effectiveness of a shelter until additional research and testing is done.

A final consideration is that some design features listed in the assessment tool were based on the assumption that a shelter may have more funds to spend than they do. Additional care has to be taken to ensure that the assessment can be used in all cases, even for those shelters that can afford a bare minimum but still want to provide services directed towards LGBTQ+ homeless.
Testing of the ETD Assessment Tool

With the Empathy Through Design Assessment Tool refined, the next step was in testing the assessment tool on several homeless youth shelters that have information on their design available. The four emergency youth shelters were chosen because they highlight various aspects of the assessment tool and form the extremes of what the tool was designed to test. The four locations include the Joan Kroc Center – St. Vincent de Paul Village in San Diego California, the Daytime Drop in Center for Homeless Youth in San Francisco California, the Lark-Inn for Youth emergency shelter in San-Francisco California, and the Assisted Care and After-Care Facility of Larkin Street Youth Services in California.

The Joan Kroc Center is a homeless youth shelter designed to invoke feelings of safety and home through architectural design. Utilizing a Spanish Missionary aesthetic incorporating warm colors through plaster and wood, the center emphasizes a central courtyard and a feeling of inward reflection in contradiction to its toned down exterior. The center is all in one, providing a suite of services, an emergency shelter, and transitional living facilities. With more than 100 beds, the shelter is not specifically designed for LGBTQ+ youth. That being said, it is designed with aesthetics in mind and some design considerations with Trauma Informed Care have been incorporated into the design.114

The Daytime Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth is a shelter designed for homeless LGBTQ+ youth services only. It is a single story shelter built into a long, narrow commercial space. The shelter was included in the assessment because its emphasis on services without emergency or transitional living spaces may affect how it is scored. That being said, the emphasis on creating a community space with a nod towards the LGBTQ+ community means that it may score better as a result.115

The Lark-Inn for Youth shelter provides primarily emergency shelter services with a small space assigned for transitional living and very little service space. The shelter is two floors with the majority of the shelter occupying a basement space that is long and narrow. While small in size with around 40 beds, the shelter is included because of its emphasis on identity through design. Special considerations are made for the LGBTQ+ homeless youth who make up many of the youth who use these services.116

The Assisted Care and After-Care Facility of Larkin Street Youth Services is a large three-story transitional living facility specifically for LGBTQ+ homeless youth who are struggling with AIDS and HIV. The shelter was included in this assessment because it is designed with LGBTQ+ youth in mind and attempts to create a community with a population suffering with physical health problems. 117

114 Sam Davis. Designing for the Homeless. [Pg. Intro]
115 Sam Davis. Designing for the Homeless. [Pg. 85]
116 Sam Davis. Designing for the Homeless. [Pg. 94]
117 Sam Davis. Designing for the Homeless. [Pg. 118]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1. Joan Kroc Center</th>
<th>2. Daytime Drop In Center</th>
<th>3. Lark-Inn for Youth</th>
<th>4. Assisted Care and After-Care Facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Community Questions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Empowerment Questions</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Choice Questions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Identity Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Aesthetic Questions</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Yes Responses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total When Factoring out NA Questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 54. Comparison of how the shelters scored according to each domain.

![Testing the ETD Assessment Tool](image-url)

Figure 55. Comparison of how the shelters scored according to each domain graphed.
Designed specifically with aesthetic in mind, the Joan Kroc Center managed to score the highest in the aesthetic category and second in the total number of yes responses. However, if NA responses are factored out of the calculation, then the Joan Kroc Center ends up scoring the lowest overall. A major consideration for its low score is that while it provided the most number of services for homeless youth, it was the least directed towards the needs of LGBTQ+ homeless youth in particular. While designed with community in mind, many of the community spaces did not take into consideration design guidelines focused on LGBTQ+ homeless youth. Assessing the Joan Kroc Center highlights how the assessment tool picked up on the design considerations and scored them appropriately while also identifying the lack of LGBTQ+ specific design considerations.

The Daytime Drop In Center for Homeless Youth scored the highest in the empowerment domain and scored third in the total number of yes responses and second in the total number of yes responses when factoring out NA questions. Several points above second place, one reason why the center scored so highly in empowerment was that it attempted to do a lot with homeless youth through the services it provided. Though the score was lowered by not including emergency shelter beds or transitional living, it still managed to score well. Other homeless youth service providers should be tested to see if these results are reproducible.

The Lark-Inn for Youth shelter tied in the community domain, scored last in the total yes responses and third in the total yes responses factoring out NA questions. One major reason for the low score was a lack of service and self-expressive spaces that led it to be scored far below in the empowerment and identity categories. Working with only a small amount of available space, the emphasis on aesthetic and community helped to buoy up the score however thanks in part to the emergency shelter’s recognition of LGBTQ+ homeless youth in the dorms.

The Assisted Care Facility came first in the choice and identity domain while tying in community. Overall the facility scored highest overall both in the total number of yes responses as well as in the total number of yes responses factoring out NA questions. The facility scored highly in these domains as well as in empowerment because in part to the space allocated to residents. Incorporating a number of different community spaces with varying privacy levels as well as a suite of services, the facility was focused on the LGBTQ+ homeless youth that called the place home. While getting many guidelines associated with Trauma Informed Care and Universal Design right, the interior color scheme and some of the aesthetics were intense and ended up hurting their score.

While informative, the assessment of these four youth shelters suffers from a number of issues that could be resolved with future comparisons. One issue is that all four locations tested are located in California whose climate and culture may inadvertently pre-dispose them to scoring higher/lower on the
assessment tool. Youth shelters in locations around the US should be tested as well to rule out a regional bias. In addition, all four shelters are in cities highlighting that there may be an urban bias incorporated into the assessment mechanism.

Another issue is that roughly a third of the questions are subjective. This meaning that different people may review the same question and report both yes and no depending on their assessment. Subjectivity can be ruled out to an extent through more precise questions but it will most likely not be possible to remove entirely from the assessment tool. Regardless, a pool of individuals should be given the same assessment and the same example shelter to assess in order to figure out what questions possess the greatest subjectivity in order to help strengthen the overall tool.
Summary

The thesis focused on a design perspective identifying barriers in traditional homeless shelters for LGBTQ+ homeless youth. Through considerable research into five theoretical domains, the Empathy Through Design (ETD) Assessment Tool was created to help assess shelters and see how well they were incorporating design features that removed barriers. After being reviewed using a Rochester NY based homeless LGBTQ+ youth transitional living shelter under construction, changes were made to the assessment to have it better reflect the realities of shelter design. The ETD Assessment Tool was then tested against four additional shelters to see how they rated. While facing some limitations, the assessment tool managed to capture the heart and spirit of what shelters focused on LGBTQ+ youth are attempting to integrate into their design. In the future, the assessment tool can be better refined through additional research and testing on a greater pool of youth shelters.
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