

6 The healing environment

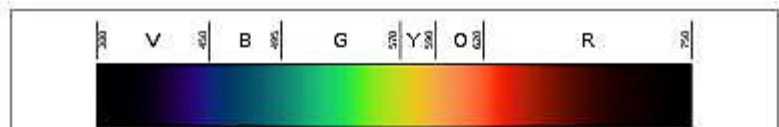
In the following sections we are going to look at other factors in the healing environment that may enhance or detract from the spiritual healing. Use your intuition and any feedback from clients to determine what may be relevant to you. You obviously have more flexibility to change things in your personal environment than you do when healing at a centre, a church, a fair, etc. however you can still be aware of what is around you.








6.1 Colour in your healing environment

Just as spiritual healing is an energy, colour is also an energy. Colours are a form of electromagnetic energy, each with its own wavelength and frequency. Studies have shown that these wavelengths can influence our physiological and psychological well-being¹. To this extent we should not ignore the influence that the colours in our healing environments may be having on our clients. Also note that some healers also see colours while they are healing.

6.1.1 The science behind colour

Our brains interpret energy reflected off objects as colours. Colour is, simply stated, broken down white light. This is a dissection of light into different wavelengths and each wavelength is perceived as a separate colour. Objects tend to absorb or reflect these wavelengths, so when we see a yellow lemon, it is the yellow wavelength that is being reflected while all others are being absorbed. Objects that absorb all the energies in the light spectrum are perceived as black (they reflect nothing back) and objects that reflect all the energies in the light spectrum are



Color	Wavelength (nm)	Frequency (THz)	Photon energy (eV)
 violet	380–450	670–790	2.75–3.26
 blue	450–485	620–670	2.56–2.75
 cyan	485–500	600–620	2.48–2.56
 green	500–565	530–600	2.19–2.48
 yellow	565–590	510–530	2.10–2.19
 orange	590–625	480–510	1.98–2.10
 red	625–750	400–480	1.65–1.98

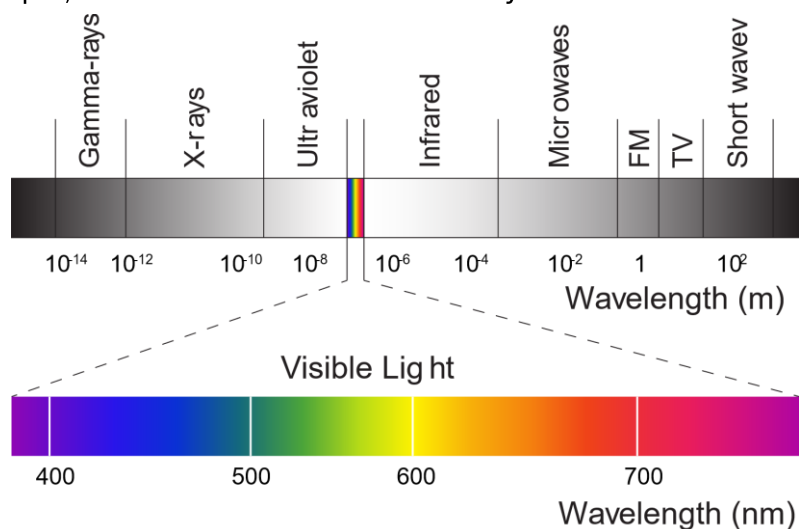
¹Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A., (2022) "Color psychology: Effects of perceiving color on psychological functioning in humans", *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 95-120. and Azeemi, S. T., & Raza, S. M., (2005), "A critical analysis of chromotherapy and its scientific evolution". *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2(4), 481-488.

perceived as white. Each individual colour has its own vibration measured by its wavelength (in nanometres) and frequency (in hertz), as shown in the table above.²

Colour is a visual interpretation of a vibration, however note that not everyone's brain interprets it in the same way. For example, those that are colour-blind may not be able to distinguish between red and green.

There are also vibrations beyond the visible light spectrum, that we cannot see with our eyes such radio waves and UV light. The visible light spectrum is only a very small part of the known electromagnetic spectrum, as shown here.³

However, some very sensitive people can also sense vibrations in that extended range.



6.1.2 Historical context of colour in healing

Colour's influence on healing dates back thousands of years, with records from ancient Egypt, China, and India documenting its use. Some civilizations built special rooms where sunlight filtered through coloured glass to impart the therapeutic energy of different hues⁴.

- Ancient Egyptians used colour in their healing temples, associating specific colours with gods and healing properties. For example, blue symbolized divinity and protection, while green represented growth and renewal.⁵
- In traditional Chinese medicine, colours were linked to the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, water) and their corresponding organs. For instance, red was associated with the heart and vitality, while yellow was tied to the spleen and digestion.⁶
- In Indian Ayurvedic practices, colours were used in chromotherapy to balance the body's doshas (energies). Each colour was believed to have a unique vibrational

² Table from AGC Lighting, (2022), "Basic Information of The Visible Light" from www.agcled.com/blog/basic-information-of-the-visible-light.html

³ Diagram by Tom Gaimann, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wavelength_Overview.svg, via Wikimedia Commons

⁴ Ceejay, (2025) "(Colors that Represent Healing) Finding Inner Peace: How Colors Promote Healing and Wellness", www.ceejayhome.com/symbolism-meaning/colors-that-represent-healing/

⁵ Birren, F, (1961), *Color psychology and color therapy*, Citadel Press.

⁶ Lu, H. C., (1994), *Chinese natural cures: Traditional methods for remedy and prevention*. Black Dog & Leventhal.

frequency that could restore harmony.⁷

The 20th century saw a resurgence of interest in colour therapy, particularly with the work of Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, who explored the symbolic and emotional significance of colours in psychotherapy.⁸

We are now going to investigate the more intuitive use of colour in healing, before looking at its use in medical settings which is based more on scientific proof.

Individual Exercise: Your personal relationship with colours

As we work through these next sections, think about what colours you are currently drawn to, what colours you dislike, what colours predominate in your wardrobes, what colours predominate in your homes and what colours are missing, and what that may be saying about you. (Note your wardrobe colours may be influenced by your complexion, instead of your likes.)

6.1.3 How colour healing tells us colour affects us

Remember that colour is just a vibration and we all resonate at a certain vibration that is completely unique to ourselves. It changes in our auric fields, swirls and grows, retracts, brightens, dulls depending on our thoughts and the day we are having. We will naturally be drawn to certain colours and these will often be colours that we find helpful.

It is generally accepted now that colour can influence our mood and how we feel. How or what we feel about it varies from person to person. Some colours give us a sense of serenity and calm; these usually lie within the blue side of the spectrum-that consists of purple and green too, known as the cool side. Others induce rage and make us uncomfortable, or signify passion; these lie within the red spectrum-which includes orange and yellow, known as the warm side.⁹



⁷ Azeemi, S. T., & Raza, as above.

⁸ Jung, C. G. (1964). *Man and his symbols*. Doubleday.

⁹ Diagram originally by MaulucioniVectorization by Guypeter4, based off BYR color wheel.svg by Sakurambo, CC BY-SA 4.0



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Colour healing modalities are based around every colour frequency having its own characteristics and being capable of affecting the different energies of the human. It is believed that colours with higher light-wave frequencies can affect the brain whereas those of lower frequencies can affect the physical body. Certain colours can be stimulating or depressing, constructive or destructive, repelling or attractive.¹⁰

	Restful	Revitalising	Stimulating
Physical	Green, light blue	Orange	Red
Emotional	Sky blue, turquoise	Peach	Orange
Mental	Indigo	Emerald Green	Yellow
Spiritual	Blue	Gold	Violet, purple

Also be aware that too much of one colour can also have the opposite effect.

The following table shows more detail about each colour's influence, how colour healing indicates what the colours reflect about us and which aspects of us respond to each colour. This table is mainly based on the works of Lilian Verner-Bonds.¹¹ Different colour healers and colour modalities may vary slightly in their interpretation of the colours however they all give you an idea of how potent colour can be. We aren't teaching colour healing here, just looking at the effects of different colours may have on our clients and ourselves.

When reading this table note that there is often a positive and negative, a yin/yang influence to each colour. Energy is just energy. It's how we respond to it that gives it its positive or negative "flavour". A person's colour preferences and responses are highly subjective, influenced by personal experiences, cultural background, and psychological state.¹² A colour that is calming for one individual may be unsettling for another. The same colour can evoke differing responses depending upon the current situation. For example, red may indicate love and passion if you have just been given a red rose or it may indicate danger if it's on a warning sign. Because some people associate colours with different emotional situations from their past, a colour can trigger a response reflective of the trauma or delight they associate with it, irrespective of whether that is a usual response to that colour. Every client is unique and their response to colour will be too. We cannot assume a client will respond as per this or any other table of expected colour responses, without considering the individual client.

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¹⁰ Ted Andrews, (2006), *The Healer's Manual: A Beginners Guide to Energy Healing for Yourself and Others*, pp116-7, Llewellyn Publications (including the table below).

¹¹ Summarised from Lilian Verner-Bonds, (2000) *Colour for Healing and Harmony*, Southwater. and Channelling by Sue Boyle of a Doctor / Shaman / Psychotherapist Guide called Counsellor Vlorna, *Manual of Healing* booklet.

¹² Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A. (2014). "Color psychology: Effects of perceiving color on psychological functioning in humans.", *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 95-120

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Summary	People	Associated body parts / glands	Physiological effect	Used to	Positive keywords	Negative keywords
<p>Red – Expansion – Devastation</p> <p>Spirit of physical life, full of power, fire & drive, but that power must be focused. Courage and liberation, power & excitement. Desire, activity, progress. Burning desire to get somewhere but tends to act without thinking. Use wisdom to focus.</p>	<p>Reformers & fighters, & at best fine leaders. Builders of great things from very little. Explorers. Pioneers – military & entrepreneurial.</p>	<p>Genitals & reproductive organs. Blood & circulation. Glands are gonads & ovaries.</p>	<p>Prompts the release of adrenalin, hence association with aggression & fear. Problems that respond to red include clogged circulation, irregularities of blood supply, hardening of arteries, infertility, exhaustion & anaemia.</p>	<p>Eliminate unwanted & negativity, get shy person to come out of themselves, feel more powerful & energised, put life back into action, increase sexual drive.</p>	<p>Chief, resolute, fighting, vigorous, diligent, appreciative, reviving.</p>	<p>Brutal, lecherous prejudiced, harsh, bullying, obstinate, dishonourable.</p>
<p>Orange – Action – Indolence</p> <p>Self-reliance and practical knowledge. Genial, optimistic, tolerant, benign, warm-hearted. Friendship, life & soul of the party. Subtle, peaceful, without being tranquil. Colour of knowledge, discernment.</p>	<p>Usually good cooks or good at sport. One who thinks, ponders, contemplates often have orange in their field, mental part.</p>	<p>Lower back, lower intestines, abdomen, kidneys. Glands are adrenal glands (& our gut instinct).</p>	<p>Breaks down barriers & assimilates learnings from the past. It moves on, e.g. from divorce. Gives the courage to face consequences. It accepts what is – and then allows you to change it. Quiet, grounding, more refined than red, subtle.</p>	<p>Bring change into your life, deal with grief/bereavement / loss, reduce shock of outrage, add strength to pull you through adversity, remove inhibitions, overcome fear of moving forward.</p>	<p>Lavish, tender, unselfish, liberal, brave, genial, vital.</p>	<p>Arrogant, gloomy, domineering, free-loading, deceptive, vain.</p>

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Summary	People	Associated body parts / glands	Physiological effect	Used to	Positive keywords	Negative keywords
<p>Yellow – Alertness – Evasion</p> <p>Of the mind, precise & optimistic (mimics light / sunshine), clear & in control. Focuses attention, loves new ideas, flexible & adaptable. Decides quickly & act immediately. Smartens reflexes. Great communication, no shortage of words, unifies & connects (through networking). Financial ambition. As executive, has ability to get things done. Despises pettiness. Has self-control, style & sophistication. Sunny & willing unless upset when they can be acid & sharp-tongued.</p>	<p>Scientists, journalists, entertainers.</p>	<p>Pancreas, solar plexus, liver, gall bladder, spleen, digestive system, middle stomach, skin & nervous system.</p>	<p>Gets rid of toxins & stimulates the flow of gastric juices.</p>	<p>Clear away confusion & negative thinking, boost low self-esteem, lift depression, & overcome fears & phobias.</p>	<p>Fresh, unprejudiced incisive, fair, speedy, sharp, honest, clarity, upliftment</p>	<p>Cynical, faithless, preoccupied, superficial, hasty, critical, imprecise.</p>

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Summary	People	Associated body parts / glands	Physiological effect	Used to	Positive keywords	Negative keywords
<p>Green – Stable – Unstable</p> <p>Harmony, stability, balance. Idealistic socially aware, helpful & selfless. Dependable & diplomatic. Clarity & understanding, self-acceptance. Giving & sharing.</p>	<p>Healers, doctors & nurses. Love working outdoors.</p>	<p>Heart, shoulders, chest & lower lungs Gland is thymus.</p>	<p>Disinfects, detoxifies & enhances physical stamina. Can purify and cleanse areas of the auric field as well as physical.</p>	<p>Aid memory, as a tonic, for shock & fatigue.</p>	<p>Discreet, sensible, fruitful, benevolent, tolerant, talented.</p>	<p>Suspicious, bitter, unmindful, greedy, bland, undependable, disappointed.</p>
<p>Blue – Wisdom – Stupidity</p> <p>Spirit of truth & higher order of intelligence. Soothing, brings rest; cools & calms. Contemplation. Quiet & discriminating. Peace with a purpose. Integrity, honour & sincerity. Subtle manipulation. Cleansing colour. Vibration is cool/soft but also resonates wisdom of a spiritual nature.</p>	<p>Highly inventive, poets, philosophers and writers.</p>	<p>Throat area, upper lungs and arms, base of the skull. Glands are thyroid & parathyroids.</p>	<p>Slows down & even retards growth.</p>	<p>Light a sick room (cools & calms), promote tranquillity, counteract internal terror.</p>	<p>Serene, virtuous, sacred, reflective, peaceful, harmonious, faithful.</p>	<p>Feeble, emotionally unbalanced, malicious, egotistical, unresponsive, dishonest, ruthless.</p>



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Summary	People	Associated body parts / glands	Physiological effect	Used to	Positive keywords	Negative keywords
<p>Indigo – Devout – Faithless</p> <p>Force & power, transmutes & purifies. Sees more than apparent. No in-betweens: all or nothing. Negatives are fanaticism, addictions.</p>	<p>Aspire to be spiritual masters, are inspired preachers & writers; lawyers & actors.</p>	<p>Skeleton, especially the backbone; the lower brain, eyes & sinuses. Gland is pituitary.</p>		<p>Kill pain, cure deep emotional hurt.</p>	<p>Discerning, organized, optimistic, tenacious, pure, compliant.</p>	<p>Immoderate authoritarian, submissive, puritanical, obsessed, false.</p>
<p>Purple – Serenity – Hostility</p> <p>Royal, ruler, power, spiritual master, perception. Protector, spirit of mercy. Visionary, psychic perception. Humility & sacrifice. Negative can be belligerent & treacherous. Helps people with peace, reaching to higher levels, alters thought. Patience.</p>	<p>Clergymen, musicians & painters.</p>	<p>Top of head (crown, brain & scalp). Gland is pineal.</p>		<p>Relieve eyestrain, long exposure may be depressing so use sparingly. Good sterilising colour for physical spaces, atmospheres.</p>	<p>Magisterial, altruistic, noble, personal, artistic, boundless, mystic.</p>	<p>Merciless, spiritually haughty, self-important, depraved, snobbish, dictatorial.</p>



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Summary	People	Associated body parts / glands	Physiological effect	Used to	Positive keywords	Negative keywords
<p>Black – Abundance - Nothingness</p> <p>Keeps control by not giving information to others, something lying dormant or buried. Negative may believe that there's nothing to look forward to, afraid of what's coming next. Freedom through discipline. Can be the colour of complete rest. It can shield, conceal one's auric field from being seen. Completeness. Mystic arts, mysterious, the unknown.</p>	<p>“Young, ready & totally in control”.</p>	<p>No associated body parts.</p>		<p>Encourage self-discipline.</p>	<p>Beneficially strong, creative, idealistic, secretly wealthy.</p>	<p>Destructively strong, troublesome, superior, despairing, constrained.</p>
<p>White – Unspoiled – Dirty</p> <p>Purity, brilliance, supreme faith, hope. Cosmic light of love, peace, all that is purity.</p>	<p>Civil servants, bankers and ergonomic consultants.</p>	<p>Eyeballs.</p>		<p>As a tonic.</p>	<p>Unsullied, comprehensive, benevolent, truthful, concordant.</p>	<p>Secluded, barren, harsh, rigid, unsuccessful.</p>

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Summary	People	Associated body parts / glands	Physiological effect	Used to	Positive keywords	Negative keywords
<p> Grey – Black – White Can be soothing neutral colours, protective, comforting. Destruction, breaking the chains that bind, making way for the new. Persistence, endurance. Can be conventional to the point of narrow-mindedness; suffering, poverty. Mental time out.</p>	Do the jobs that no one else wants to do.	No associated body parts, but represents breakdown. If skin & nails have grey tint, indicates congestion somewhere.		Light grey is soothing, can help to restore sanity.	Well-versed, sane, authentic, reputable, spartan.	Destitute, carping, dispirited, ill, miserable, depressed.
<p> Turquoise – Autonomy – Egotism Single-minded, self comes first. Says what feels, not what's appropriate. Can be deceived about self.</p>	Antique dealers, people that work with animals.	Throat, chest	Feeds the central nervous system.	Sooth throat & chest, speak up for self in relationships, encourage self-questioning & work out what is wanted. Dispel emotional shock.	Calm, introspective, self-reliant, self-possessed.	Reserved, indecisive, undependable, boastful, narcissistic.

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Summary	People	Associated body parts / glands	Physiological effect	Used to	Positive keywords	Negative keywords
<p> Gold – Faith – Doubt Purity, “I am” Access to knowledge of self, forgiveness & letting go of the past, expands the power of love through trusting completely, honour among men, gracious. Resonates with higher mind; often denotes a master, wisdom, consciousness, mastery and knowledge. It is a warm and uplifting vibration, soothing but stimulating.</p>	Wise old sages, masters.	No associated body parts.		Uplift where tendencies towards depression or suicide.	Mature, enlightened, abundant, lenient, achieving.	Cynical, mistrusting, obstructive, sullen, misfitting.
<p> Silver – Increasing – Decreasing Illuminates & pierces, lights up the path. Specific cleansing vibration, sign of advancement, spirituality. Transition, moving from one phase to another. Negative can be delusion.</p>	Creators of make-believe work.	No associated body parts.		Resolve disputes (it takes unbiased stand).	Revealing, contemplative, impartial, astute, flowing.	Deceitful, disconnected, slippery, inauthentic.

6.1.4 *How colour is used in medical healthcare settings*

Whereas colour healing modalities might be influenced by historical use and traditions, intuition and experience, the application of colour in today's modern healthcare settings is more informed by scientific research, psychological theories, and design principles. However, it still recognizes colour as a critical element in the design of healing environments and many of their findings reinforce what the colour healers already know.

6.1.4.1 *Evidence-based design*

The concept of evidence-based design (EBD) involves using research and evidence to guide the design of healthcare environments. Numerous studies have shown that thoughtful colour choices can improve patient outcomes by reducing stress, enhancing comfort, and even shortening hospital stays.

For example, a study published in the journal "Health Environments Research & Design"¹³ found that patients in rooms with soothing colours experienced lower levels of anxiety and higher levels of satisfaction compared to those in more traditional, sterile rooms. Another study indicated that exposure to natural colours, such as green and blue, can promote healing by enhancing emotional well-being and creating a sense of calm.

6.1.4.2 *Environmental psychology*

In the field of environmental psychology, it has long been recognized that our surroundings significantly affect our emotions and overall well-being. One aspect of this is colour. In healing environments such as hospitals, clinics, therapy centres and healing centres, the strategic use of colour can play a role in promoting physical and psychological health, aiding in recovery, and creating a comforting atmosphere.

"Colour psychology" examines how colours influence human behaviour, emotions, and cognitive processes. Research, mainly undertaken in hospitals and clinical environments, has shown that colours can evoke specific emotional responses, which can be leveraged to create calming, uplifting, or restorative environments.¹⁴

- **Blue:** Often associated with calmness and serenity, blue has been shown to lower heart rate and blood pressure, making it ideal for stress reduction.¹⁵

¹³ Ulrich, R. S., Zimring, C., Zhu, X., DuBose, J., Seo, H. B., Choi, Y. S., & Joseph, A. (2008). "A review of the research literature on evidence-based healthcare design." *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal*, 1(3), 61-125.

¹⁴ Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A, as above.

¹⁵ Küller, R., Mikellides, B., & Janssens, J. (2006). "Color, arousal, and performance—A comparison of three experiments", *Color Research & Application*, 31(4), 345-353.

- **Green:** Symbolizing nature and renewal, green promotes relaxation and has been linked to improved recovery times in hospital settings.¹⁶
- **Yellow:** Associated with energy and optimism, yellow can stimulate mental activity and uplift mood. However, overuse may cause agitation.¹⁷
- **Red:** Known to increase heart rate and stimulate appetite, red is often used in dining areas but may be overwhelming in patient rooms.¹⁸
- **Neutral tones (beige, grey, white):** These colours provide a sense of cleanliness and neutrality, often used as a backdrop in healthcare settings to avoid overstimulation.¹⁹

6.1.4.3 Physiological responses

Colours do not only affect emotions; they also have measurable physiological impacts through their impact on the autonomic nervous system. For example:

- **Blue and green:** These colours have been shown to reduce cortisol levels, a hormone associated with stress.²⁰
- **Red:** Can increase adrenaline production, which may be beneficial in short bursts but detrimental in high-stress environments.²¹
- **Warm colours (orange, yellow):** Can stimulate appetite and social interaction, making them suitable for dining areas or communal spaces.²²

6.1.4.4 Biophilic design

Biophilic design incorporates natural elements, including colour, to create environments that mimic nature. This approach has been shown to reduce stress and improve well-being.²³ For example:

- **Natural greens and blues:** These colours evoke the sky and foliage, promoting relaxation and connection to nature.

¹⁶ Ulrich, R. S. (1984). "View through a window may influence recovery from surgery", *Science*, 224(4647), 420-421.

¹⁷ Kwallek, N., Lewis, C. M., & Robbins, A. S. (1997). "Effects of office interior color on workers' mood and productivity", *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 84(1), 43-51

¹⁸ Elliot A.J., Maier M.A., Moller A.C., Friedman R., & Meinhardt J., (2007), "Color and psychological functioning: the effect of red on performance attainment", *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Feb 2007 Issue 136, pp154-68

¹⁹ Mahnke, F. H. (1996), *Color, environment, and human response: An interdisciplinary understanding of color and its use as a beneficial element in the design of the architectural environment*. Wiley.

²⁰ Küller, R., Mikellides, B., & Janssens, J. (2009). "Color, arousal, and performance—A comparison of three experiments", *Color Research & Application*, 34(2), 141-152.

²¹ Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A, as above.

²² Mahnke, F. H., as above.

²³ Kellert, S. R., Heerwagen, J., & Mador, M. (2008), *Biophilic design: The theory, science, and practice of bringing buildings to life*. Wiley.

- **Earthy browns and beiges:** These tones create a grounded, stable atmosphere.

6.1.4.5 *The role of natural light*

Natural light plays a crucial role in the perception of colour and can also significantly impact a healing environment. Natural light enhances the vibrancy of colours, while artificial lighting can alter their appearance.²⁴

Incorporating large windows, skylights, and open spaces that allow natural light to flood the room can make a space feel more open and inviting. Using light-filtering curtains or blinds can help control the amount of light and avoid glare, ensuring that the environment remains comfortable.

6.1.4.6 *Colour harmony*

So we now have all these colour recommendations, how do they pull them together? Harmonious colour schemes are essential in healing environments to avoid visual clutter and overstimulation. Designers often use the 60-30-10 rule:

- 60% dominant colour (e.g., walls)
- 30% secondary colour (e.g., furniture)
- 10% accent colour (e.g., decor).²⁵

Other techniques often used are:

- **Layering colours:** Using multiple shades of the same colour to create depth and interest. For example, different shades of blue can be layered to create a calm and sophisticated atmosphere.
- **Accent colours:** Incorporating accent colours to bring warmth and energy without overwhelming the space. For example, a few yellow or orange accents can brighten up a room without making it too stimulating.
- **Natural elements:** Combining colours with natural elements such as wood, stone, and plants to create a more organic and comforting environment. This combination can help patients feel more connected to nature and less confined.
- **Personalization:** Allowing for some degree of personalization in patient rooms. Giving patients control over some aspects of their environment, such as choosing a small accent piece in their favourite colour, can enhance their comfort and recovery. We see this used more in rest home settings than in hospital and therapeutic settings where patients and clients don't stay long. However, advances in technology

²⁴ Küller, R., Mikellides, B., & Janssens, J. (2006), as above

²⁵ Mahnke, F. H., as above.

such as smart lighting systems, now allow for customizable colour schemes tailored to individual preferences and needs.²⁶

6.1.4.7 How the use of colour is being applied in health care settings

This is a lot to consider. Examples of how this information has been applied to healthcare environments to enhance their therapeutic potential, include:

- **Warm colours (red, orange)** tend to increase arousal, energy levels and positivity.

Warm colours like yellow, orange, and red can evoke warmth, energy, and positivity. These colours have been found to be great for areas where stimulation and energy are required, such as physical therapy rooms.

Yellow is a cheerful and uplifting colour that can create a welcoming atmosphere. It is often used in small doses or combined with other colours to avoid overstimulation. Similarly, orange can bring energy and enthusiasm, making it suitable for areas where a positive and active vibe is needed.

Red, though it should be used sparingly, can stimulate the senses and increase energy levels. It can be integrated into accent pieces or artwork to bring a touch of vibrancy to the space without becoming overwhelming.

- **Cool colours (blue, green)** promote relaxation and reduce stress.²⁷

Cool colours like blue, green, and purple are often used in healthcare settings to promote a sense of calm and tranquillity. These hues can lower blood pressure, reduce heart rates, and decrease anxiety. Blue, for example, is known to have a calming effect, making it ideal for spaces where patients need to relax and feel at ease, such as waiting rooms or private patient rooms.

Green, which symbolizes nature, can promote healing by creating a connection with the outdoors. This colour is particularly effective in reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of balance and harmony. Incorporating green through plants, wall colours, or artwork can make a healing space feel more natural and less clinical.

²⁶ Veitch, J. A. (2001). "Psychological processes influencing lighting quality", *Journal of the Illuminating Engineering Society*, 30(1), 124-140.

²⁷ Azeemi, S. T., & Raza, as above.

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Purple, especially in lighter shades like lavender, is associated with tranquillity and stress reduction. It can be used in areas designated for rest and recovery to create a soothing environment.

- **Neutral colours** (white, beige, grey) promote balance and clarity

Neutral colours provide a balanced backdrop that can be soothing and unobtrusive. These colours help avoid visual clutter and create a clean, orderly environment conducive to healing. They also complement other colours, allowing for accents and artwork to stand out without being too dominant.

White, often associated with cleanliness and purity, can be used in clinical areas where hygiene is a priority. However, overuse of white can feel cold and impersonal, so it is best balanced with warmer or calming hues.

Grey and beige offer a more comforting and less stark alternative to white. These colours can create a sense of warmth and homeliness, making patients feel more at ease.

In practice, we find the following evidence-based applications in modern healthcare settings. This considers more than just the colour impact on the client, but also impact on the medical staff and practical considerations.

- **Hospitals and clinics**
 - Patient rooms: Soft blues and greens in patient rooms can reduce anxiety and promote restful sleep, with plants in the common areas.²⁸
 - Waiting rooms: Again, soft blues and greens to promote relaxation and reduce anxiety.
 - Operating rooms: Neutral tones with subtle accents of blue or green are preferred to minimize visual fatigue and create a calming atmosphere for medical staff.²⁹
 - Rehabilitation and physical therapy areas: Warmer colours to stimulate energy and motivation.

²⁸ Park, S. H., & Mattson, R. H. (2009), "Ornamental indoor plants in hospital rooms enhanced health outcomes of patients recovering from surgery" *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 15(9), 975-980.

²⁹ Joseph, A. (2006). "The role of the physical environment in promoting health, safety, and effectiveness in the healthcare workplace", *The Center for Health Design*.

- Paediatric wards: Bright, cheerful colours like yellow and orange are often used to create a welcoming environment for children, though care is taken to avoid overstimulation.³⁰
- Clinics: Neutral colours with soothing accents to create a professional yet comforting atmosphere. Important areas such as reception highlighted with welcoming colours like yellow or light orange.
- Therapy centres: A variety of colours to evoke different moods and support various types of therapy. For example, use blue for relaxation
- **Mental Health Facilities**
 - Calming colours: Blues and greens are commonly used in mental health facilities to reduce agitation and promote emotional stability.³¹
 - Accent colours: Pops of warm colours like orange or red can be used sparingly to stimulate energy and positivity in common areas.³²
- **Long-Term Care Facilities**
 - Earthy tones: Colours like beige, taupe, and soft greens are used to create a homely, comforting atmosphere for elderly residents.³³
 - Contrasting colours: High-contrast colour schemes are employed to aid residents with visual impairments in navigating their environment.³⁴

6.1.5 Cultural considerations

Colour preferences and meanings vary across cultures. For example: in Western cultures, white symbolizes purity and cleanliness, while in some Eastern cultures, it is associated with mourning.³⁵ So healers and designers should also consider the cultural context of the client population when selecting colours.

The following table lists some of the cultural implications of colours.³⁶

³⁰ Daykin, N., Byrne, E., Soteriou, T., & O'Connor, S. (2008), "The impact of art, design and environment in mental healthcare: A systematic review of the literature", *Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 128(2), 85-94.

³¹ Ulrich, R. S., Zimring, C., Zhu, X., DuBose, J., Seo, H. B., Choi, Y. S., & Joseph, A., as above

³² Mahnke, F. H., as above.



³³ Cohen-Mansfield, J., & Werner, P. (1999), "Outdoor wandering parks for persons with dementia: A survey of characteristics and use", *Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders*, 13(2), 109-117.

³⁴ Calkins, M. P. (2009), "Evidence-based long-term care design", *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 35(11), 10-14.



³⁵ Kaya, N., & Epps, H. H. (2004), "Relationship between color and emotion: A study of college students", *College Student Journal*, 38(3), 396-405.

³⁶ From: <http://snaggdit.com/art-science-color-theory/>




SPIRITUALISM NEW ZEALAND HEALING MANUAL

	Western (European & North American)	Eastern & Asian	Latin American	African	Middle Eastern	South Pacific	Worldwide
 Red	Danger, Love, Passion, Excitement, Sacrifice, Stop, Christmas (with green), Power Parts of Europe: Masculinity Celtic: Death, Afterlife Russia: Communism	Joy (with White), Bridal Colour China: Celebration, Good Luck, Happiness, Long Life, Summoning India: Purity Japan: Life	Mexico: Religion (with White)	Death Nigeria: Wealth, Vitality, Aggression Some Areas: Good Luck Cote d'Ivoire & South Africa: Mourning	Egypt: Luck Iran: Good fortune	Australia (Aboriginals): Life, Earth New Zealand (Māori): Nobility, Divinity	
 Orange	Autumn, Harvest Ireland: Protestants Netherlands: Royalty (Very Popular) Ukraine: Strength United States: Halloween (with Black)	India (Hindu): Sacred (the Colour Saffron) Japan: Courage, Love			Egypt: Mourning		




SPIRITUALISM NEW ZEALAND HEALING MANUAL

	Western (European & North American)	Eastern & Asian	Latin American	African	Middle Eastern	South Pacific	Worldwide
 Yellow	Hope, Happiness, Weakness, Hazards, Taxis, Warmth Germany: Envy Italy: Summer Ukraine: Hospitality, Benevolence	Sacred, Imperial China: Royalty, Nourishing India: Commerce Japan: Courage	Mexico: Mourning	Ethiopia: Mourning South Africa (Zulu): Wealth	Egypt: Mourning Saudi Arabia: Strength, Reliability		
 Green	Environmental Awareness, Spring, New Birth, Go, Christmas (with Red), St Patrick's Day France: Not a Good Colour for Packaging Ireland: National Colour, Catholicism Unites States: Money	China: Exorcism, Infidelity (Green Hats), Not a Good Colour for Packaging India: Islam Japan: Life, High- tech		North Africa: Corruption South Africa (Zulu): Nature	Holiness Egypt: National Colour, Fertility, Not a good colour for packaging	Indonesia: Forbidden Colour Malaysia & Some Areas: Danger	Military (Olive Green)

SPIRITUALISM NEW ZEALAND HEALING MANUAL

	Western (European & North American)	Eastern & Asian	Latin American	African	Middle Eastern	South Pacific	Worldwide
 Blue	Soothing Scandinavia: Cleanliness Ukraine: Good Health United States: Baby Boys (Light Blue), Used by Many Banks to Symbolise Trust	China: Immortality India (Hindu): Krishna	Colombia: Soap	Nigeria (Yoruba): Very Positive South Africa (Zulu): Happiness	Protective Iran: Heaven, Immortality, Spirituality Israel: Holiness		Often Considered to be the "Safest" and "Most Positive" global colour.
 Voilet & purple	Royalty	China: Nobility India: Reincarnation Thailand: Mourning	Brazil: Mourning		Egypt: Virtue		
 Pink	Feminine United States: Baby Girls	Marriage East India: Feminine Japan: Popular with Both Genders Korea: Trust		South Africa (Zulu): Poverty			

SPIRITUALISM NEW ZEALAND HEALING MANUAL

	Western (European & North American)	Eastern & Asian	Latin American	African	Middle Eastern	South Pacific	Worldwide
 White	Marriage, Peace, Purity, Hospitals Italy: Death & Funerals (White Chrysanthemum)	Funerals, Coldness, Sterility China: Death, Mourning, Age, Misfortune India: Unhappiness, Death, Rebirth Japan: Mourning (White Carnation)		Ethiopia: Illness, Purity Nigeria: Good Luck, Peace South Africa (Zulu): Goodness Zambia: Goodness, Cleanliness, Good Luck	Egypt: Status Iran: Holiness, Peace	New Guinea: Prosperity	
 Grey	Poverty, Plainness					Papua New Guinea: Mourning	
 Black	Funerals, Death, Mourning, Formality, Rebellion	China: Colour for Young Boys, Trust, High Quality Thailand: Bad Luck, Unhappiness, Evil Tibet: Evil	Peru: Mourning, Favoured Colour for Male Clothing	Ethiopia: Impure, Unpleasant Nigeria: Ominous	Egypt: Rebirth Iran: Mourning	New Zealand: Patriotic, National Colour Australia (Aboriginals): Colour of the People	

SPIRITUALISM NEW ZEALAND HEALING MANUAL

	Western (European & North American)	Eastern & Asian	Latin American	African	Middle Eastern	South Pacific	Worldwide
 Brown	Earthy, Healthy, Poverty United States: Often a Greatly Successful Colour for Food Packaging	India: Mourning	Colombia: Discourages Sales Nicaragua: Disapproval			Australia (Aboriginals): Colour of the Land	
 Silver	Money, Stylish						
 Gold							Money, Success, High Quality



SPIRITUALISM NEW ZEALAND HEALING MANUAL

6.1.6 Learning for spiritual healers

The strategic use of colour in our healing environments has the potential to enhance client outcomes, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being. By drawing on historical and traditional practices, psychological research, and design principles, we can create spaces that will help relax the client and assist the spiritual healing.

For example, by using soft, muted tones as the dominant colours like pale blues and greens we can promote calmness and reduce anxiety. By using warm colours such as light yellows and oranges we can uplift mood and create a welcoming atmosphere. Natural light combined with carefully chosen colour palettes helps in improving mental clarity (and regulating sleep patterns). Incorporating soothing neutral colours can also diminish the perception of pain and foster a sense of tranquillity.

However, selecting the most appropriate colours is complicated. While colour healing modalities and research provides general guidelines, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to using colour in healing environments. The colour preferences and responses of our clients will also be highly individual, influenced by their personal experiences, cultural background, and psychological state. And even if you think you have the perfect colour solution, any perceived colour in a space is also influenced by lighting conditions at the time. If using blankets to keep clients warm, let the client select the colour of the blanket. If using healing beds which have coloured covers, again allow the client to select which bed they prefer if there is a choice.

The reality for many of us is that unless we are redecorating or setting up a new healing space, we don't often have the ability to change the decor of the environments in which we are healing. In such a case, we just need to be aware of any potential colour conflicts for our clients or ourselves, and do the best to avoid or limit them. As society's understanding of colour psychology and environmental design continues to evolve, so too will our ability to harness the healing power of colour. If we are fortunate enough to be able to decorate our healing spaces, involving a colour consultant experienced with healing environments might well be worthwhile - and save a lot stress!