



How to Create a Healing Space to Empower Women & Girls ©

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You put a lot of time and effort into selecting just the right name, the right program, and selecting the right team members to educate, support and empower women and girls in your community. These women and girls chose to come to you-you must be special! As you get ready to gather, what efforts have you made towards getting the space right?

We are all affected by our environment. I encourage you to think about this more than you probably have in the past. In my experience, it makes a difference.

A healing space is warm and welcoming. It is an empowering space for next-level experiences, bonding, releasing, and learning.

There are many factors to consider when preparing your space. As I outline in [Sisterhood Agenda's Ultimate Guide to Starting Sister Circles](#), there are a few things to consider:

- The space is like a stage
- It is a sacred space
- You want your space to be warm, inviting, and uplifting
- At a minimum, the space is safe and clean
- Ideally, the space is spiritually cleansed and clear (not just free of dirt and germs)



Photo credit: HGTV

CLEANING

Treat the space like a blank canvas. Your space needs to be clean and free of all clutter. Keep supplies and materials in closets, drawers, cabinets, and decorative storage solutions such as storage ottomans and baskets. Surfaces should be clear and clean, too.

Cleaning and clearing physical spaces also helps to clear mental and emotional energy in those spaces. Clearing mental and emotion spaces allows for maximum intuition and creativity. Then, we can then be more open to receiving.

The space should be spiritually cleansed, not simply “clean” in the conventional sense. Cleanse your space to make it fresh to start anew. This can be done in a number of different ways using any of the four elements: earth, wind, fire, water, in any combination.

The possibilities are endless. For example, you can:

- Burn resin frankincense and/or myrrh on a charcoal block
- Burn sage smudging sticks around the meeting space
- Light candles and/or burn incense
- Sprinkle salt to cleanse the area, including the corners
- Use sea water or other salt water solution to mop the floor of your space

COLOR

When you welcome folks into your special, sacred safe space, you are inviting them into a different world that you have created especially for them and their empowerment during this designated time. Women and girls that you are working with come to you as they are. Receive them with something wonderfully different and very special.



You are entrusted to uplift them, fill them with information and resources that empower them personally and collectively. With the right space, you can make that process flow quite seamlessly. Color is one part of the solution.

For your wall colors, I recommend soothing, neutral colors that do not elicit emotional responses like excitement, shock, or fear. Warm whites (not white-white can be hospital-like and institutional), light beiges, and creamy colors tend to lend themselves to the “blank canvas” approach that you want to take with the women and girls participating in your programs.

Your furnishings should also reflect the peace and tranquility that you are staging. When working with girls, select vibrant colors used minimally are perfectly acceptable for learning. However, bright colors are energizing. For optimal healing, we want to calm and soothe them, not stimulate them with too much color.

Therefore, I recommend soft colors. With soft colors, we can bring the energy down and transform it into something more subtle and soothing. Natural, neutral colors can do this easily, often at an unconscious level. Soft, neutral colors easily promote healing.

NATURAL ELEMENTS

This is perhaps the most important aspect of architecture and interior design. Again, earth, air, fire, and water are the four key elements of nature that can be incorporated into your space to make it great.



Photo credit: WL Morris

Not limited to just color, natural elements can be incorporated into your space through furniture, artwork, shapes and texture, such as circular mirrors and a soft, fluffy cashmere throw on the couch.

At Sisterhood Agenda's SEA: Sisterhood Empowerment Academy on St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands, we utilize concept the of the Healing Trifecta: Sun, Air, Sea. It is an oceanfront facility in a lush tropical setting, making it an ideal location to promote holistic health and healing. It is also an award-winning eco-building, recognized with the National Energy Award for its sustainable building design based on permaculture principles. However, even if your program space is not oceanfront in the islands, you can still keep these important principles of harmony, nature, and sustainability in mind.

Natural light, i.e., the sun, is essential to healing. Bring in as much light as you can to your space, even incorporating the outside into your inside spaces creating lovely interior/exterior transitional areas.

Large windows, doors with windows, skylights, glass and acrylic furnishings bring exterior sunlight inside. White and light-colored furnishings also reflect light back into the space making it physically brighter. If windows are limited, you can create energy-efficient artificial sunlight with bright white LED bulbs and 10,000-plus lumen lights that are specifically designed to help alleviate SAD (Seasonal Affect Disorder), a disorder where people are prone to depression during the colder seasons due to the drastic reduction of daylight hours.

With your windows, make sure your views are pleasant with open curtains and blinds. If the view is not great, put something nice in front of it, such as artwork, plants, and flowers.

Ensure that your air quality is good with fresh and clean air with regular air flow. If you have filters, choose quality filters and change them regularly. Open your windows and doors when the weather is nice. During cold months, fire is very soothing and conducive for chatting. Fireplaces, bonfires, and fire pits are ideal strategies for incorporating fire into your space, which naturally promote comfort, relaxation, and healing.

If you are lucky enough to be near the ocean, the sounds of the waves and the smell of saltwater in the air has been proven to increase mood, decrease anxiety, and lead to better sleep by inducing a meditative state. Similarly, the sounds of running water are soothing.

If you are not near a natural water source such as the ocean, a lake, or a creek, you can create your own water benefit by installing a water feature in your space. Suggested water features are water fountains. You can also get similar healing benefits by watching ocean videos, and rain recordings. For example, Sisterhood Agenda has a SEA meditation video: <https://youtu.be/4kOv7FV6pEI>.



Photo credit: Angela D. Coleman

You can also bring the outdoors in with plants. Plants help to purify the air while simultaneously adding texture and life. Plants symbolize a healing, nurturing environment because plants require care to live and grow. The color green is also a healing color that represents growth, wealth, and health (FYI: the color brown is the opposite).

PLACEMENT

I am a big believer of Feng Shui for both public and private spaces. For me, it just works. These ancient Chinese principles, similar to many other ancient cultural principles, are not that complicated and lay the foundation for the health, happiness, and wealth energies of your space.

A large part of having positive Feng Shui is clearing clutter, effective use of mirrors, and furniture placement. Placement is key to have proper energy flow in your space. The entrances and exits should be clear, nothing should block your walking paths and flow between furniture pieces.

Mirrors should be strategically placed so that they are not shocking to people, they are not facing each other, and they do not reflect anything negative in them. With mirrors, they should also not reflect a window or a door where all of your positive energy can escape.

Circles stimulate togetherness, bonding, and equality. These are ideal conditions for healing. For example, Sisterhood Agenda implements Sister Circles. Sister Circles are an effective therapeutic tool because of its circular group format. You can create a similar effect with circular furniture and circular furniture placement. With circular placement,

your group is learning how to be more inclusive and accepting of each other, sometimes without even realizing it.

Keep your surfaces clear with a maximum of one or two objects. I encourage you all to look more into Feng Shui principles if this basic information stimulates your interest.

SCALE

The size of your space does not dictate how nice it is or how healing it can be. You can create a beautiful, peaceful, empowering space of any size when you follow principles of scale. Scaling principles are simple: small rooms require small furnishings. Large rooms require larger furnishings. Remember, do not put too many things in any single designated space.



Photo credit: Golden Ratio/Home DSGN

Furniture and furnishings should be as large as the space allows with scaling that also provides ample empty space for movement. Scaling is the solution to some of your participants' need for both physical and emotional space. Participants should not feel suffocated by a lot of "stuff" around them. Some may have an aversion to feeling trapped with no escape, sometimes part of traumatic experiences and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). You want your participants to feel and know that they are safe and comfortable; you want them to stay and yet, you want them to know that they can leave at any time, if they want to.

The space should be open and airy because you want them to be open with you and be receptive to receiving the information that you are providing. You also want them to feel

comfortable. Healing and empowerment are about expansiveness; we are expanding minds, limitations, and consciousness. We need the look and feel of expansive space to help us accomplish this goal more easily.

CULTURE

Whenever possible, include diverse cultural representations in your design. Items such as African and African American art, Indian textiles, and Asian artifacts go a long way in embracing the beauty of exotic, global locations while simultaneously affirming the cultural identities of those whom you serve. With cultural décor, a little goes a long way. It will be very much appreciated.



Photo credit: Interiors

CONCLUSION

In closing, my advice is to follow your heart. Look at interior design photographs that appeal to you. Collect them and create your space as the most ideal space for women and girls.

As you might be able to tell, I really enjoy this process. If you want help, just ask! Feel free to [contact me](#) at Sisterhood Agenda.