# THEORETICAL PREM

### THE 2010 ADA DESIGN STANDARDS

The 2010 ADA Design Standards were originally crafted to allow people with disabilities access to the built environment, including public accomodations, commercial facilities, and state and local government facilities. Familiar to architects, engineers and interior designers, these standards focus primarily on the wellbeing of those with physical disabilities—yet pay no attention to the impact in which the built environment has on occupant's mental health and disabling mental illnesses. Various sources argue that mental health goes hand-in-hand with physical health. In fact, mental health is a facet of physical health essential to achieving prosperity when functioning in society. With that, can the ADA Design Standards be supplemented by an additional set of set of architectural-related standards design specifically to mitigate mental illness amongst occupants in various building

### DEFINING MENTAL ILLNESS

The term 'mental illness' is used to define a group of illnesses that have a direct effect on the mind or brain. This condition impacts a considerable number of people across the nation, where 1 in 5 adults in the United States are diagnosed with a mental illness. This significant percentage of people live with mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders in their daily lives, however such disgnoses are not immediately palpable; people cannot see them like they do in a person physically impaired. Such conditions are not limited to depression, anxiety, bipolar, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, and attention deficit disorder.

## CAN MENTAL ILLNESS BE CLASSIFIED AS A DISABILITY?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as a "person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially *limits one or more major life activities*" (What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? 2017). Poor mental health effects one's functionality in relationships, productive activities including work, school, and caregiving, and the ability to adapt to and cope with adversity. For those reasons, mental illness can be classified as both an invisible disability and psychiatric disaability—those that are not immediately apparent. Further, mental illness is defined as a subcategory under the broader ADA term, mental impairment, although there are no documented ADA design standards specific to alleviate such mental conditions.

### SALUTOGENESIS AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

# salutogenic design (n):

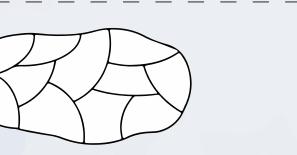
- sal·u·to·gen·ic de·sign
- Focus on the positive impact of design on human health.
- · Helps to "maintain physical and mental well-being, helping [people] to lead healthier and potentially longer lives"
- "The ultimate investment in people, in an architectural sense" (Rickard-Brideau, n.d.).

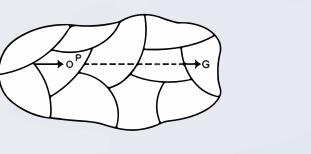
Humans spend over 90% of their lives indoors, so the buildings they inhabit must have an effect on their overall health. Salutogenic design is a "measurable aspect of design that can help a building's inhabitants operate at their peak effectiveness, maintaining physical and mental wellbeing" (Little Architects, 2018).

### THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY

Certain responses to the built environment have universal effects on people—like the amount of daylight in a space, which many people have a positive response to. However, in a psychological sense, each individual reacts to differing environments in different ways; think of the psychological phenomenon, 'nature versus nurture'. Psychological theories like Kurt Lewin's Field Theory Rule argue that behavior is the "result of the individual and the environment" and that the environment shapes a person's psychological behavior and negative.. mental health (Cherry, 2018).

In a diagrammatic sense, Figure A below shows the environment, and Figure B shows the person (P) and goal (G) in which they are trying to achieve. The dotted line notes the different spaces they must go through during life—shaping them in different ways. Individuals may have the same *goal*, but the *field* or environment to get there may be





### THE WELL BUILDING STANDARD: A FRAMEWORK

While each individual has reacts to their environment differently, various standards can be produced that assist all individuals and their symptoms of mental health. Utilizing the WELL Building Standard as a framework, 26 design standards have been curated with intention to be added to the ADA Design Standards. See the book below to view all standards.



greenery or plantings, into a space increase joy and comfort, thus promoting productivity. Adaptability allows for a range ecreasing depression or anxiety felt by individuals. Exposure to views of engagement in building occupants. of nature also boosts positive moods and decreases those that are



Designated adaptable and quiet spaces meant for Natural light has several benefits, including a boost in vitamin D storage, leads to higher productivity, helps with sleep, and improves mood. Access to light helps mitigate symptoms of depression in one's mental health.



Exercise is one of the most effective ways to improve mental health. Providing subtle elements that allow for exercise in building inhabitants including staircase access, pedestrian promotion, and active transportation support allow for exercise

