

THE THEORY OF FENG SHUI & MENTAL HEALTH



EXTERIOR RENDERING



LOBBY RENDERING

Fish tanks incorporate all of the Feng Shui Elements

Wood Floors ground the space

Metal focus wall brings in the energy for the metal sector

Living things bring energy to the space

Rounded front desk creates energy flow



BREAK ROOM RENDERING

Images of the outdoors bring in the earth element

Stone table tops help balance the space

Views of the outdoors help users feel better and focus more

White emphasis for the white sector brings good energy



OPEN CONCEPT WORK AREA

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

In the workplace
12.7%
OF SICK DAYS ARE ATTRIBUTED TO MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

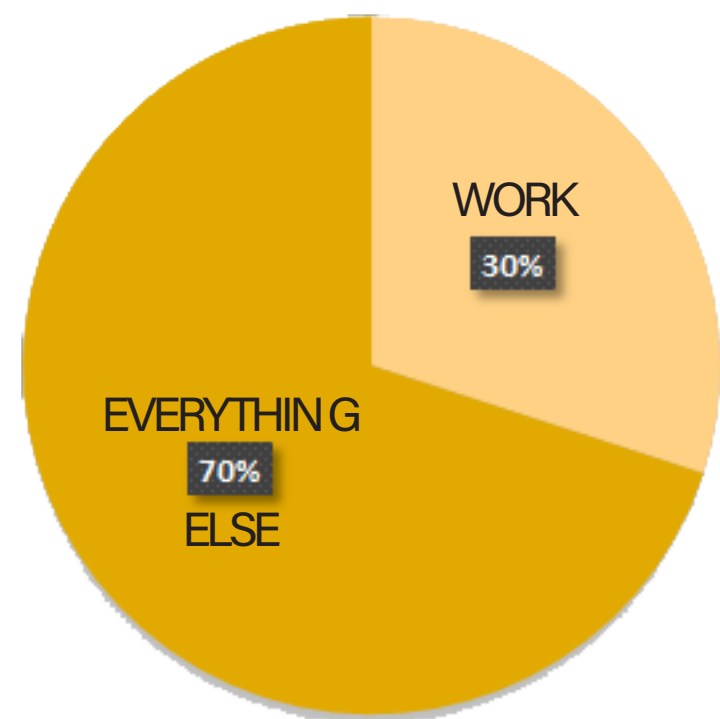
In the workplace
WOMEN ARE 2X
MORE LIKELY to have mental health issues than men

1 in 6.8 people experience mental health problems in the workplace

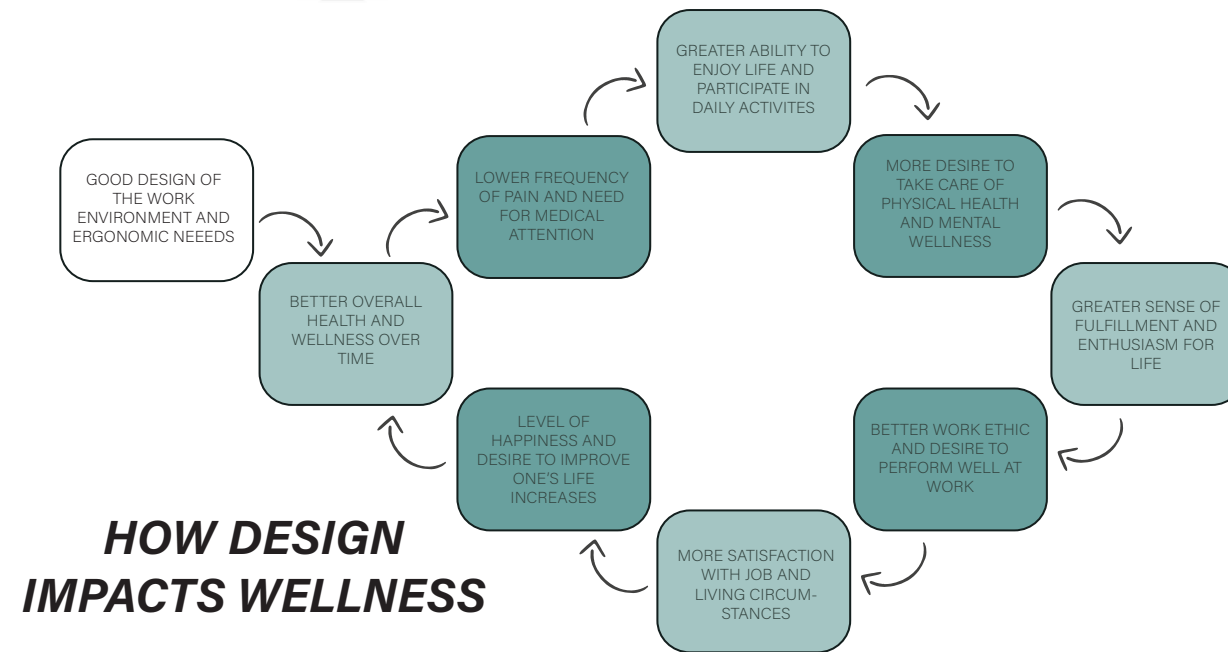
DEPRESSION INTERFERES WITH A PERSON'S ABILITY TO COMPLETE PHYSICAL TASKS
20%
OF THE TIME

DEPRESSION REDUCES COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE
35%
OF THE TIME

WHAT AN EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE NEEDS



TIME SPENT AT WORK OVER A LIFETIME

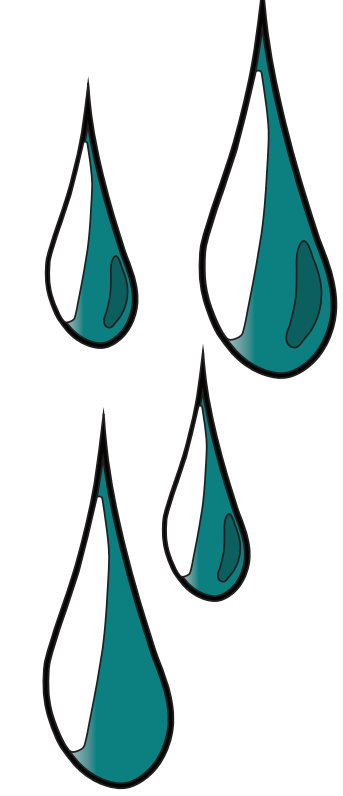


HOW DESIGN IMPACTS WELLNESS

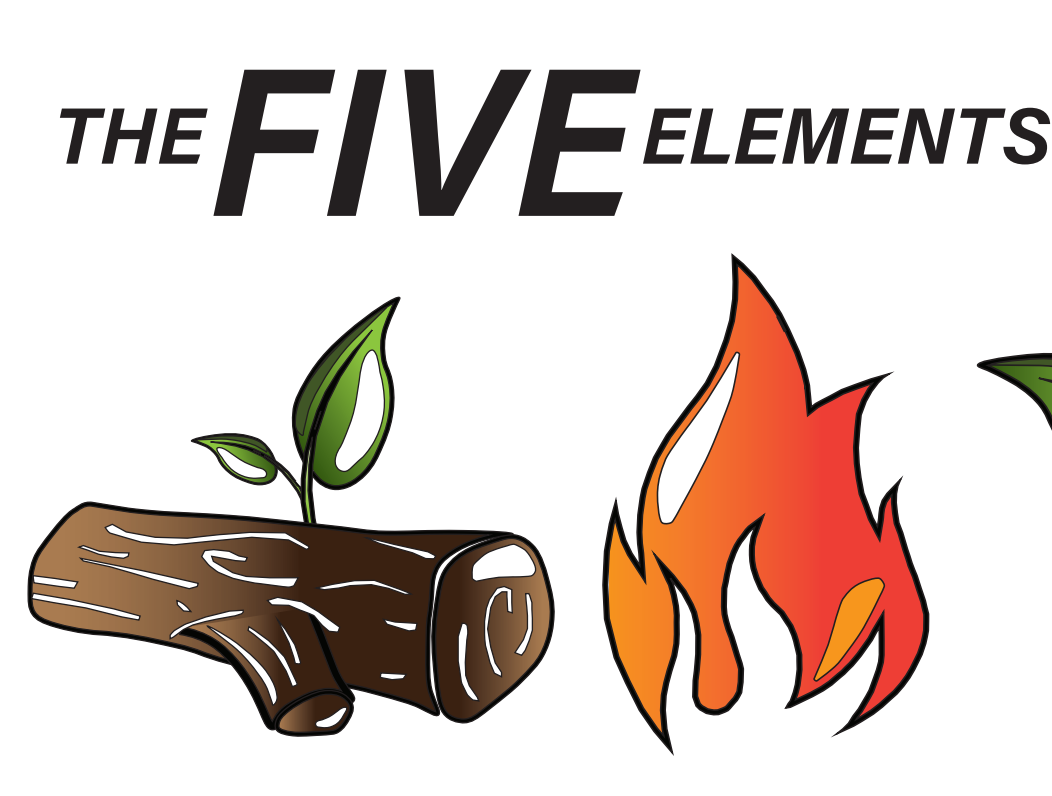
FENG SHUI

\ 'fəŋ-'shwē, -'shwā \

: a Chinese geomantic practice in which a structure or site is chosen or configured so as to harmonize with the spiritual forces that inhabit it also : orientation, placement, or arrangement according to the precepts of feng shui



WATER
COLOR: Blue/Black
DIRECTION: North
TRAIT: Emotional & Inspiration
BA-GUA SECTOR: Money & Career



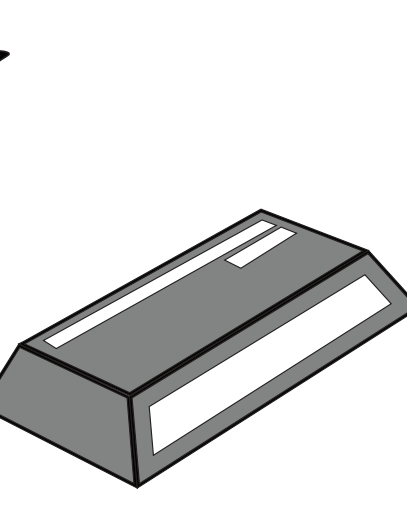
WOOD
COLOR: Green
DIRECTION: East/SE
TRAIT: Creativity & Growth
BA-GUA SECTOR: Family & Wealth



FIRE
COLOR: Red/Orange
DIRECTION: South
TRAIT: Leadership & Boldness
BA-GUA SECTOR: Fame



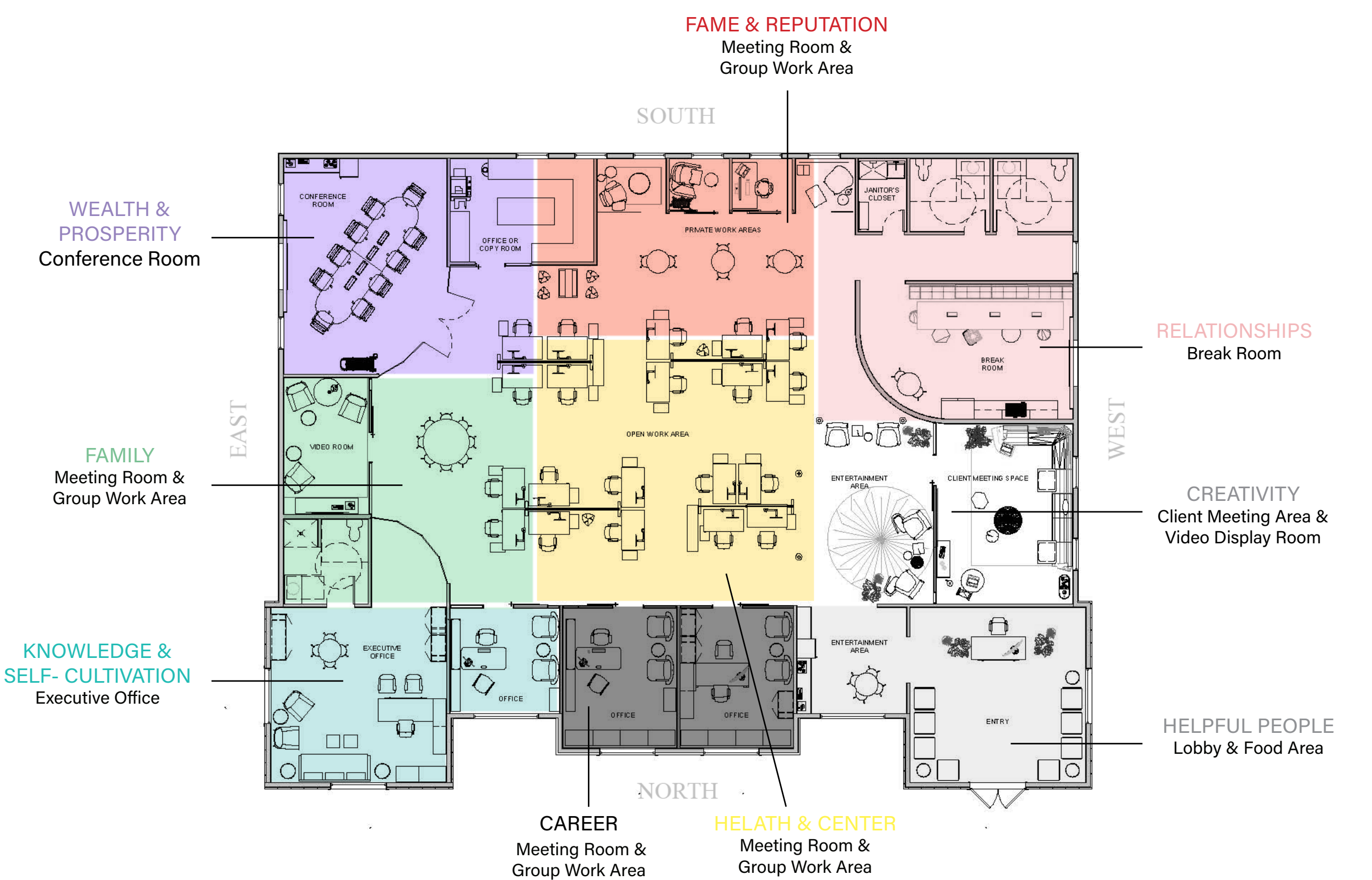
EARTH
COLOR: Brown/Yellow
DIRECTION: NE/SW/Center
TRAIT: Strength & Stability
BA-GUA SECTOR: Knowledge, Relationships, & Contemplation



METAL
COLOR: Metallic
DIRECTION: West/NW
TRAIT: Focus & Order
BA-GUA SECTOR: Children & Helpful People

WEALTH + PROSPERITY SE or Rear Left Purple, blue, red Wood Element	FAME + REPUTATION S or Rear Middle Red Fire Element	RELATIONSHIPS SW or Rear Right Pink, red, white Earth Element
FAMILY E or Middle Left Green Wood Element	HEALTH (CENTER) Yellow, orange, earth tones	CHILDREN + CREATIVITY W or Middle Right White Metal Element
KNOWLEDGE + SELF-CULTIVATION SW or Front Left Blue, green, black Earth Element	CAREER N or FRONT DOOR Black Water Element	TRAVEL + HELPFUL PEOPLE NW or Front Right White, Gray, Black Metal Element

THE BAGUA MAP



REAL ESTATE OFFICE FLOOR PLAN

A pivotal part of the Feng Shui process is aligning the floor plan with the bagua. The placement of rooms corresponding with the bagua creates spaces of emphasis that allow the energy to focus on that trait in that area. For example, the relationships section aligns with the break room. When individuals congregate in the break room, this alignment will encourage healthy relationships to form among employees. Conference rooms aligning with the wealth and prosperity sector have shown an increase in the wealth and prosperity within the company and the individuals who work there. This principle is applicable to all of the spaces within this facility.

ABSTRACT:

Design is about solving problems in the most beautiful and functional way possible. Within the profession it is the designer's responsibility and obligation to provide practical, meaningful, and healthy spaces wherein people will thrive. Similar to most design projects, the sector of workplace design focuses significantly on the mental health and psychological wellness of the employees that use the space in order to combat the negative effects of bad design on long term health.

According to an article published by Gettysburg College, the average person will spend approximately one-third of their life, or about 90,000 hours at work over a lifetime. Because of the sheer amount of time individuals spend in their respective work spaces during their professional careers, it is very important to establish rules and guidelines that keep residents happy and healthy while they work. One of these established guidelines is Feng Shui.

Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese practice that when used correctly and exactly has been known to enhance spaces, create harmony between elements and can lead to prosperity and wealth. Feng Shui is used specifically in building design and is thought to cause favorable or unfavorable effects on the user based on the arrangement and material selection in a space. Research supports the use of Feng Shui as a means to enhance the user's experience in a space. It also suggests that good design practices, even if not exactly following the laws of Feng Shui, will also create a better and healthier work environment than a space with poor design. Ultimately, interviews and articles indicated that good design and Feng Shui greatly overlap. Though Feng Shui is not always the only solution to all workplace design problems, it is a great way to enhance the mental well being of users in a space.

INTRODUCTION:

In one of my classes, my teacher taught us about a Chinese design theory called Feng Shui. After learning about this theory and the positive effects it brings to the people who abide by its rules, I was curious about whether or not it could be applied to the workplace in addition to home design to bring similar positive effects on mental health and wellness.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify whether or not Feng Shui is an effective method to increase mental health and wellness in workplace design.
2. Identify effective means to incorporate Feng Shui into design.
3. Discover what specific things impact the way a room feels and functions in regard to mental wellness and health.

METHODS:

1. Interview professionals about their design process and its relation to Feng Shui.
2. Read a variety of materials relating to workplace design, Feng Shui, and wellness.
3. Compare famous design with Feng Shui concepts and find correlation and differentiation.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Since the average worker spends 1/3 of their life in at their job, it is vital for employers to provide a safe and happy environment if they want their employees to thrive.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

A large portion of my research came as I interview professionals in the field of interior design and architecture. These professionals lived in a variety of places in the United States ranging from San Francisco, California, to Portland, Oregon, to Salt Lake City, Utah. In addition to the location differences, each of the designers specialized in a different area of design within the commercial sector: multi-family housing, workplace design, large scale commercial, and religious. Despite these differences, the designers were for most part in agreement about all of the concepts of design that related to Feng Shui. For example I asked each of them respectively about whether or not they believed that environment impacts performance and they unanimously agreed that good design is directly correlated with increased performance and individual wellness. I found this very informing because this belief relates directly to existing scientific research backing the viewpoint that workplace design really does matter in terms of employee health and job satisfaction. It is estimated that the UK loses 570,000 hours per year due to workplace absences linked to poor building design. This is approximately \$5,900,000 US dollars lost by the working class every year. There has been extensive research about internal environmental quality and is even a required section in both WELL and LEED green building standards. Another question I addressed with the designers was about the relevancy of Feng Shui in workplace design. Almost all of the professionals had a basic idea of what Feng Shui was, but they didn't practice it regularly. I found this interesting because when I followed up with a question regarding technique and strategies for how they design, a lot of their methods aligned very similarly with the principles of Feng Shui. After digging deeper into this train of thought, we found more similarities in belief about lighting, furniture placement and even the concept of decluttering your spaces and how that always feels better. A workplace designer out of California said, "Feng Shui is a set of rules that make it possible for the average person to design well. As designers, we innately have those senses of good and bad design so the principles of Feng Shui are naturally incorporated into what we do." I also thought it was interesting because another designer mentioned that even if an employee doesn't like how the workplace looks, a better designed space will still make them feel better and live better. In addition to design professionals, I watched some lectures by professional Feng Shui Masters. They specialize in Feng Shui and had incredible stories about the change and impact Feng Shui principles had on individuals and companies world wide. One of these masters, Marie Diamond, claims that by adjusting a company's physical environment the company itself will see dramatic changes in their productivity and success.

CONCLUSION:

Feng Shui is an effect technique in creating design for wellness. The main purpose in using Feng Shui principles is to create balance and harmony. This feeling in turn correlates directly with mental health and has been seen to positively impact the user. As I interviewed professionals, their design concepts and rules correlated significantly with Feng Shui principles. These design principles discussed by the professionals are proven design techniques that impact wellness in the workplace and other design sectors. Though this area of expertise lacks hard scientific research, there are numerous individual stories and professional Feng Shui masters that have seen significant lifestyle improvements through the use of Feng Shui in homes, offices, and other means.