

## Shared Spaces

# Town Center

# Break Room/Team Lounge/ Inpatient Family Lounge

Image Copyright  
Photographer: Jasper Sanidad  
Architect: WRNS Studio  
Location: UCSF Mission Hall



### FUNCTION

These spaces serve as essential retreats within workplace environments, offering employees a space to unwind, recharge, and foster interpersonal connections. These areas provide a break from the demands of work, allowing individuals to relax, enjoy meals, and engage in informal conversations with colleagues. Break rooms also facilitate team bonding and camaraderie, promoting a sense of community and collaboration. Additionally, they contribute to overall well-being by offering a comfortable environment where individuals can momentarily escape the pressures of their tasks, ultimately enhancing morale and productivity.



### SPATIAL COMPONENTS

- Programmatic elements may include: seating area, kitchen or refreshment area, dining area, and impromptu workspace. At times, vending machines and lockers, may also be incorporated.
- Contemplate situating break rooms in close proximity to work areas to promote utilization.
- Consider including private or semi-private areas where employees can make phone calls or have quiet conversations without disturbing others.
- If program allows, break rooms may include a workspace with desks, chairs, and power outlets for users to work or use personal devices.



### MATERIALITY

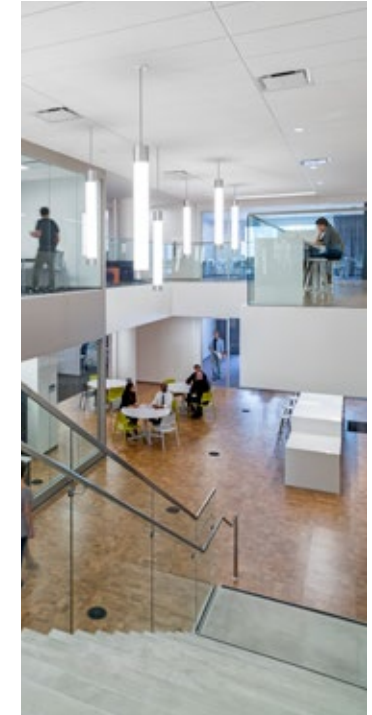
- Specify red-list free, sustainable materials.
- Floor
- Prioritize durable materials effectively conceal scuff marks, and reduce glare.
  - Use red-list free, sustainable materials in line with resilient or hard surface flooring.
- Walls
- Incorporate wall protection where necessary.
  - Designate areas for bulletins and necessary regulatory signage.
- Ceilings
- Acoustical treatment must effectively address high noise levels.



### LESSONS LEARNED

- Town centers typically cater to one floor and are centrally situated within it.
- Take into consideration the impact of noise and odors of work areas nearby. Staff restrooms should be in close proximity.
- Consider furniture options for booths to avoid pest issues.
- Opt for durable, low-maintenance finishes. Avoid plastic laminate countertops in wet areas.
- Provide storage to meet programmatic and operational requirements.
- All furniture should be made of non-porous materials that are easy to wipe and maintain.

Consider inclusivity.



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Kyle Jeffers Photography ©Tim Griffith  
Architect: Mark Cavagnero Associates  
Location: UCSF Weill Institute for  
Neurosciences



Transform the break room into an oasis of respite.



## EXPERIENTIAL QUALITY

**Create a calming oasis for breaks**

- Encouraging breaks enhances productivity and mitigates burnout. Establishing a tranquil respite area can motivate users to unwind and rejuvenate.
- Harnessing the restorative effects of nature can amplify resilience and cognitive function.
- Access to daylight and views are desired for designing for wellbeing. If program allows, create a connection to the outdoors.
- Ensure placement is accessible to all employees and students, ideally located near restrooms and other amenities.

**Provide a space for flexible use and offer choice**

- Offer diverse seating arrangements within these spaces to facilitate both group gatherings and one-on-one interactions.
- Consider offering single-person seating solutions away from group settings, to allow individuals to focus on work and study or take a moment for respite.
- Offer tables that meet accessibility standards integrated throughout all areas, rather than segregated into separate zones.
- Provide convenience outlets for drop in work.

**Design to promote comfort**

- Comfortable seating is essential for promotion of relaxation and may include sofas, armchairs, lounge chairs, and tables for eating or working.
- Creating a pleasant atmosphere with appropriate lighting, comfortable furnishings, art and decorative elements can contribute to a relaxing environment.
- Create different atmospheres within the break room, utilizing lighting and artwork strategically to cater to various neurodivergent needs and enhance the environment accordingly.