THE COLLECTIVE
An Eclectic School of Thoughts

CONCEPT
The Collective is a supportive and engaging environment designed to inspire the senses. Organic curvilinear forms, distinct graphics, and a rhythmic, color scheme engage seamless navigation throughout the space. This encourages exploration, contemplation, and sensory stimulation at an individual pace.

Eclectic, a word derived from a group of philosophers that came together to welcome different schools of thought, drives the main inspiration and embodies the vision behind The Collective. Every collaborative room and private corner reinforces familiarity, evokes interest and invites the senses through design.

LOCATION
Located in Denver, Colorado, Lincoln Park area. The Collective is a training center for individuals with autism and other disabilities who are transitioning out of the education system and into independent living. The area is culturally diverse and creative district that is near to major healthcare and research facilities.

As it appears that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis rates are rapidly increasing across the nation, many families are struggling to find accessible and affordable resources for their children. The majority of the current support venues are clustered in the major cities that flank the continent on both the east and west coasts (Wright, 2007). Gaining access to these facilities can be time-consuming and expensive, due to the high price of flights and accommodation costs. By building The Collective in Denver, the center becomes accessible for many families throughout the Midwest by reducing travel time and costs.

Denver is home to the Autism Society of Colorado (ASC) which is leading the way in education and awareness throughout the region. ASC has spearheaded policy changes for the region, as well as creating an Autism Friendly Business (AFB) program. By partnering with ASC, The Collective provides training and support resources for those with ASD and their families. The work training provided in the center parallels the skills required for employment in any Autism Friendly Business. The center is designed to help those throughout the Midwest gain access to resources which support and facilitate healthy and fulfilled lives for all those affected by ASD.

Floor Plan Features

- Reception
  - Diverse seating options for 6-10 (Designated wheelchair spots)
  - Wheel chair accessible desk
- Multipurpose/Working Training Room
  - Fold away wall divider to maximize flexibility
  - Adjustable work surfaces and layout
  - Flexible workstations to learn a variety of skills
  - Filing for office work. Movable file, small library to learn
  - by helping organize and lend out books to visitors
- Kitchen
  - Ample storage and adjustable work surfaces
  - Open and predictable plan for safety and circulation
- Corridors
  - Leading colored lines
  - Wall mounted seating nook
  - Feature slyght at intersecting hallways

Mock Apartment
- Clean and comprehensible layout

Sensory Room
- Custom sensory tunnel
- Bean bag and plush tiered lounge seating
- Vestibular swing
- Adjustable LED sensory lighting fixtures

Flex Room
- Multi-use functional floor plan
- Wall mounted mode waling
- Built-in storage
- Gallery wall/Pin-Up and display shelves
- Full length mirror with built-in ballet bar

Sensory Garden
- Garden wall/Pin-Up and display shelves
- Wall recessed nook seating
- Multi-use functional floor plan
- Vestibular swing

Sensory Room
- Clean and comprehensible layout
- Adjustable LED sensory lighting fixtures
- Flex Room
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MATERIALS
The Collective is designed with natural, sustainable and locally sourced materials to ensure a healthy environment for those working and learning within the space. All Materials are sourced with the 5 senses in mind:

Sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste

- Wool Felt
  - Natural
  - Acoustic Solution
  - Visual and tactile Interests
- Blue Colorado Spruce
  - Locally sourced
  - Provides warmth
  - Carbon sequestering
- Cork
  - Sustainable
  - Acoustic solution
  - Soft, cushioned surface
- Milk Paint
  - Non-toxic
  - Flat finish, to reduce glare
  - Antimicrobial properties

Floor Plan NTS
Research Methods Highlight

- First hand research was conducted through interviews with three individuals. Front Mudie is a Home Care Worker for Hollyburn Family Services, Nicole Douglas BSc, MSc, a Research Developer and Care Giver at Community Living Toronto, and Susan Spencer who has an adult daughter on the autism spectrum and is an active member in the autism community.
- Site visits to the Pacific Autism Centre, and North Shore Connections. The information obtained from the first hand sources and observations, in addition to case studies, was extremely beneficial as many scientific studies had conflicting experiences and observations, in addition to case studies, was used to provide additional data and understanding of views on functional design for people on the autism spectrum.

PROCESS

Exploring through loose sketches focused on designing the multipurpose room and workstation keeping flexibility in mind.

- Using Herman Miller Everywhere tables, the layout can be quickly and effortlessly rearranged
- Allows for creative and collaborative set ups
- Ensures there is enough room for personal space
- Sketches helped play with shape and rhythm through the room to mimic the curves in the walls
- Mixing curved and rectangular tables generates interest in the design by breaking the surrounding walls, while accommodating all levels of sensory sensitivity within the learning environment.

FURNITURE

From the reception, through the working spaces, to the sensory room every piece of furniture maintains functionality and is unified by universal design and flexibility to accommodate individual needs and preferences.

- Soft, natural fibres wrap inviting and architecturally inspired furniture and custom wall-receiced seating, ensuring ease to the tactile senses. Local softwood is featured in multiple custom pieces, which provides visual and emotional comfort. Where necessary, sized surfaces are used for easy maintenance and upkeep.

Within working spaces all furniture is selected to enhance flexibility in furniture layout in order to accommodate personal working space as well as collaborative group activities.

- Covered pathway
- Sensory architectural features
- Direct access to Flex Room through an exterior door
- Lounge seating
- Vegetable and sensory garden
- Weighted blankets
- Aroma diffuser
- Vestibular swing
- Wall of mirrors installation
- Light shelves
- Fold-away acoustical felt dividing wall
- Ample built-in storage
- Custom sensory tunnel
- Bubble LED light tubes
- LED floor solar strips of light
- Bean bag seating
- Terrarium lounge seating with soft and comfortable surfaces
- Stable and secure
- Local upholstery shop
- Ablyss upholstery and back Yaaad
- Outdoor polyester upholstered on swivel base

Art Area (Flex Room)

- Collaborative and customizable work surfaces
- Built in storage and utilities area
- Gallery wall and custom display shelves
- Custom wall-receiced nook seating
- Custom wall retracted LED panels
- The Collective custom wall mural
- Soft durable cork flooring
- Multi-purpose room and workstation keeping flexibility in mind
- Amplified built-in storage

Work Training/Multi-purpose Room

- Field-away acoustical felt diving wall
- Clerestory windows maximize natural light light shielded
- Customizable and flexible work surfaces
- Built in storage and sorting area
- Computer training area
- White board and 3D capabilities
- Soft and durable cork flooring
- Clean and low long material
- Amplified built-in storage

Sensory Room

- Custom sensory tunnel
- Bubble LED light tubes
- LED floor solar strips of light
- Bean bag seating
- Terrarium lounge seating with soft and comfortable surfaces
- Ventilated seating
- Wall of mirrors installation
- Light shelves
- Aroma diffuser
- Weighted blankets

Outdoor Sensory Space

- Vegetables and sensory garden
- Lounge seating
- Space for a collaborative or personal journey development
- Direct access to Flex Room through an exterior door
- Sensory architectural features
- Covered pathways
- Wheelchair ramp accessible to public sidewalk

Bibliography