

choice of flooring, the presence of handrails, the absence of barriers along paths, the use of protection (from sun or rain) and, as mentioned above, not using vegetation which can harm patients.

- *Possibility of choosing between places and functions.* Having a choice is very important for a patient from the psychological point of view; in the garden it is important to provide areas with different functions where different activities are carried out, and to allow the patient to choose between sunny or shaded, quiet and busy areas.
- *Family atmosphere.* Design can help in maintaining a family atmosphere in the garden, limiting separation from familiar things and through the creation of shared spaces and meeting areas.

In conclusion, it is desirable that the process of the design of healing gardens refers to the scientific evidence from environmental psychology and neuroscience (evidence-based design) (Senes and Toccolini, 2013), just as it is important, after the completion of the project, to assess whether the objectives have been achieved. With reference to the case study, the proposed project includes the use of the garden not only for relaxation, but also for *active* exploitation through the practice of horticulture. The proposed methodology can be applied to similar situations, although different types of patients may require different design choices, based on their needs as identified by both experts (focus groups) and the users themselves. Design choices, and materials, furniture and vegetation utilized, aim at ensuring patient safety, comfort, autonomy and freedom of choice. After the creation of the garden an evaluation of the project should be carried out, to verify its effectiveness from a therapeutic point of view.

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