

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** Nature and the Counseling Clinic Waiting Area

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The counseling clinic waiting room is unique: unlike many waiting rooms, counseling client visits are often recurring and anxiety levels—already present in most healthcare waiting rooms—may be heightened by depression, stress, nervousness, frustration, fear, etc. as well as what is about to be experienced and discussed in the therapy session. The study consists of two forms of data collection: observations and surveys. Observations are used to study client behavior and activity in the waiting room and the surveys are to gather client perceptions about the built environment. Findings from this study reveal the highest frequency of behaviors of counseling clients (unable to relax/fidgety) and activity (use of phone/tablet) to reveal helpful changes to the design of counseling clinic waiting rooms. Based on the knowledge gained from this study, the researcher recommends several design changes and inclusions such as limiting cell phone use, providing beverage stations, and creating an environment conducive to private meditation and self-care.