

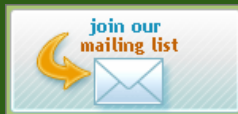


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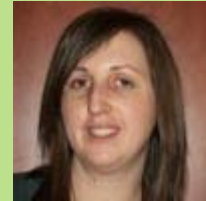
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## → Color Their World

We place a great deal of importance on structuring the environment in our day programs. Things like equipment, layout, lighting and background music are all significant but there probably isn't a better benefit-to-cost improvement than strategic use of interior paint. For consumers in our day programs, the use of color - both in the rooms and in art materials - can make a big difference in mood, attitude and behaviors. Some colors are uplifting, while others evoke a less desired behavior.



For example, I observed a consumer, Robert, sitting in a calming blue room at ADEC's Adult Habilitation site at The Shoots in Goshen. His mood varies, but his baseline tends to be rather mellow. Robert painted with the color red on his ceramic bowl with a great amount of care, attention, and positive expression. He was more focused, active, and alert due to his choice of visual stimuli and environment.

Color evokes an emotional language distinct to the people we serve. It is important to be sensitive to our consumer's personal associations with color from past events and relationships. Check in with them to see what colors spur the imagination or a past experience. Engage in a discussion about childhood memories and favored colors. Use what they offer to tap into the power of color to promote a positive behavioral environment.

The study of color is complex, yet accessible for staff to think about and apply throughout the day. Research into the physiological and psychological aspects of color have found that different colors are used for their arousing (red) or calming (blue) effects. According to psychologist B.J. Sharpe, people prefer colors in the following order: blue, red, green, violet, orange, and yellow. Also, gender plays a role. Men tend to prefer blue to red, and woman yellow to orange. In western culture, color is used to describe emotions. Blue is described as indicating sadness (blue mood); red is associated with passion, i.e. love or uncontrollable rage; yellow as aggressive, and green as calming.

Back to Robert, red may have affected him differently than research suggests. It did not make him agitated or hostile, but activated his senses and behavior to a more productive level.

If your program seems stagnate or chaotic consider adding or changing the color of the environment. It can be a quick and inexpensive way to brighten moods or calm behaviors. You may see an improved frame of mind in DSPs and consumers alike.

Kortney Malone  
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Read more about color and its effect on mood and behavior in these resources:

Click [here](#) to view Google results on this topic.

Hinz, L. (2009) Expressive Therapies Continuum; A Framework for Using Art in Therapy. New York: Routledge.

Sharpe, B.T. (1982) The Psychology of Color and Design. Nelson-Hall, Chicago IL.

Rossotti, H. (1985) Colour: Why the World Isn't Grey. Princeton University Press, NJ.

Vodvarka, F. (1999) Aspects of Color. Retrieved from [www.midwestfacilitators.net/.../mfn\\_19991025\\_frank\\_vodvarka.pdf](http://www.midwestfacilitators.net/.../mfn_19991025_frank_vodvarka.pdf)

## Why the Newsletter?

We are strong believers that day programs can dramatically change the lives of those we serve. What people do during the day defines who they are and should provide a sense of purpose and self-worth.

We have seen the remarkable results that come with productivity and want to share our challenges, successes and innovations. We also want to hear about your challenges and success. The more we help each other succeed the better off we all are.

When we demonstrate that investment in our programs yield significant results, support increases. The more successful we are as a whole the more we can justify increased funding statewide.

Let's give those we serve a purpose in life and give others a reason to invest in what we do. We ask that you join us in making Indiana a leader in day services for people with disabilities.

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