Depression Treatment and Prevention Center

Refurbishment of a 1940’s Old School
Vliegenbos, Amsterdam
INTRODUCTION

Depression is a ‘taboo’ in the society.

- too many people suffer from it, while very few actually discuss about it
- 50% of the depressed don’t get any treatment because they are not aware of their mental disease, or they are afraid to be stigmatized and they hide it
- It is time to educate ourselves about depression, and support the ones suffering from it

My goal

- to raise awareness about this mental disability at the level of the society
- by designing a clinic which puts the patient’s needs in the heart of the assignment
MY INTEREST IN DEPRESSION

1. My past experience with anxiety

- 70% of people with anxiety are expected to develop depression
- Psychotherapy methods are pretty similar in treating anxiety and depression
- Negative thoughts represent the main cause
- The challenge is to fight the negative thoughts, by denying them or converting them into positive ones

2. Having close friends with depression

- They tend to withdraw from the society
- They feel that nobody can understand them
WHY THERE ARE NO CLINICS FOCUSED ON TREATING DEPRESSION?

1. Worldwide

- ranked as the **no.1 cause of disability** by the World Health Organization
- over 350 million people suffer from depression
- 3000 people commit suicide every day and another 50000 attempt it

- it is the **most costly brain disorder**
- in Europe, 33% of the total cost spent on healthcare are for depression

2. The Netherlands

- is the **most clinically depressed country in Europe**
- 19% of people are expected to develop depression during lifetime

- 1,9 billion euros are spent for loss of production and 1 billion for treatment every year

3. Trimbos institute recommends an **alternative, cost-effective treatment** of depression:

- Closing large mental hospitals as there are too many psychiatric beds in The Netherlands
- Open activity centers at the level of the community as means of prevention and social support
HOW IS DEPRESSION TREATED IN THE NETHERLANDS?

Large mental hospital, Heiloo
HOW IS DEPRESSION TREATED IN THE NETHERLANDS?

Typical mental hospital corridor
How does it feel to visit a psychiatric clinic?

‘My first reaction was to run away...it was a negative environment.

...People around me had serious mental disorders and I was thinking that I am completely healthy compared to those people, so I should not be here.’

(Patient with depression)

‘...you are going to meet people very ill, that can make you more depressed just by seeing them, and thinking that you belong to the same group.’

(Henk-Willem Klaasen, social psychiatrist)
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Large mental hospital, Heiloo
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Psychiatric clinic, Castricum
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Mental care facilities, Castricum
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WHAT ARE THE PATIENTS’ NEEDS?

Patients’ experience:

‘...the state of panic transformed into disappointment and constant thoughts as “I am good of nothing”, with lack of energy to work and having an unhealthy lifestyle. Further, I experienced loss of interest for social activities, loss of hope and meaning in almost everything. In the end I had thoughts of suicide.’

Patients’ needs:

‘...I need a positive environment that makes me forget about my negative thoughts.’

1ST PREMISE confirmed!
HOW TO CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT?

Community

Patients

Community
ENGAGING IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Social group activities (sports, dancing, arts) are more effective in treating depression than group psychotherapy, because people have the sense of belonging to a group, instead of just showing up. *(Study 2014)*

2. Open activity centers at the level of the community for prevention and social support *(Trimbos)*
EFFECTS ON THE PATIENT - REDIscOVERYING WHAT THEY’VE LOST DURING DEPRESSION

- social interaction
- energy
- healthy lifestyle
- self-esteem
- meaning
- moral support
- hope
EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY - BRINGING NEW VALUES

awareness

responsibility

social bounds

new activities in the area
HYBRID TYPOLOGY

ACTIVITY CENTER

PSYCHIATRY

PATIENT ROOMS
PROGRAM (6000 m²)

A. ACTIVITY SPACES

1. Performing Arts (Theatre, Cinema, Dance)
2. Library
3. Arts & Crafts (Painting, Sculpture, Music, Sewing/other)
4. Gardening + Cooking School
5. Physical exercise (Swimming, gym, yoga)

B. INPATIENT FACILITIES

total of 40 beds
rooms of 2 beds
rooms of 4 beds
common living rooms

C. PSYCHIATRY & ADMINISTRATION

6 doctor offices
staff meeting rooms
medication rooms
changing rooms
archive
DOMINANT FEELING OF THE CLINIC
“Many people associate the depression clinic with something very negative and the challenge is to develop a different image - not focused on the psychical problems, but on the benefits of those activities for our well-being.’

(A. Muresan, psychologist)
THE SITE
AMSTERDAM NOORD
NEIGHBORHOOD TYPICAL IMAGE

Working class housing
GREEN AREAS

Vliegenbos Camping
Locals tend to engage in social and cultural activities.
Reason 1: People have the sense of ownership for the well-being of their neighborhood.
Reason 2: Between the city and the forest. Social inclusion in a green setting
Street Image
Forest atmosphere
Reason 3: Existing potential for new functions
Reason 4: Potential for a new extension
‘I lost the **balance** in my life...’
EXPERIENTIAL VALUE OF THE ELONGATED BUILDING CONCEPT

Depression experience curve

Building experience curve
GARDEN THEME

4 types of gardens at 6 different levels as transition between the interior and the park
CONSTRUCTION
CLIMATE
Elongated building issue
Technical spaces position advantages/disadvantages
Clima Level
Energy Glass

Sunlight → EnergyGlass™ → Artificial Light

Diffused Light → Backup Power Supplies → Charge Controller → Power Conversion → Power Storage System
Ventilation
Heating
Plan Street Level
LEARNING FROM THE OLD BUILDING

Transversal volumes - Extending to the park - extroverted
LEARNING FROM THE OLD BUILDING

Longitudinal volume - protected from the park - introverted
The corridor - most public space
Existing structure remains
INTERVENTIONS ON THE OLD BUILDING

North-South volumes - Open to the park - Activity spaces
INTERVENTIONS ON THE OLD BUILDING

North-South volumes - Open to the park - Activity spaces
INTERVENTIONS ON THE OLD BUILDING

In-between volumes - Intimate functions - Rooms/Psychiatry
INTERVENTIONS ON THE OLD BUILDING
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PUBLIC vs. PRIVATE
‘I think at the beginning would be difficult to interact with the public, but as a second stage, the energy of the others can have a good impact. Moreover, will give you the feeling that you are comfortable around people, and there is nothing to be ashamed of.’

(patient with depression)
PRIVATE EXPERIENCE
PUBLIC EXPERIENCE
The corridor - main tool - public & private mediator