



Designing
Justice+Designing
Spaces

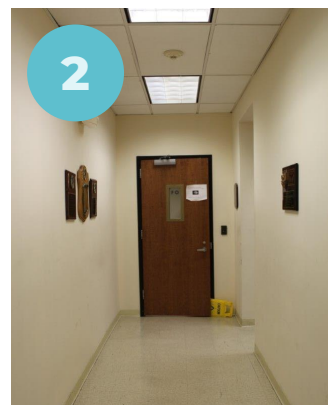
**ESSEX SPACES
FOR
SURVIVORS
ONEder Grant
Report**

SITE DESCRIPTION — Essex County Prosecutor's Office

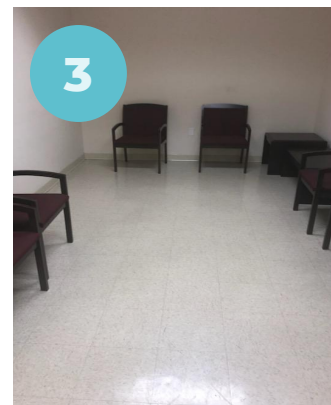
The site of this design study is the Essex County Prosecutor's Office (ECPO), specifically the fourth floor waiting room and conference room. In the waiting room, violence survivors and loved ones of homicide victims wait to speak to detectives and assistant prosecutors (AP). They then walk through the ECPO offices to a conference room, in which they talk with the detectives and/or APs.



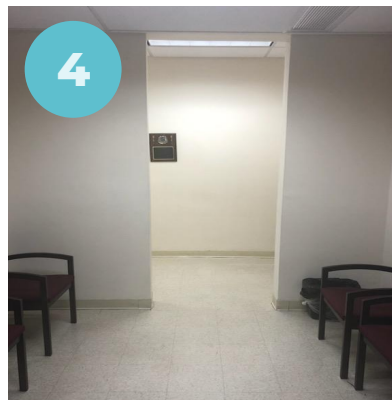
1 First point of entry to Prosecutor's office



2 Hallway to secondary entry to Prosecutor's office (waiting area to the right)



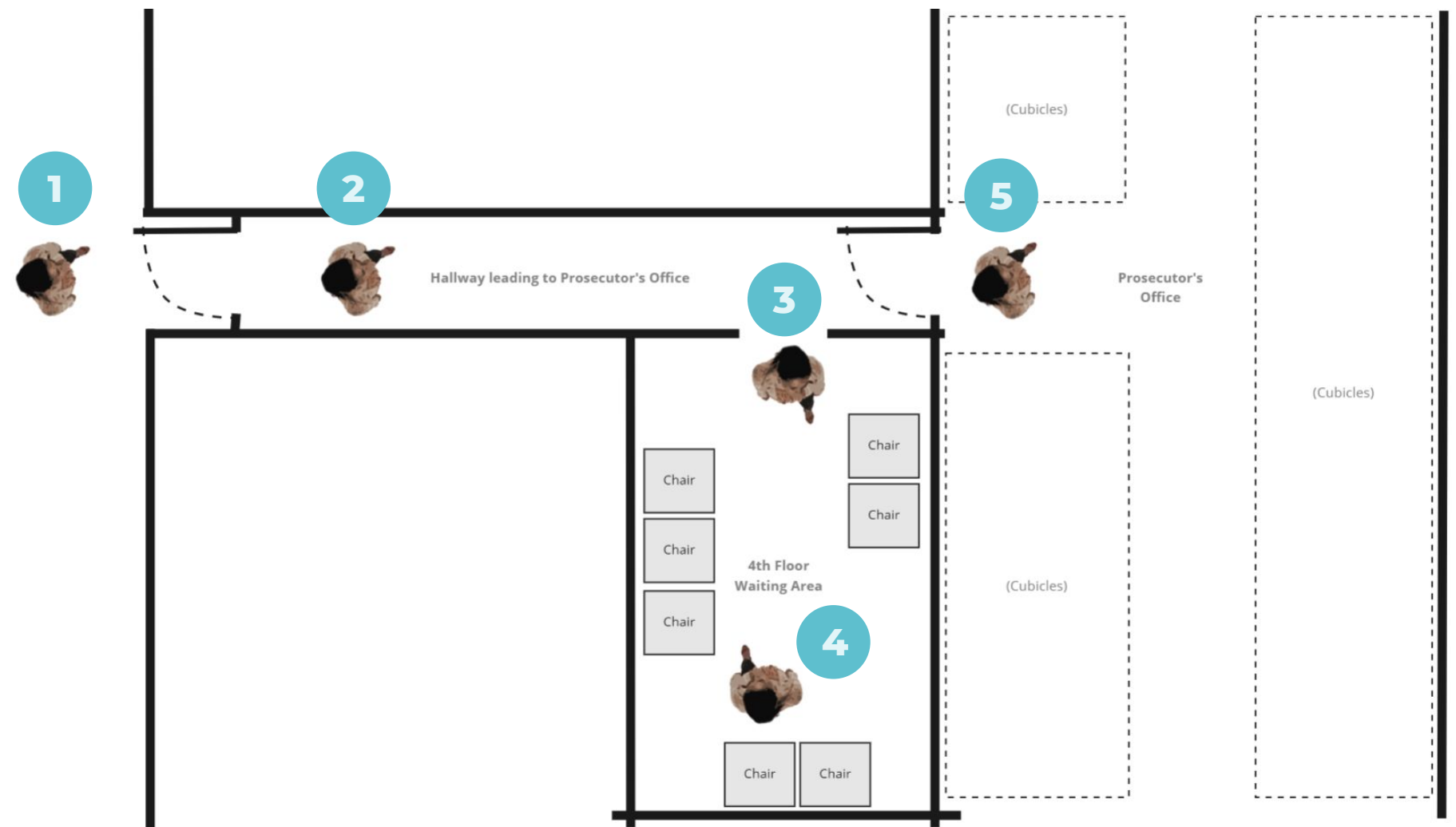
3 Seating inside 4th floor waiting areas



4 View from 4th floor waiting area to hallway



5 View of cubicles inside Prosecutor's office



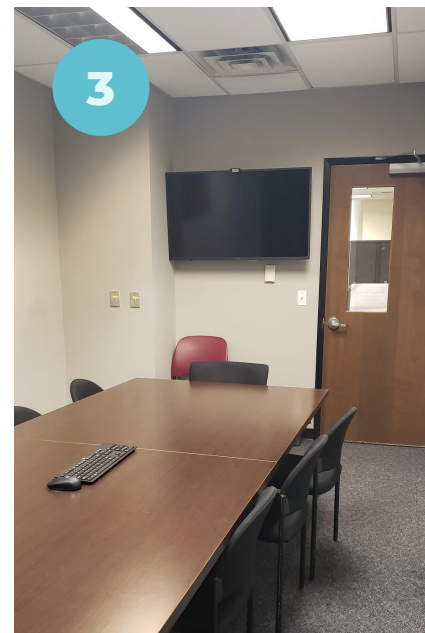
SITE DESCRIPTION — Essex County Prosecutor's Office



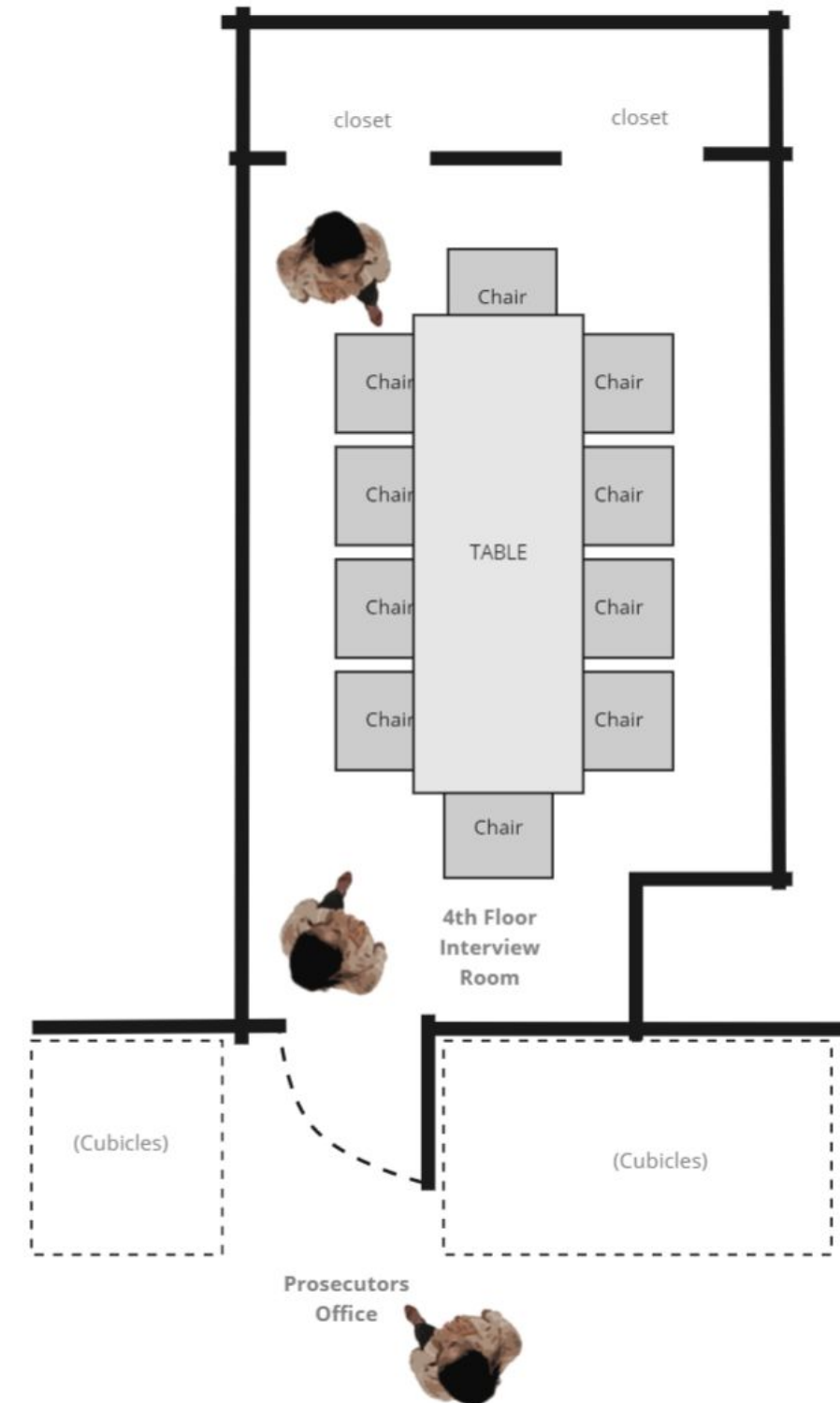
1
Cubicle outside of conference room



2
View inside of conference room



3
Reverse view of conference room towards exit



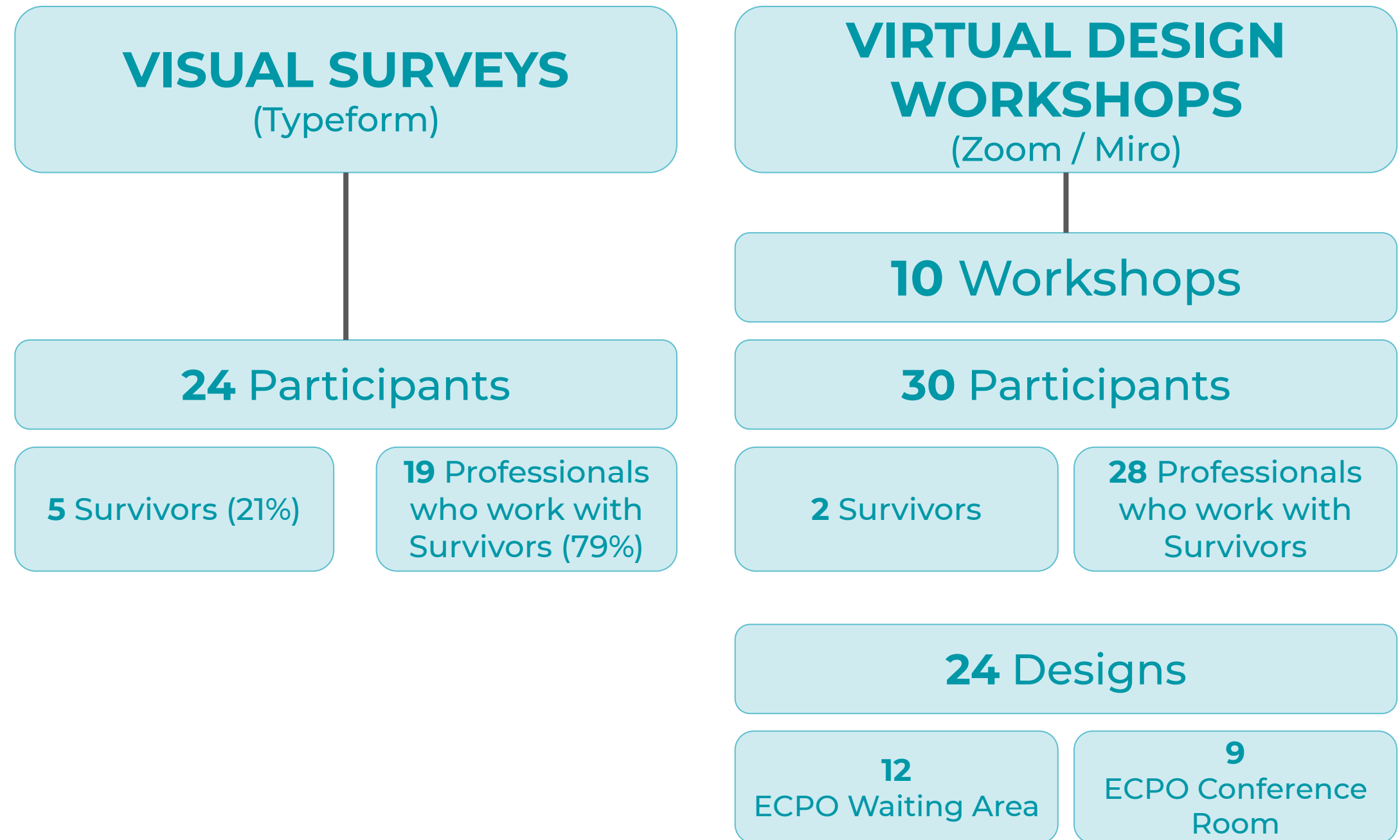
VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS

Two strategies were used to collect data: an electronic visual survey and a virtual design workshop.

Of the 24 survey participants, 5 were violence survivors and 19 were people who work with violence survivors. 10 virtual design workshops* have been held, involving 30 people. Of these participants, 2 were violence survivors and 28 were people who worked with survivors.

24 designs were created in the workshops: 12 for the fourth floor waiting room, 9 for the conference room, 1 for the victim/witness waiting area in the same building, and 2 for spaces to serve violence survivors in the community.

For both the survey and workshops, the people who participated who work with violence survivors included victim advocates, mental health professionals, detectives, and assistant prosecutors.



* One more design workshop is scheduled for February 25, 2021.




RECRUITMENT

The research-design team recruited survey and interview participants through key Essex County and Newark stakeholders, including the Essex County Victim Advocate, Essex County Prosecutor, Essex County's Captain of the Homicide Detective Unit, Newark Community Solutions, and Southward Public Safety Roundtable.

Recruitment occurred from mid-November of 2020 through mid-February of 2021. Stakeholders received an email and printable PDFs introducing them to the study, which they then circulated among their colleagues and networks. All participants who took the survey were invited to provide contact information if they wished to learn more about the design workshops; four workshop participants came through this route. The remainder of workshop participants, all of whom are people who work with violence survivors, were recruited through their supervisors.


All recruitment materials were available in both English and Spanish.

Help us design spaces for survivors of violence.



Imagine you had to have an emotional and difficult conversation.

- Where would you want to have it?
- What would the space look and feel like?
- How would you design that space?



We're working with the Essex County Prosecutor's Office to redesign the victim/witness interview spaces. A team of restorative justice architects and researchers would like to hear **your ideas for how to design spaces** in which violence survivors interact with criminal justice professionals to help inform that redesign process.

You are invited to:

1. **Complete a survey** with questions about how to design spaces for emotional and difficult conversations, and your thoughts on the design of existing spaces where violence survivors receive services;
2. **Participate in a virtual design session** where you will work with an architect using a digital whiteboard to design a space for violence survivors.

You will not be asked to talk about your experiences with the violence, justice workers, or the justice system.

Help us design spaces for survivors.

Violence survivors who complete both the survey and the interview will receive **\$50** as a thank you.

Imagine you had to have an emotional and difficult conversation. Where would you want to have it? What would the space look and feel like? How would you design that space?

Have you survived violence, experienced the homicide of a loved one, or work with violence survivors (paid or volunteer) in Essex County? We're redesigning the interview spaces at the ECPO. You are invited to complete a survey, then join us for a virtual design session to share your ideas.

Ayúdenos a diseñar espacios para sobrevivientes

Los sobrevivientes de violencia que completan la encuesta y la entrevista recibirán **\$50** a modo de agradecimiento.

Imagine que tuviera que tener una conversación emotiva y difícil. ¿Dónde preferiría tenerla? ¿Cómo le gustaría sentirse en el espacio? ¿Cómo diseñaría usted ese espacio?

¿Ha sobrevivido una situación de violencia o la pérdida de un ser querido por homicidio, o trabaja con sobrevivientes de violencia (de forma remunerada o como voluntario) en el condado de Essex? Estamos rediseñando los espacios para entrevistas en la Oficina del Fiscal del condado de Essex. Le invitamos a completar la encuesta, y después a unirse a nosotros en una sesión de diseño virtual para compartir sus ideas.

¡Participe en la Encuesta Visual!

Help us design spaces for survivors.

Violence survivors who complete both the survey and interview will receive **\$50** as a thank you.

We're redesigning the interview spaces at the ECPO. We would like to hear your design ideas.

tuviera que tener una conversación emotiva y difícil... ¿Dónde preferiría tenerla? ¿Cómo le gustaría sentirse en el espacio? ¿Cómo diseñaría usted ese espacio?

Los sobrevivientes de violencia que completan la encuesta y la entrevista recibirán **\$50** como una gracias.

Encuesta Virtual: bit.ly/redisenar-ecpo

* No se le pedirá que hable sobre sus experiencias relacionadas con ningún incidente violento, los trabajadores judiciales o el sistema judicial. Para participar debe de ser mayor de 18 años, hablar inglés o español y haber sobrevivido una situación de violencia en el condado de Essex entre 2012 y 2020, o debe de trabajar con sobrevivientes de violencia.



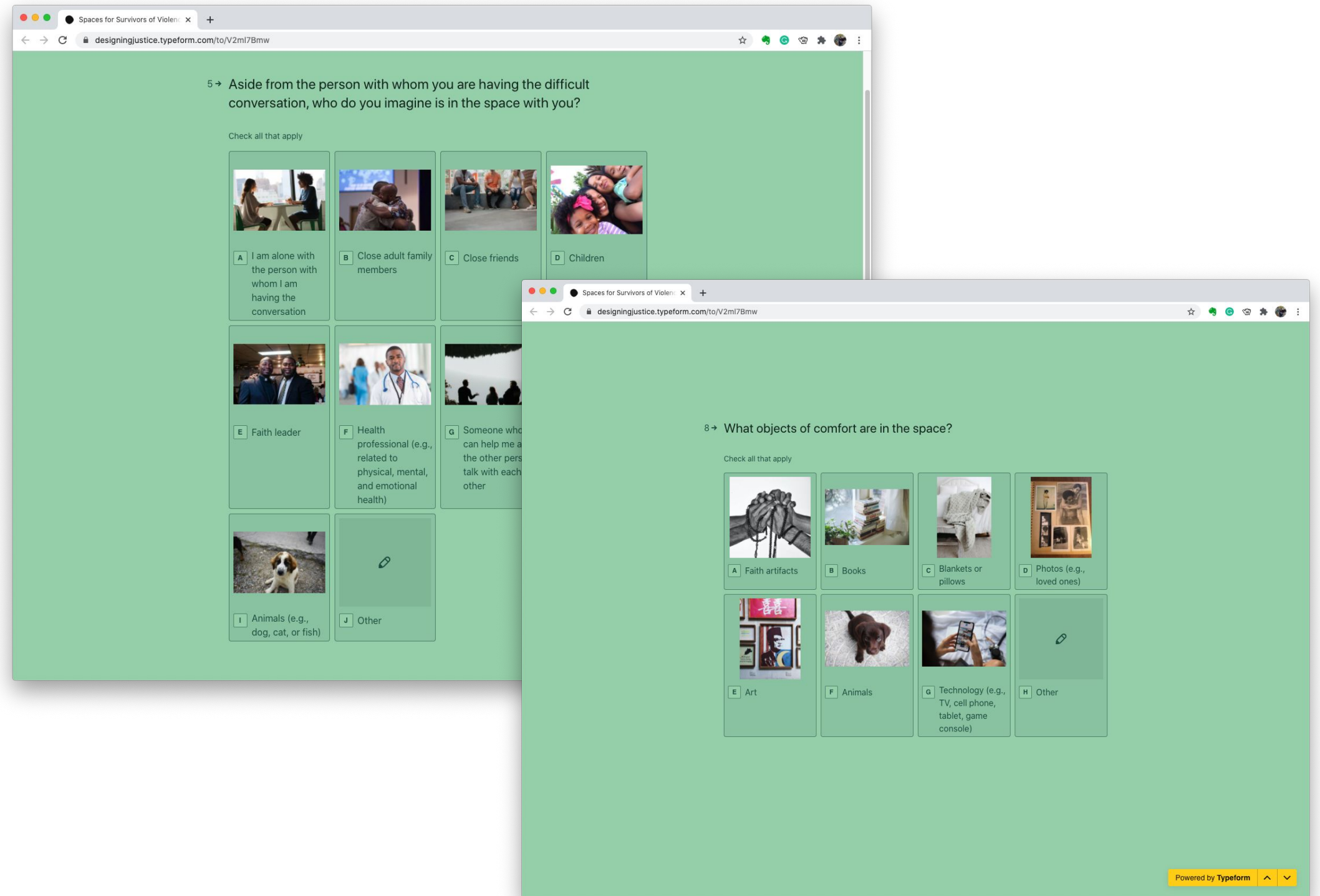


VIRTUAL
ENGAGEMENT
Visual Surveys



VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT — Visual Surveys

The electronic visual survey inquired about design preferences for spaces in which to have an emotional and difficult conversation, like the conversations that survivors have with justice professionals after experiencing violence. The survey also inquired about survivors' experiences in and reactions to the design of Essex County spaces in which survivors receive services, with particular attention to spaces in the ECPO waiting and conference rooms. The survey, which was available in both English and Spanish, included imagery in the answer choices to spark respondents' creativity.

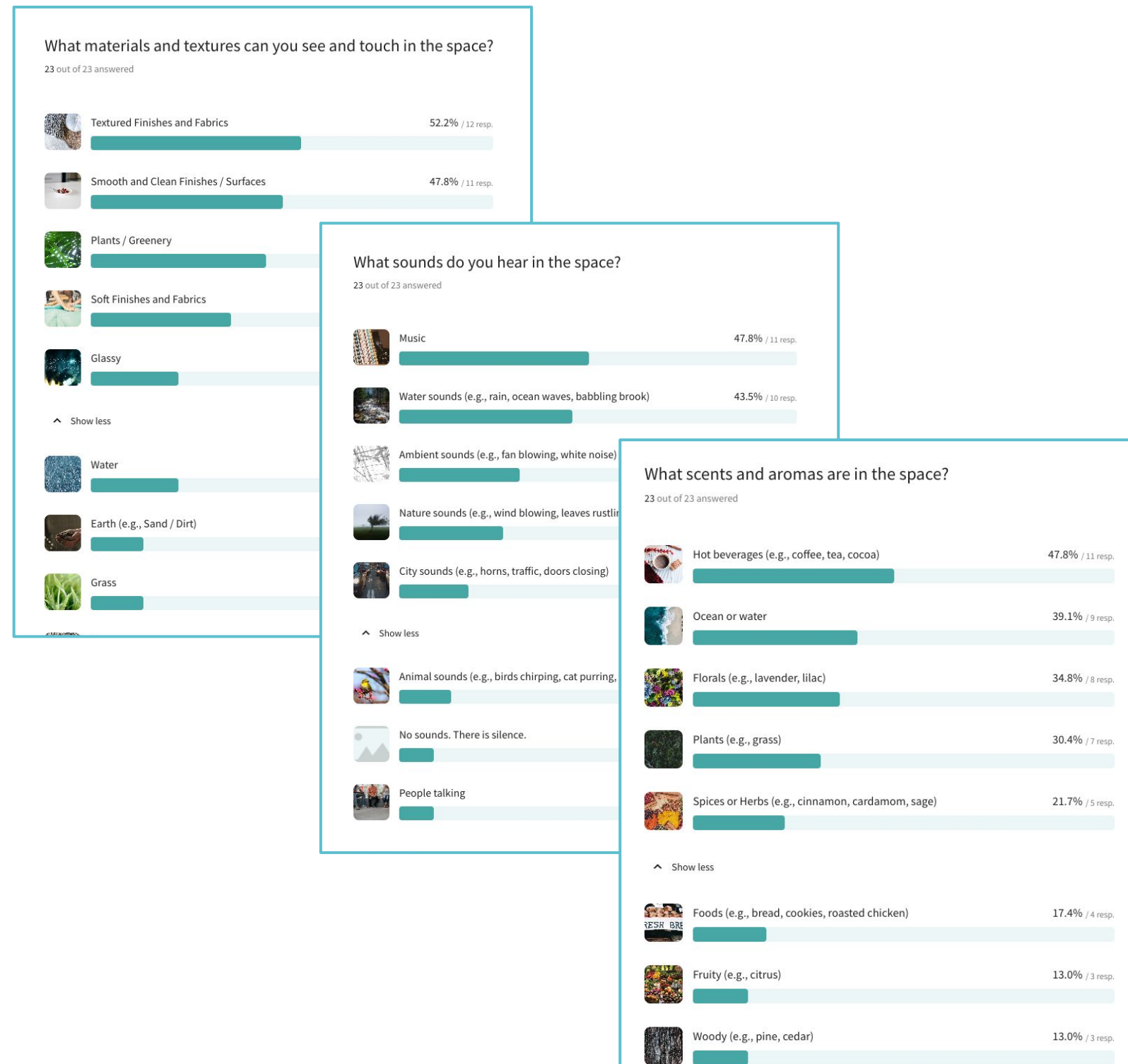


VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT — Visual Surveys

To achieve the stated goals, the survey was divided into two parts.

Part A asked participants to imagine a space in which they were going to have a difficult and emotional conversation, and then it asked them to design that space by responding to 22 questions about how they would want to feel in that space and about the imagined characteristics of that space. All participants answered the same questions in Part A.

Part B inquired about actual spaces in which participants either received services as survivors or where they work as professionals. If the participant had been to the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office (for services or work), they looked at images of the ECPO waiting room and of a waiting/meeting area in the victim advocate’s office, and then responded to questions about the designs of those spaces. Those who had not been to ECPO responded to questions about the courthouse or community-based spaces where they had received services or worked, and provided feedback on the design of those spaces. All respondents answered questions about community-based spaces where survivors seek services, as well as the types of spaces that were missing. All participants responded to similar questions, but people who work with survivors were asked to consider the experiences of survivors, and not their own, in the spaces under study.





VIRTUAL
ENGAGEMENT
Design Workshops



VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT — Virtual Design Workshops

The virtual design workshops aimed to gain a deeper understanding of survivor experiences in the ECPO spaces, as well as their design preferences for those spaces in response to survivor needs. Meeting in Zoom and using a collaborative whiteboard, participants reflected on the feelings and experiences they wanted survivors to have when they are in spaces in which they are having difficult and emotional conversations and, after viewing photos of ECPO waiting area and conference room, what feelings and experiences survivors have, or are perceived to have, in those spaces.

Participants then designed empty layouts of the ECPO spaces so that they would solicit the desired feelings and experiences, using images of different architectural features (e.g., seating, lighting, nature, windows). Three participants chose to design, from scratch, other types of community spaces in which survivors can seek services.

Of the 10 workshops, 4 included just 1 participant and 6 were like focus groups, including 3 to 6 participants at a time. When there were 4 or more participants, they were divided into 2 groups for the design work.





EMERGING FINDINGS

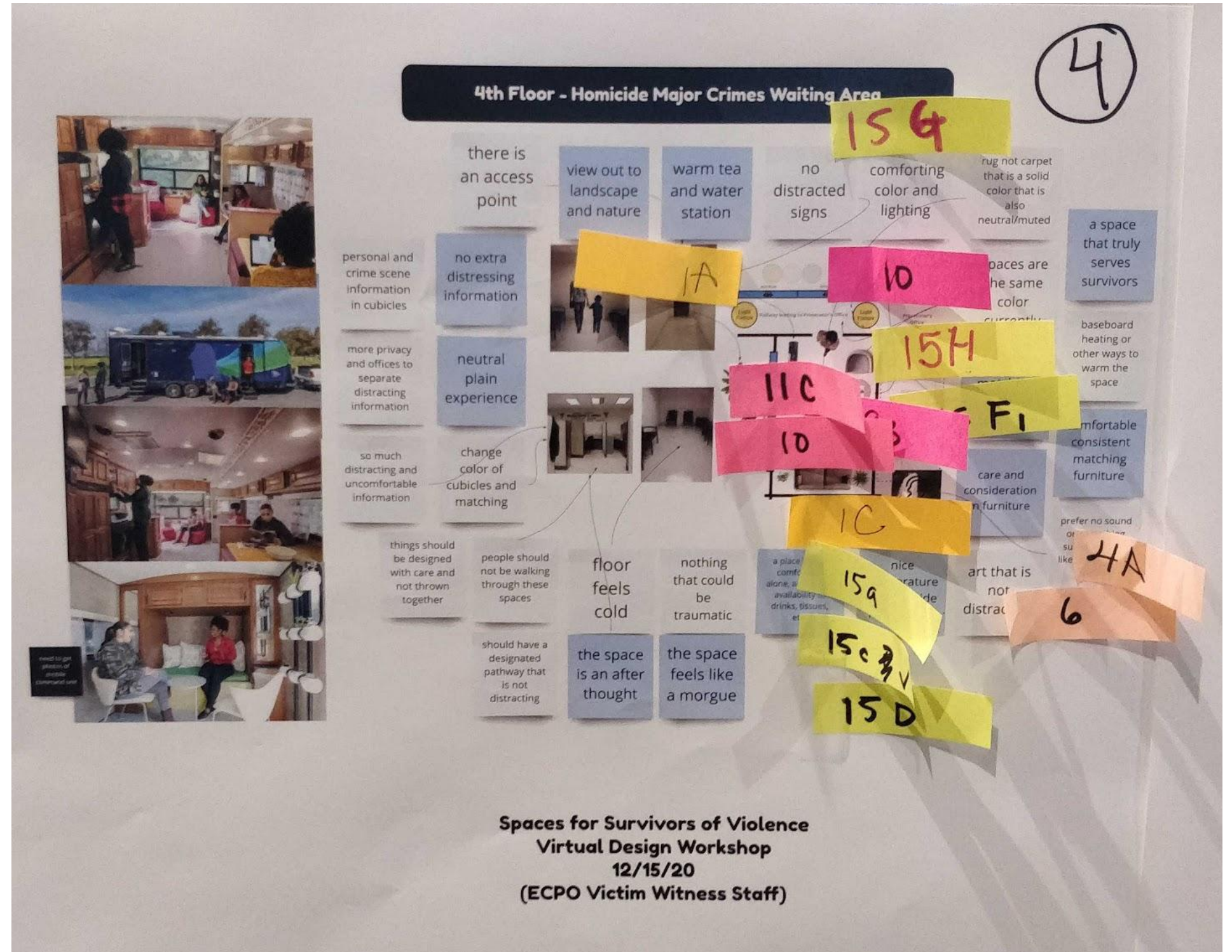


EMERGING FINDINGS — Introduction

Data analysis is currently underway for the survey and workshop designs and audio transcripts. The findings that follow are preliminary and emerging based on the analysis to date and will evolve as data analysis continues and results are finalized. They also bring together survey and workshop data.

The focus at this stage has been to analyze for (a) feelings and experiences desired by survivors when they are in spaces for difficult and emotional conversations as well as (b) design characteristics of survivor-oriented spaces. As analysis continues with the workshop audio transcripts, a deeper understanding will emerge about, for instance, the problems with the design for existing spaces, operations issues, and justifications for design preferences.

Accordingly, the findings are divided into two sections: (a) survivors' feelings and experiences and (b) design characteristics.



3.1

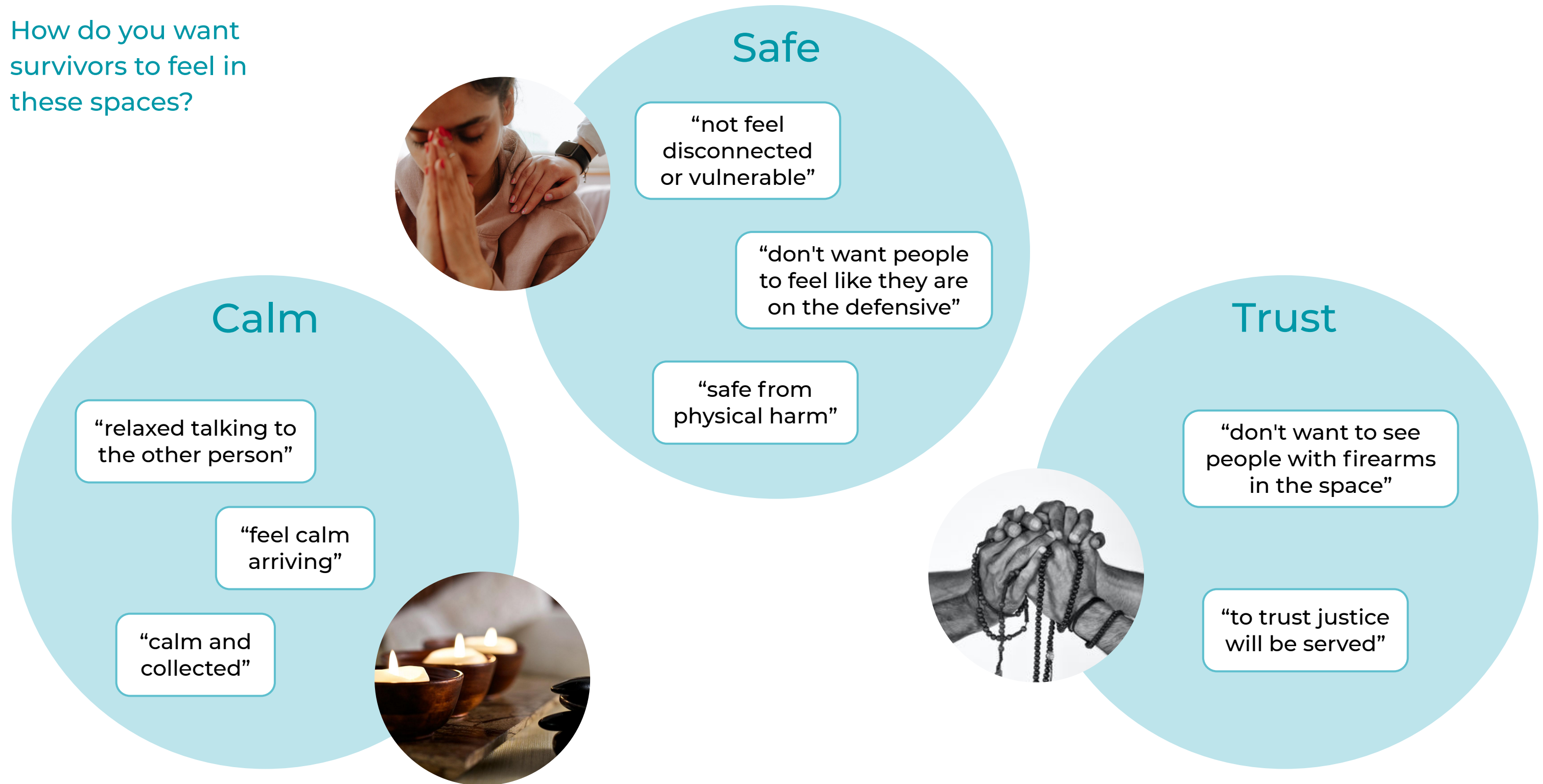
EMERGING FINDINGS **Experiences in Spaces**

Both the survey and workshops inquired about how people want to feel, or want survivors to feel, when they are having a difficult and emotional conversation. Nine key feelings have surfaced so far. The following pages identify these key feelings and present sample quotes from the workshops to define the feeling.



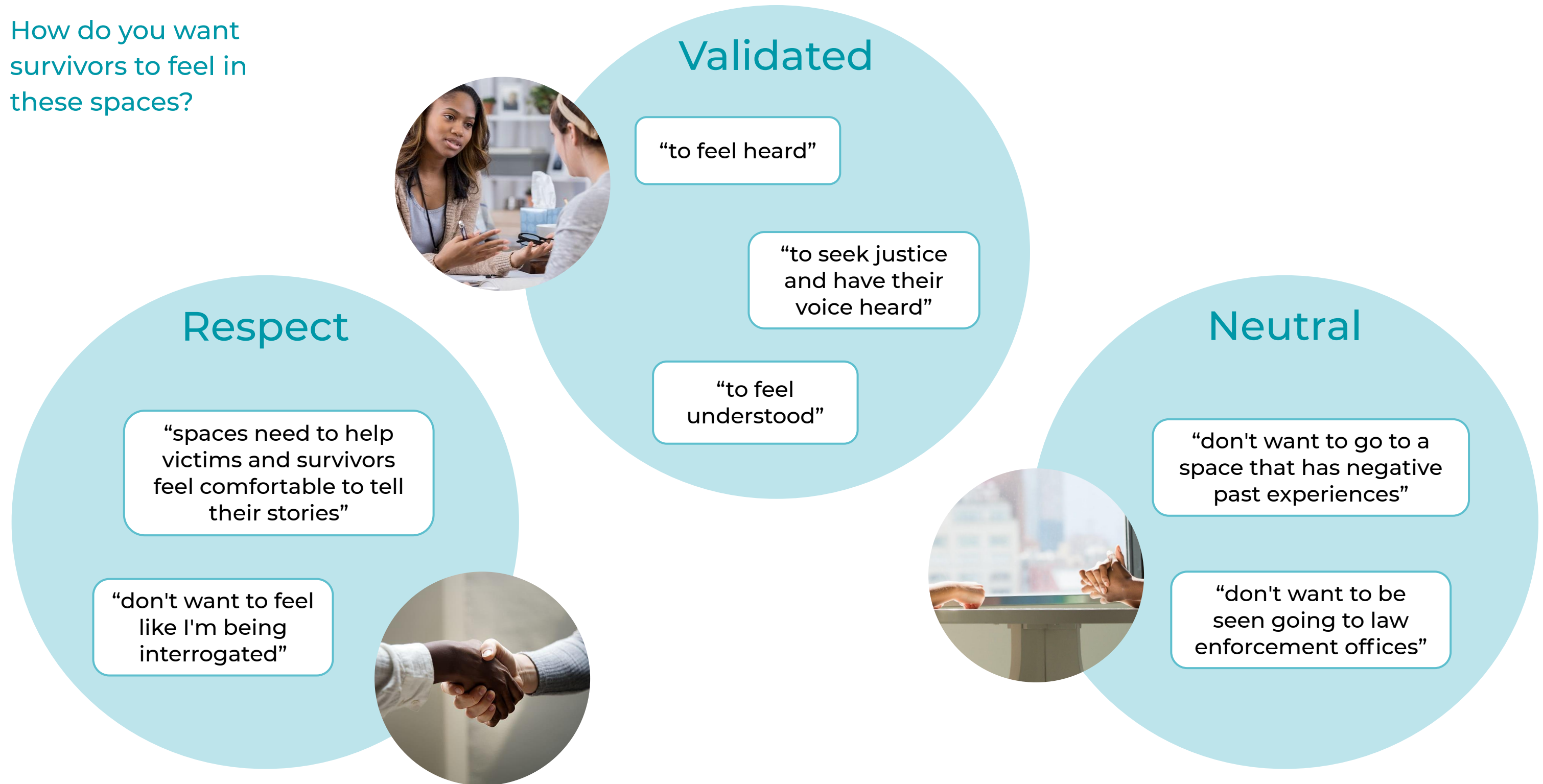
EMERGING FINDINGS

How do you want survivors to feel in these spaces?



EMERGING FINDINGS

How do you want survivors to feel in these spaces?



EMERGING FINDINGS

How do you want survivors to feel in these spaces?

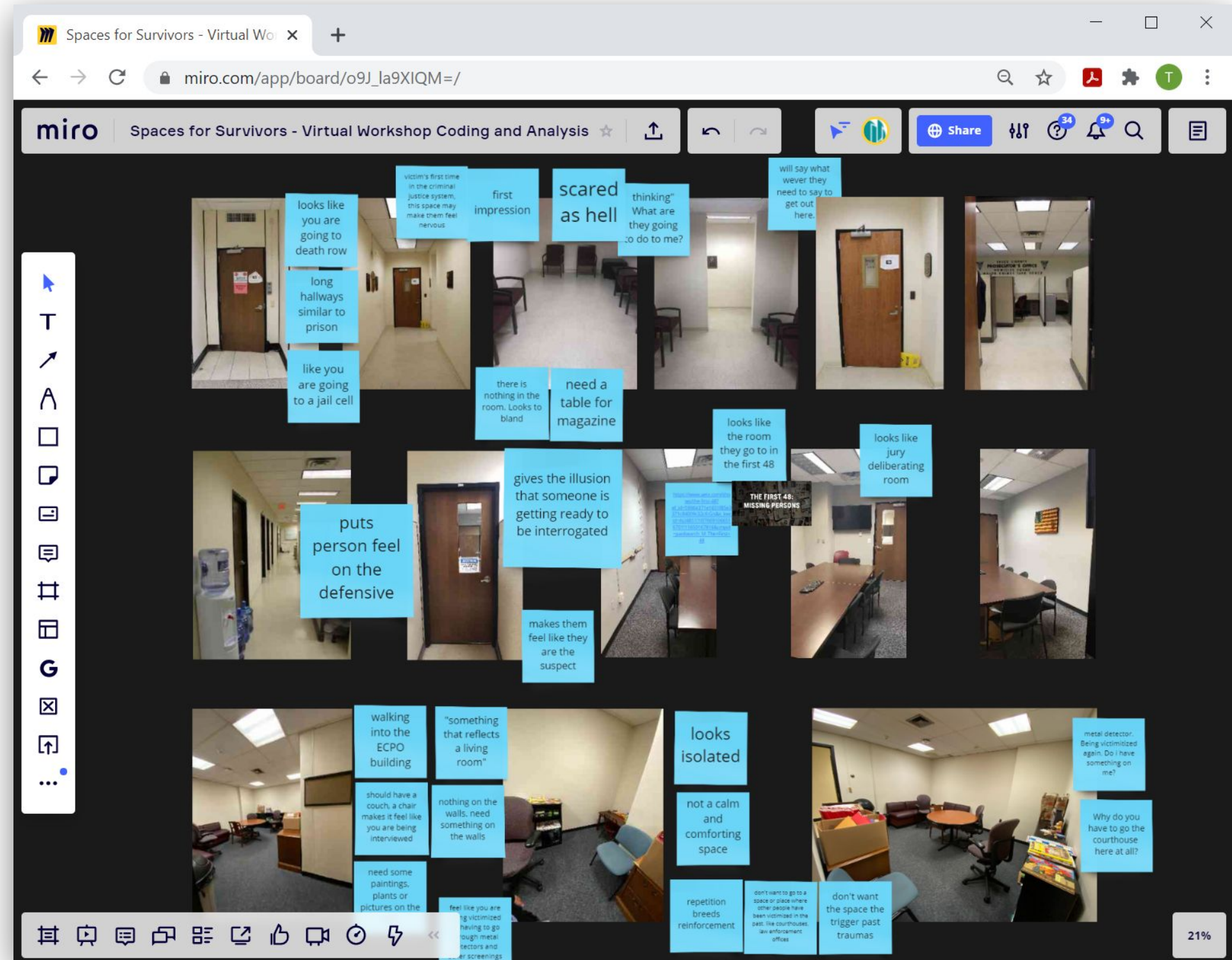


EMERGING FINDINGS — Reactions to the Existing Space

Reflecting on the images of the existing spaces, how do you think these spaces make survivors feel emotionally and physically?

Survey participants who had experience in the ECPO spaces reacted to images of ECPO spaces, reflecting on what they noticed about the design and the likely feelings the design elicited for survivors. Workshop participants also reacted to these images. Nine key feelings have surfaced so far.

The following pages identify these key feelings and present sample quotes from the workshops to define each feeling. As you look at these feelings and quotes, note how they differ from how participants said they want survivors to feel, as presented in the prior section.



EMERGING FINDINGS — Reactions to the Existing Space

Reflecting on the images of the existing spaces, how do you think these spaces make survivors feel emotionally and physically?



EMERGING FINDINGS — Reactions to the Existing Space

Reflecting on the images of the existing spaces, how do you think these spaces make survivors feel emotionally and physically?

Intimidated

“makes person feel on the defensive”

“gives the illusion that someone is getting ready to be interrogated”

“intimidation because of law enforcement”



Untrusting

“expectation of lack of trust and apathy”

“do not provide dignity and their humanity”



Uncomfortable

“not comforting space”

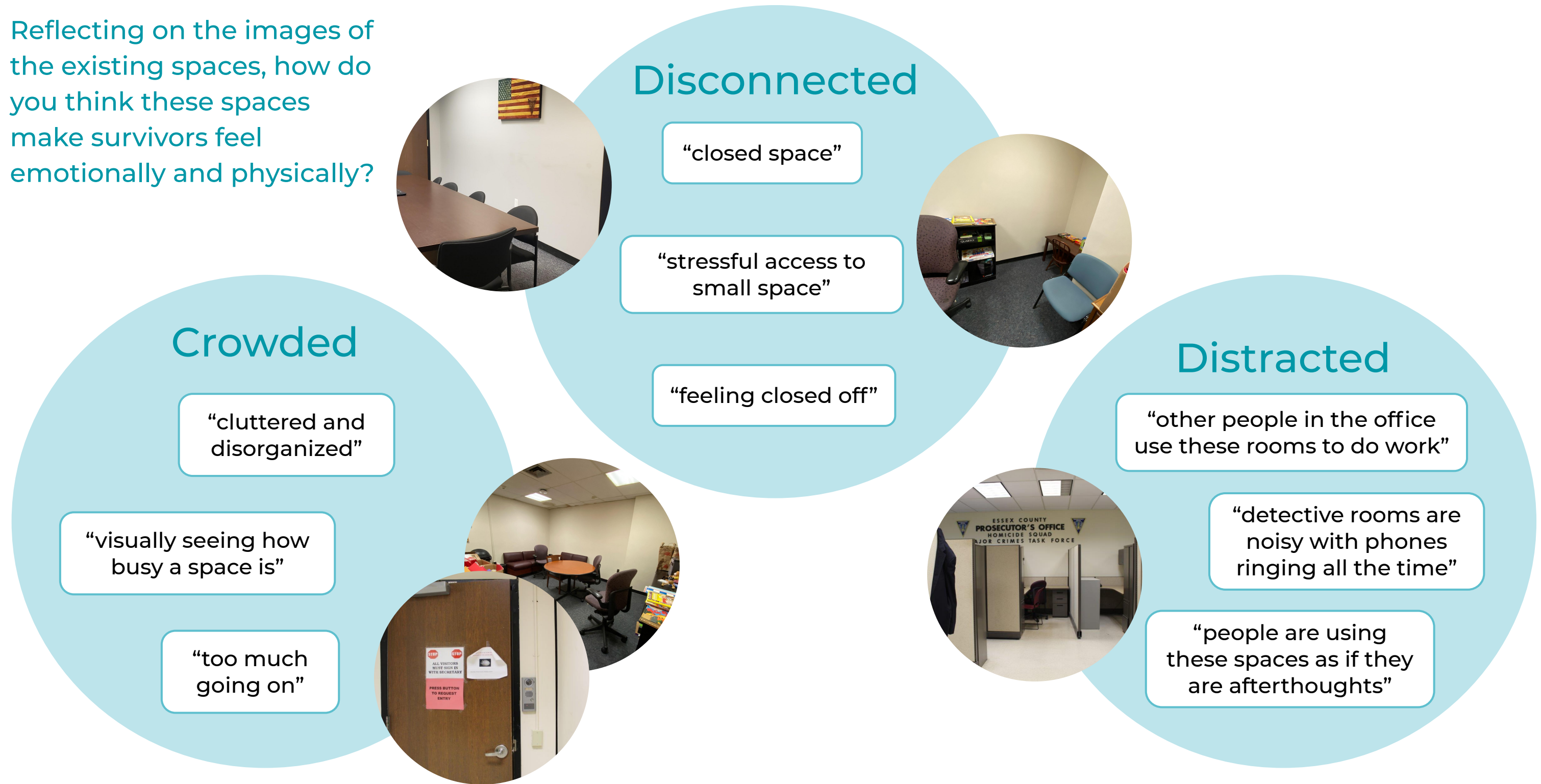
“should have a couch, a chair makes it feel like you are being interviewed”

“you feel uncomfortable, and victims may feel uncomfortable as well?”



EMERGING FINDINGS — Reactions to the Existing Space

Reflecting on the images of the existing spaces, how do you think these spaces make survivors feel emotionally and physically?



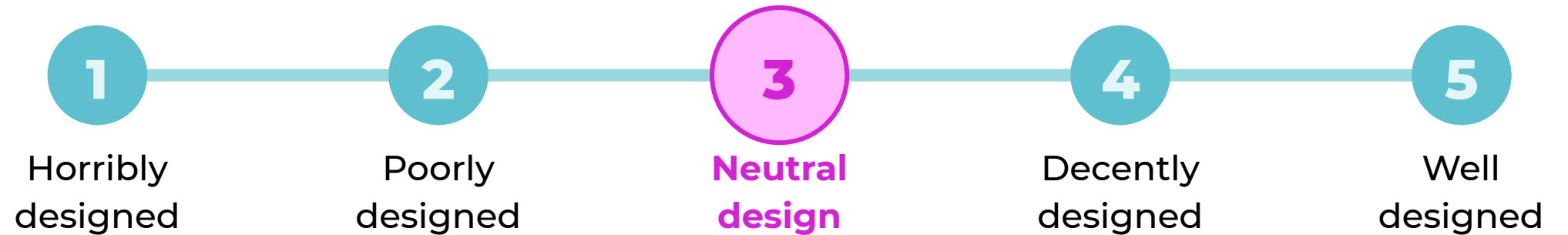
EMERGING FINDINGS

Rate the degree to which the prosecutor's office is designed to be a space in which to have an emotional and difficult conversation?

The difference between (a) how participants want survivors to feel in spaces where they are having emotional and difficult conversations and (b) what participants perceived that survivors are likely to experience in the ECPO spaces suggest that the design of the ECPO spaces is not serving survivors well.

Survey participants had the opportunity to rate the design of ECPO spaces on a scale of one through five, where one (1) was horribly designed and five (5) was well designed. **The average score was three (3)**, meaning that the space feels equally safe, supportive, and respectful and not safe, not supportive, and not respectful.

Workshop participants were not asked to numerically rate the design of the ECPO spaces. Based on their qualitative feedback, however, it is doubtful that they would have given such a high rating. This may be a result of the different methodologies at play, as well as interaction with the research-design team.



3.2

EMERGING FINDINGS

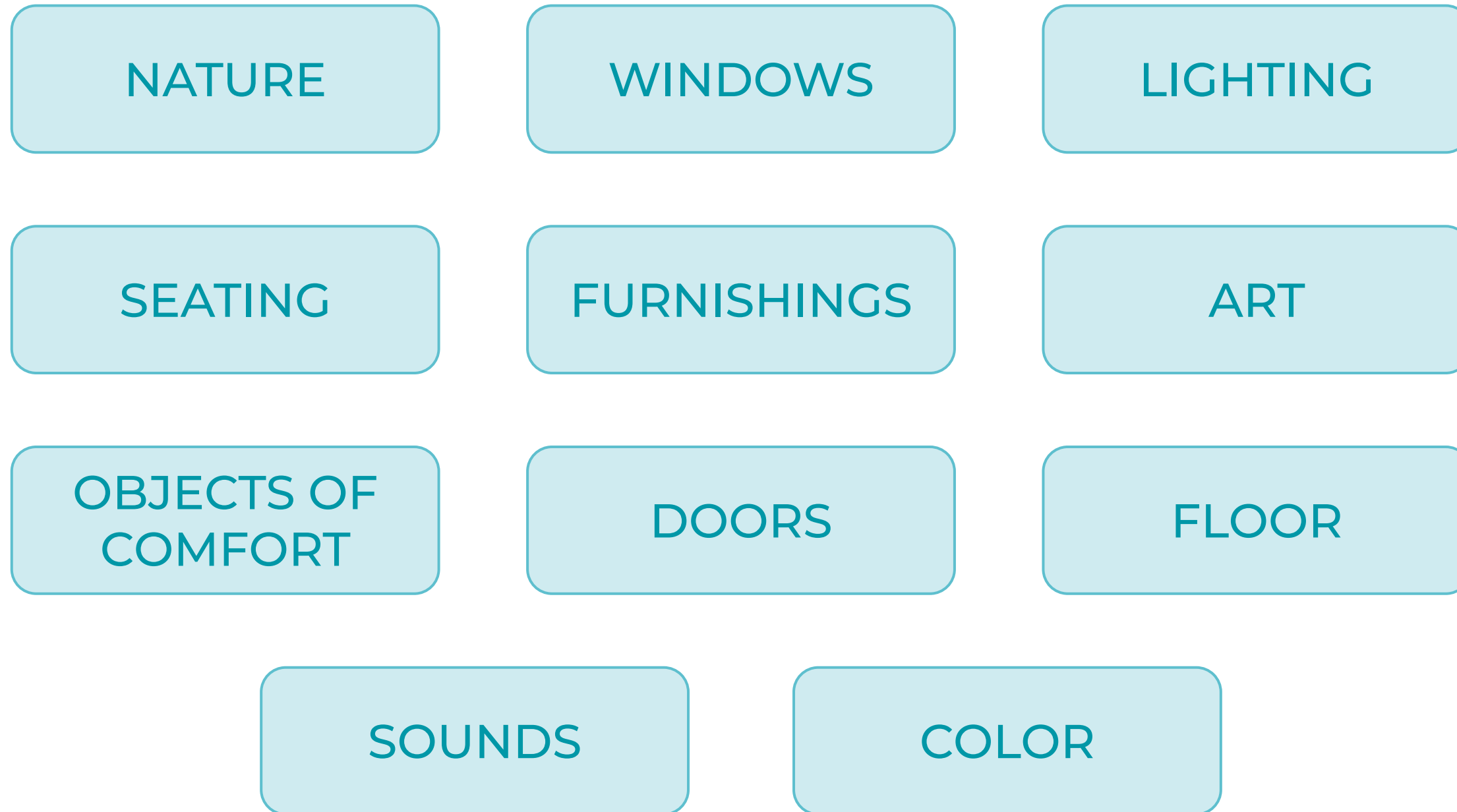
Design Characteristics of Survivor Oriented Spaces

The emerging findings gathered so far suggest that the designs of ECPO spaces are not eliciting the feelings that survivors would like to experience in the space in which they interact with justice professionals, nor are they sending the messages that survivors would like to receive. Both survey and workshop data offer insight into the desired design characteristics of survivor-oriented spaces.

Preliminary findings show evidence of 11 design characteristics, as outlined on the following pages. Each of the design characteristics is discussed in turn, and for each design characteristic we have included a layout created in a workshop to exemplify the concepts being discussed. Where necessary, distinctions are made between the two ECPO spaces under study — the waiting area and the conference room.

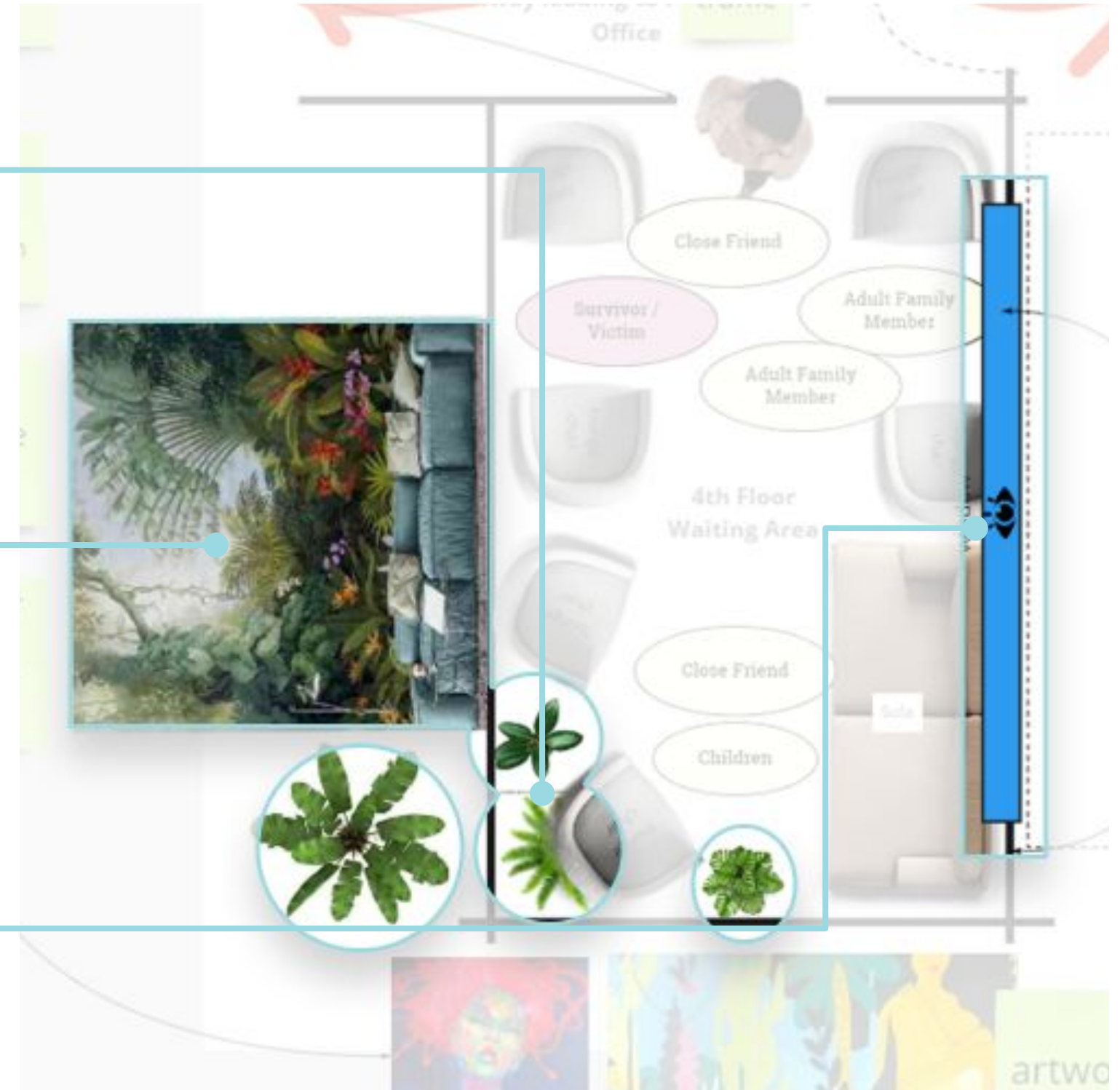
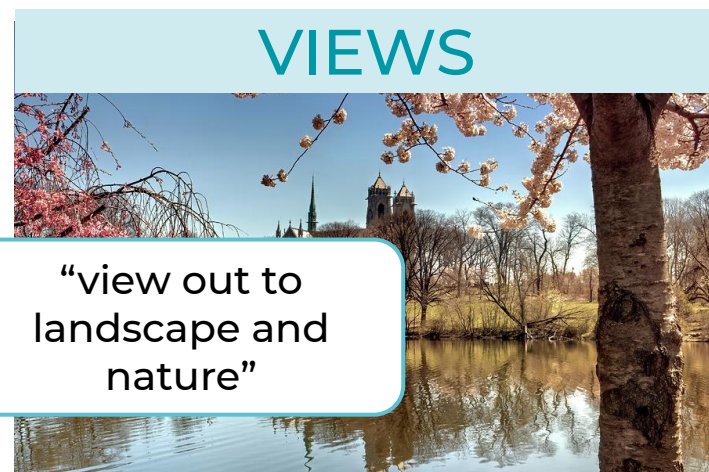


DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Areas of Focus



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Nature

A connection to nature is a key design feature that can come in different forms. It may be accessible through natural elements, such as live plants or cut flowers, in the space. It may be experienced through art or images of nature, such as photographs or murals. People in the space may see nature out the windows, in the form of gardens, sky views, or natural light. The layout example shows how live plants, nature art, and outside views are incorporated into one design. All designs created in the workshops for both the waiting and conference rooms incorporate nature in some way, and 88% of survey respondents desired nature in their imagined spaces. (The majority of that 88% wanted to have plants present.)

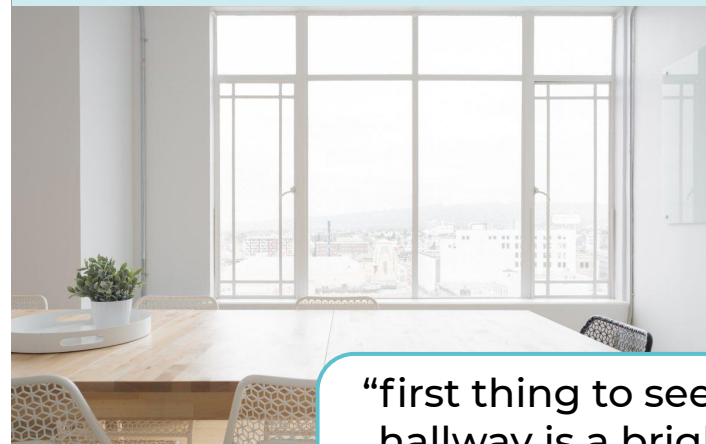


DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Windows

Workshop participants wanted to have windows in the spaces. All the waiting room designs and 75% of the conference room designs have windows, with many offering nature or cityscape views and bringing in natural light. The layout example shows the inclusion of three big windows in the waiting area and a large window in the hallway leading to it.

Windows are not without their risks, however, as they can interfere with privacy. Workshop participants discussed this risk and survey participants indicated that curtains or frosting of the glass could bring privacy. Ongoing analysis will deepen the meaning and possibilities for windows in the spaces.

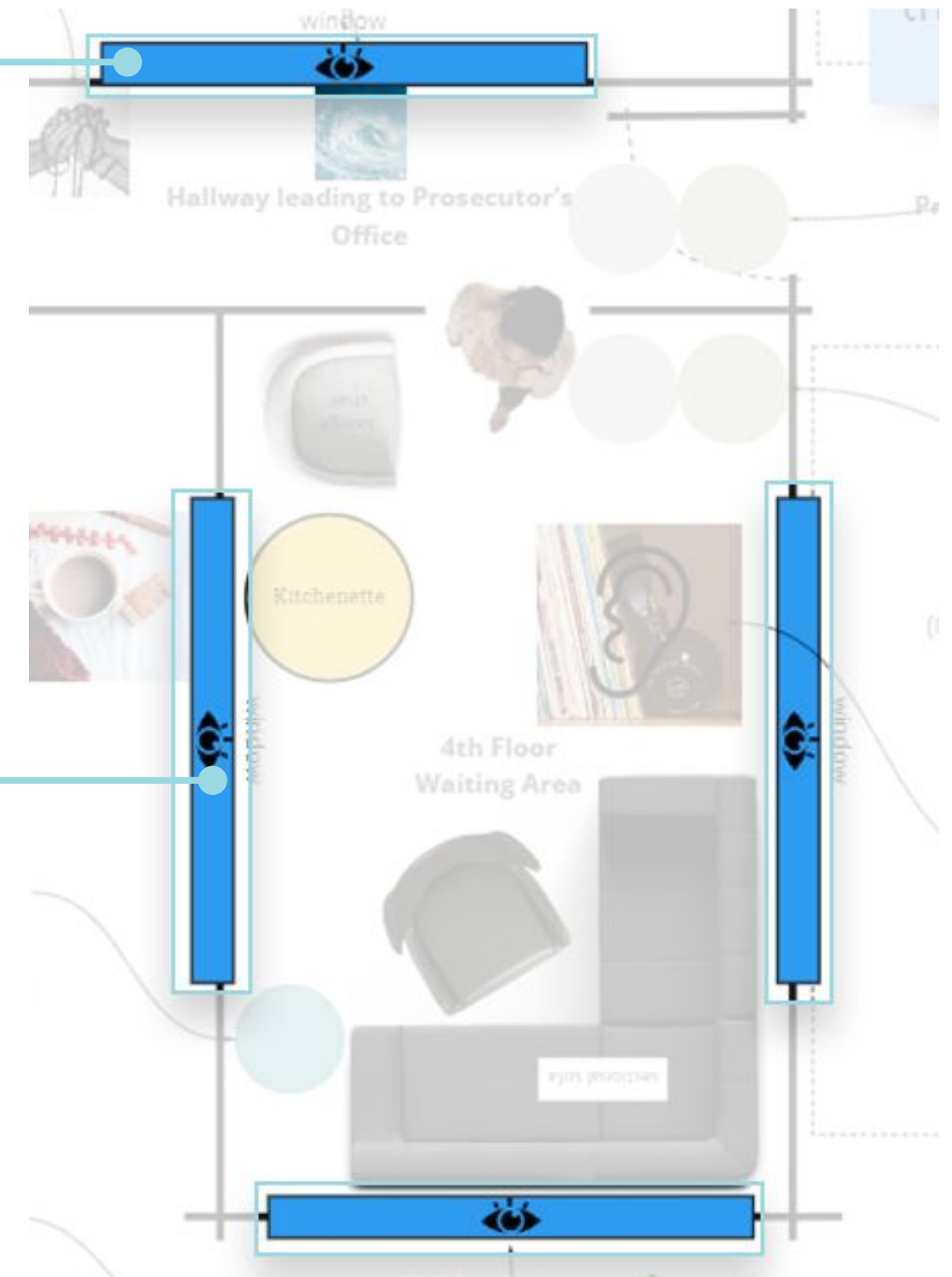
NATURAL LIGHT & WINDOWS



“first thing to see in hallway is a bright space with windows to let light”



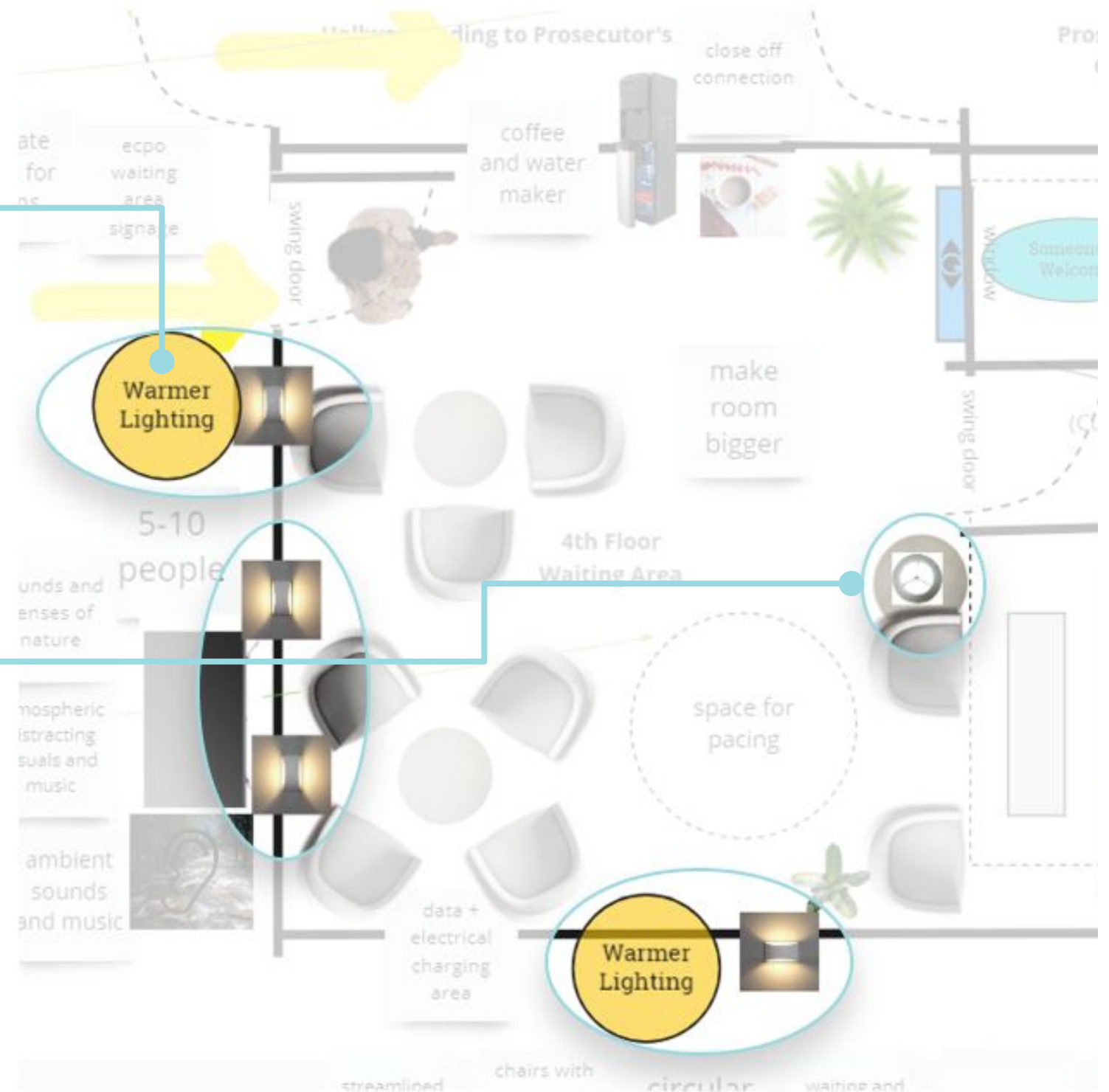
“there is never too much natural light”



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Lighting

The desire for windows suggests a preference for natural light (see previous page for examples). Workshop participants regularly spoke of wanting natural light; and almost half of survey respondents also wanted natural light to be inside the space in which they had a difficult and emotional conversation, while about 20% imagined having their conversation outside (in natural light). The windows in the previous layout example show the possibility for natural light to light the hallway and waiting area.

Workshop participants spoke of a need for soft or warm lighting, which showed up as lamps, wall sconces, and overhead lights. Survey respondents also selected these lighting features, with more than half envisioning some form of overhead lighting. The layout example here shows lighting of wall sconces and a table lamp.



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Seating: Waiting Area

Seating is an important consideration, since it influences how people talk to and interact with each other, and since the rooms in question are likely to hold groups of people who don't necessarily know or trust everyone else in the room (e.g. a family and a detective, or two families who don't know each other). Workshop participants spoke about the varying sizes of groups that come for meetings — ranging from just 1 or 2 people up to 10 to 15 people. Almost half of survey respondents imagined having adult family members with them in their difficult and emotional conversations, and about 42% imagined being there alone.

There are seating differences between the waiting room and conference room in the designs that participants created in the workshops, which participants said was largely due to the different purposes that the rooms serve.



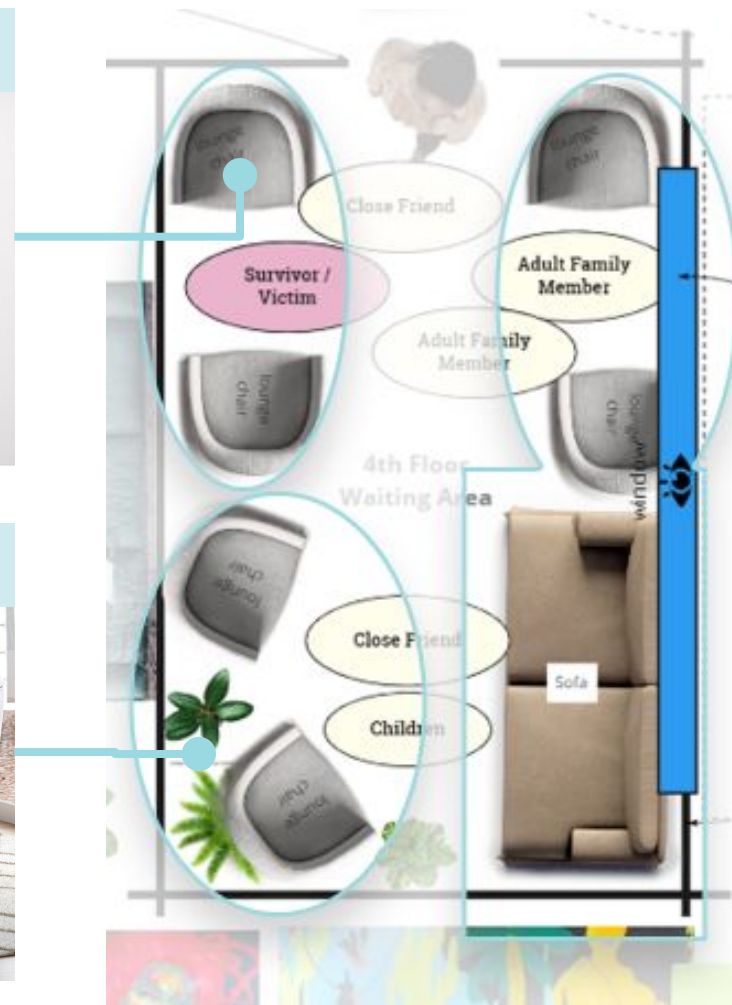
“streamlined but comfortable”



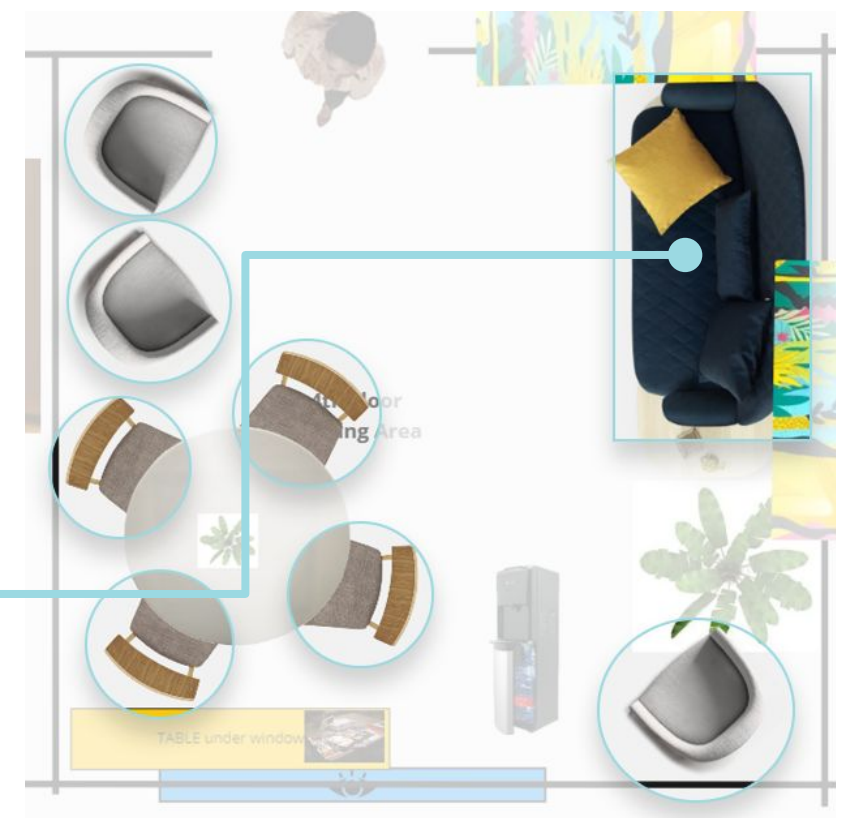
CLUSTERED



DIVERSITY

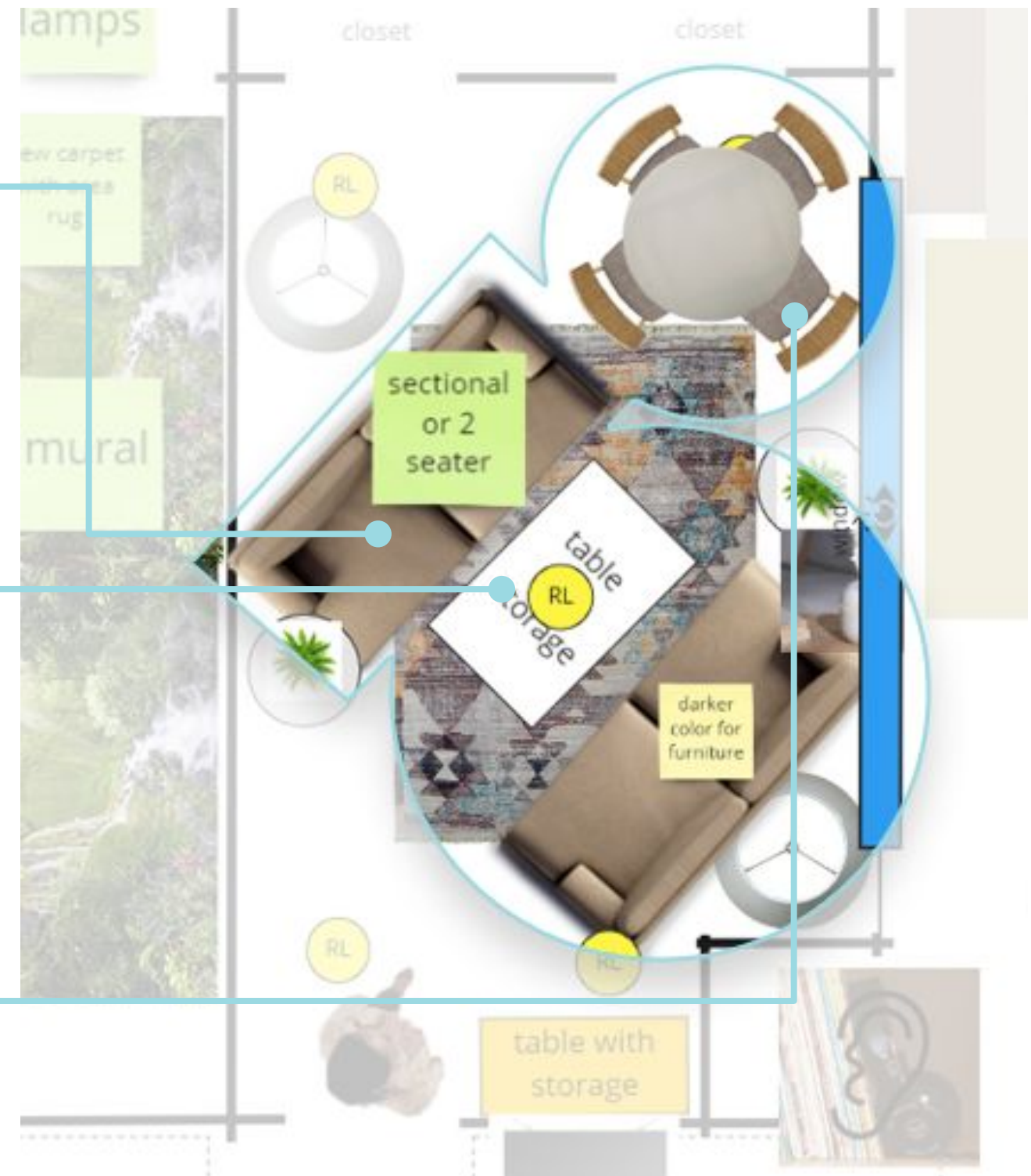


In the waiting room, participants desired soft seating that is clustered, so that groups of people could sit together and so that groups could each have their own spaces within the room. They also sought diversity in seating so that they could have options (e.g., sit on a club chair or on a sofa, sit with others or sit alone). The waiting room layout examples show soft chairs in the form of club chairs and a sofa, and clustered seating in the way the club chairs are positioned. Diversity in seating is represented through a mixture of club chairs, sofa, and table/chairs, as well as clusters of seating for 2 and for 4.



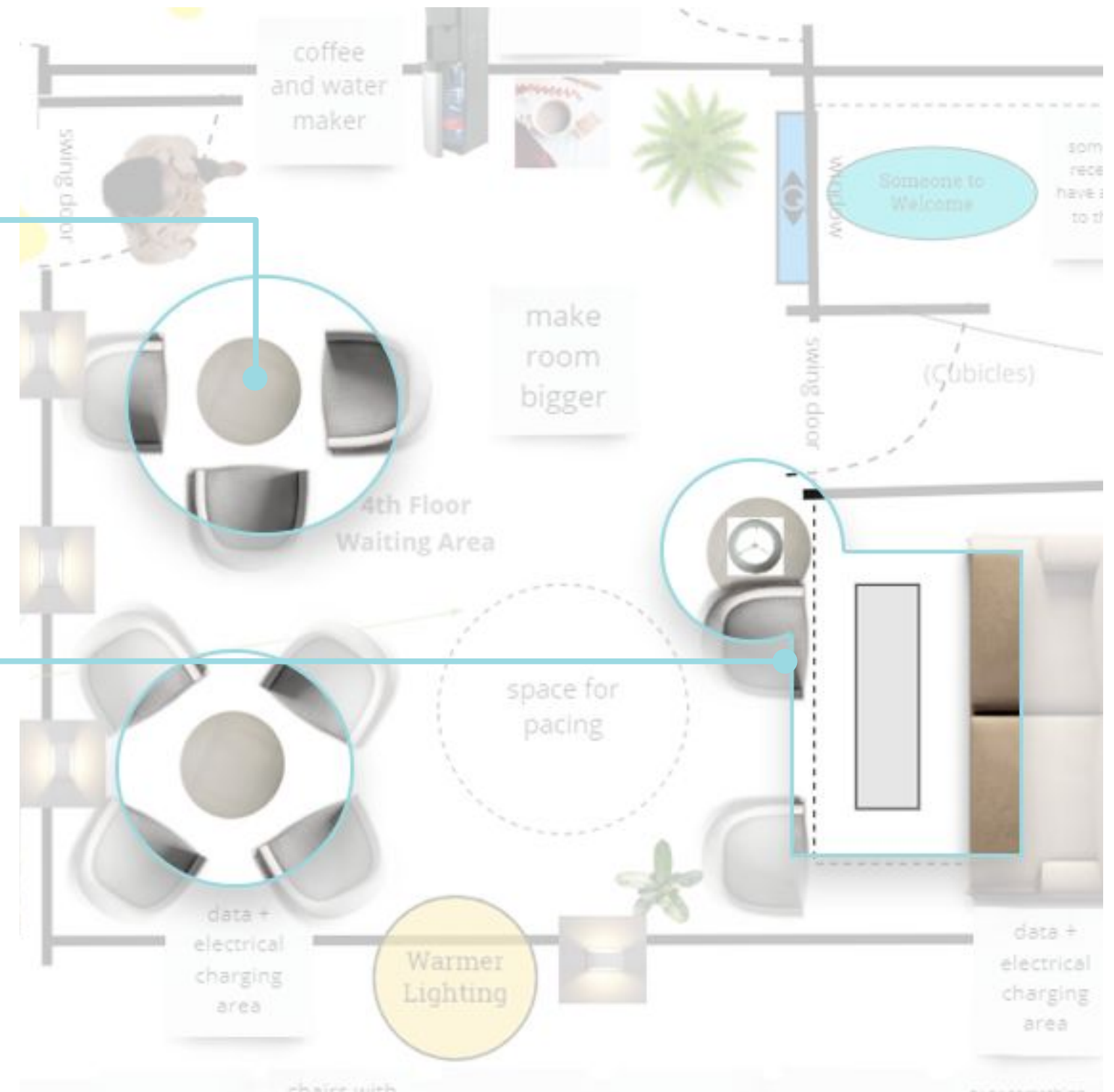
DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Seating: Conference Room

In the conference room, participants were split between wanting soft chairs and desk-like chairs, but almost all participants wanted the seating centered around a table. While many designs placed desk-like chairs around a table in the middle of the room, the layout example here shows how soft seating can also be centered around a table, with a more traditional table and chair arrangement off to the side. The majority of participants saw this room as more professional and business-oriented than the waiting room; but for some, elements of the waiting space were considered appropriate for this room as well, since survivors spend a lot of time waiting in this room as well.



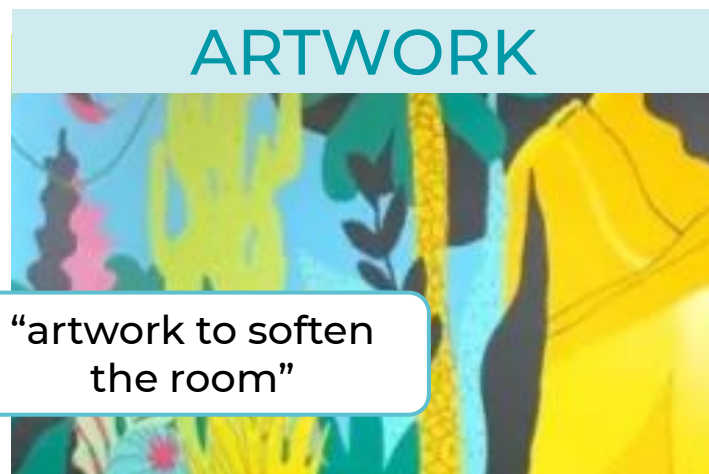
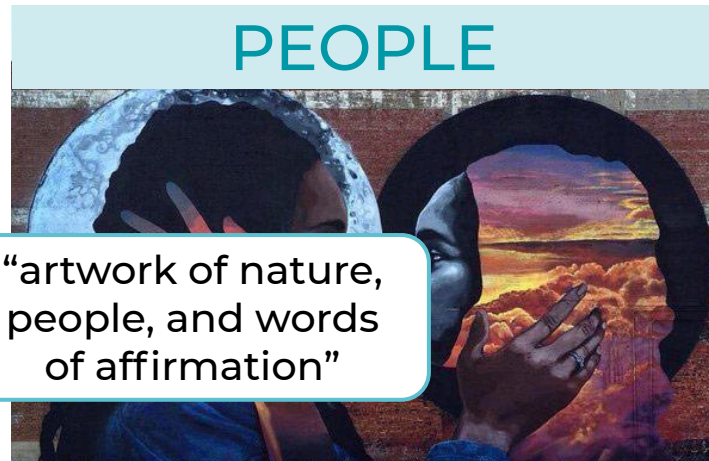
DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Furnishings

Participants furnished the rooms with other types of furnishings and accessories. Tables of various kinds were placed in each space (e.g., tables to meet around in the conference rooms, and coffee and end tables for magazines and beverages in the waiting rooms). Especially in the waiting areas, there is a desire for activated table tops and horizontal surfaces. Ongoing analysis is also showing a desire for accessories related to technology, such as charging stations. The layout example shows a waiting room with coffee and end tables and a charging station.



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Art & Imagery

Participants prefer activated walls. All of the designs of both the waiting and conference rooms include some type of art, including paintings and images of people, nature, and Newark. Some wanted motivational sayings or posters hanging on the walls. Survey respondents didn't prioritize art to the same degree — only half chose art when given a list of "objects of comfort" to include in their imagined spaces. When all respondents were asked in a different question what kind of art they would include, the majority said paintings. Workshop participants also showed an interest in murals, and 38% of survey respondents indicated a desire for such art. The layout example shows several representations of art in a waiting room and the hallway leading to it.

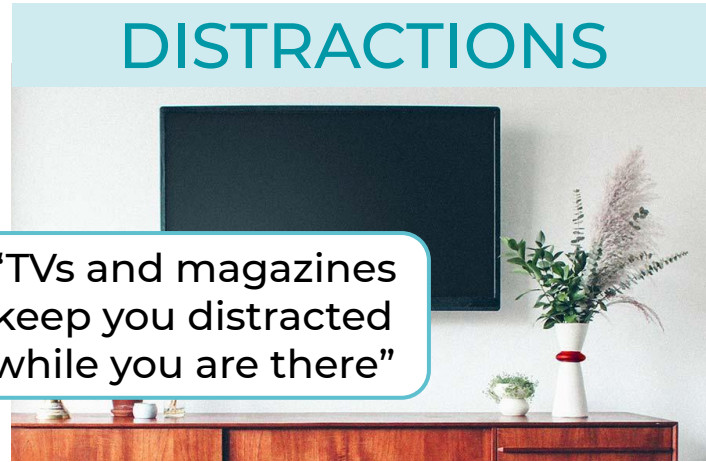


DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Objects of Comfort

Participants identified other “objects of comfort” for their spaces. These varied across the waiting room and conference room. In the waiting room, beverages and snacks were the most common objects of comfort, followed by distractions (e.g., TV, magazines, games). In the conference room, distractions were the most common feature, followed by resources about a variety of services. Across the designs and survey, books are also emerging as another valuable object of comfort. The layout example of the waiting area includes a TV, magazines, and food and beverage stations.

DISTRACTIONS

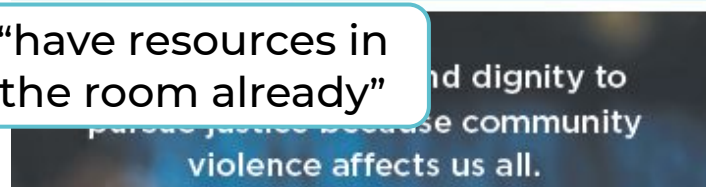
“TVs and magazines keep you distracted while you are there”



RESOURCES

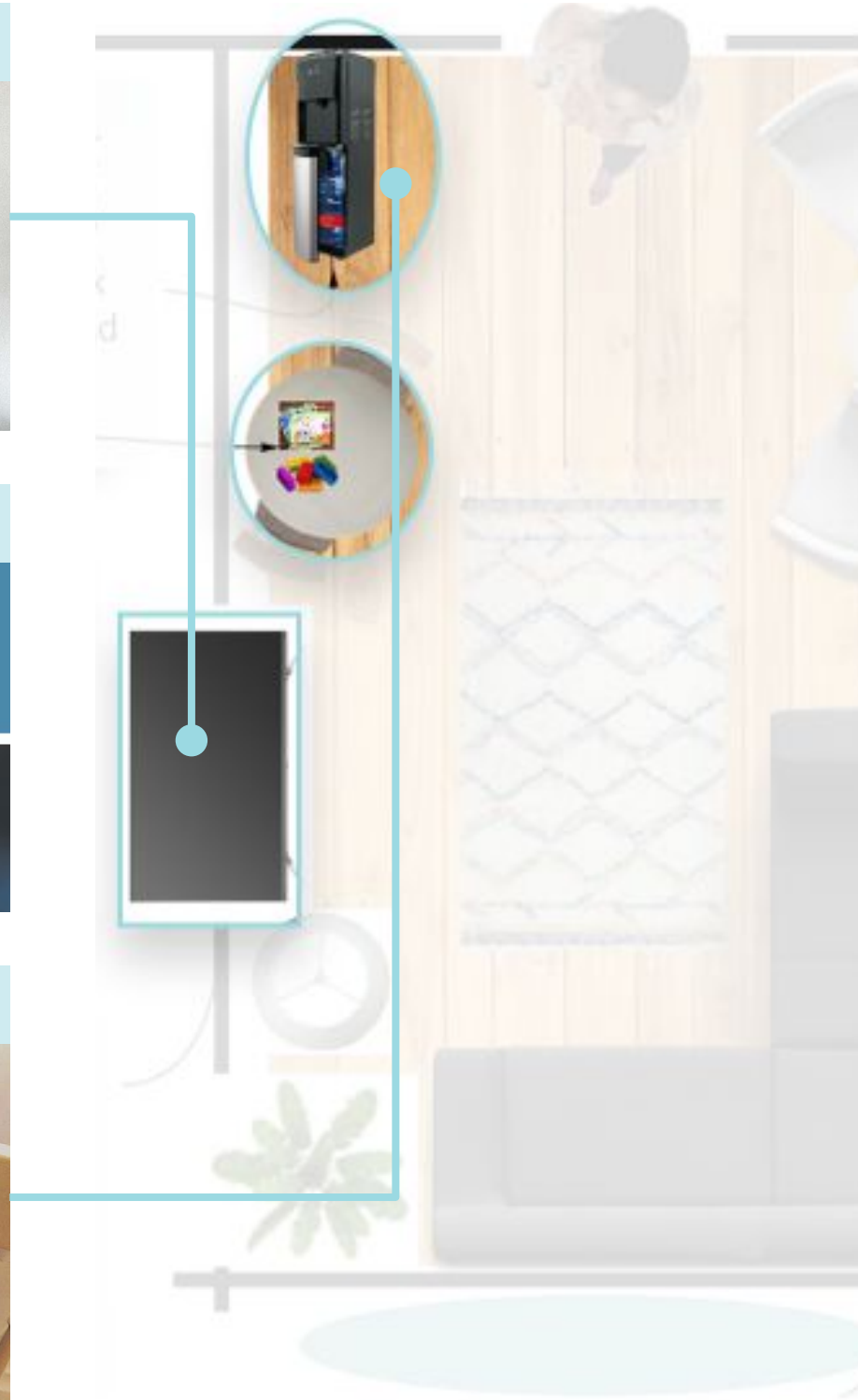
What's Next

“have resources in the room already”



FOOD & DRINK

“access and availability to drinks”



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Doors

Doors are important and complicated. They can provide necessary privacy, as evidenced by 88% of survey participants who want a door into their imagined space as a way to have privacy. On the other hand, doors, and the lack thereof, can also negatively impact survivors, as is evidenced in design workshop discussions about the four key doors and doorways that survivors encounter when they approach and enter ECPO spaces.

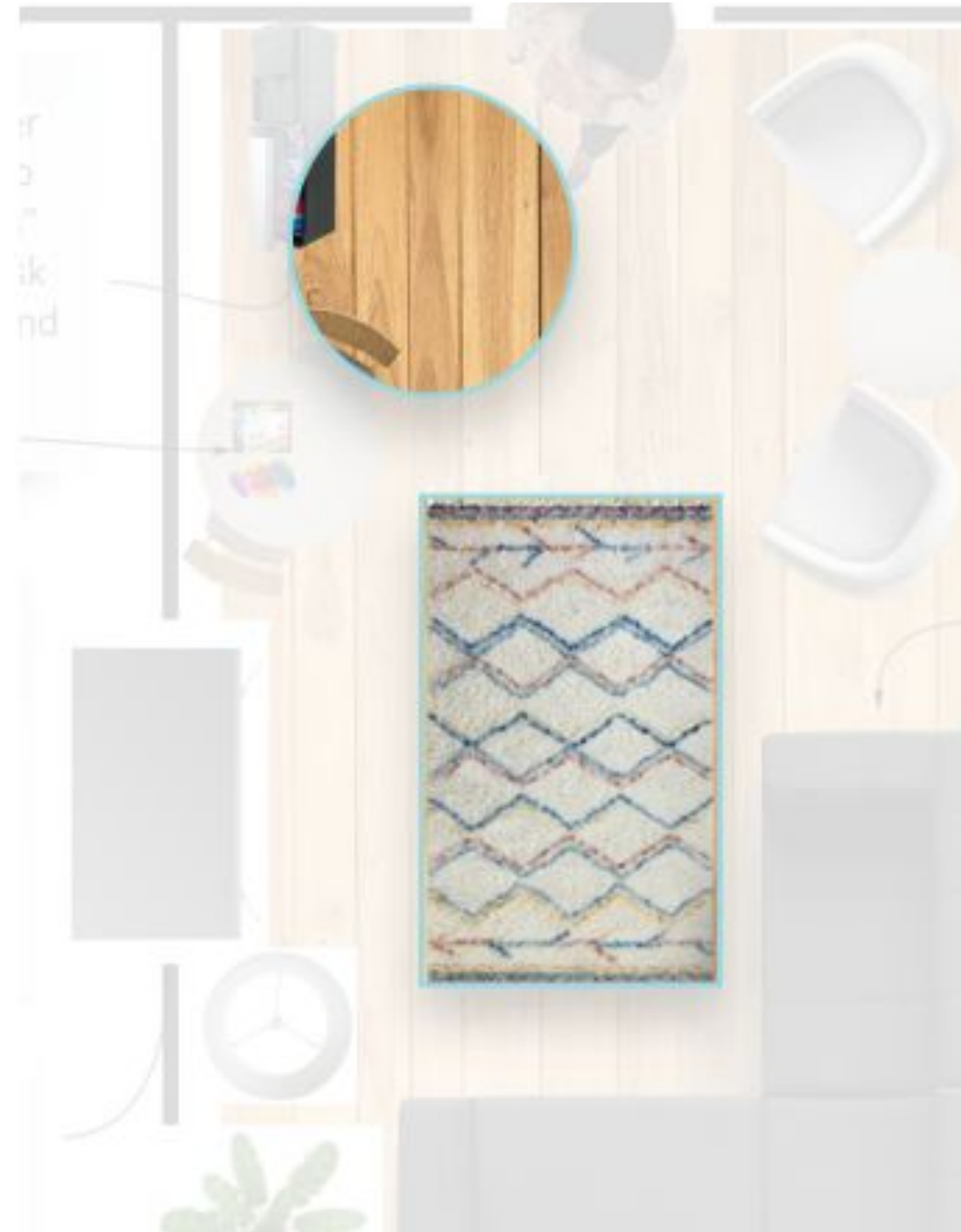
Ongoing analysis will clarify and synthesize survivors' experiences with existing doors and design preferences. The current analysis is paying attention to 1) concerns for privacy; 2) the transparency and opaqueness of doors and how those characteristics impact privacy, feelings of trust, and access to natural light, and; 3) signage on and around doors and how the signage has the potential to positively and negatively impact survivors.



The layout examples show new doors at the end of the hallway toward the waiting area (top left and bottom right images); the current door is solid brown. The bottom left image is a door added to the waiting area, which is currently without a door.

DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Floor

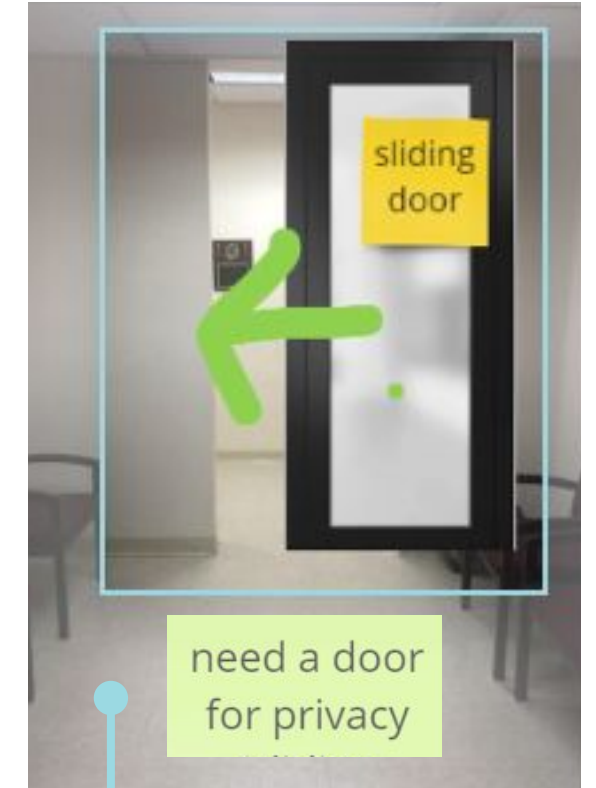
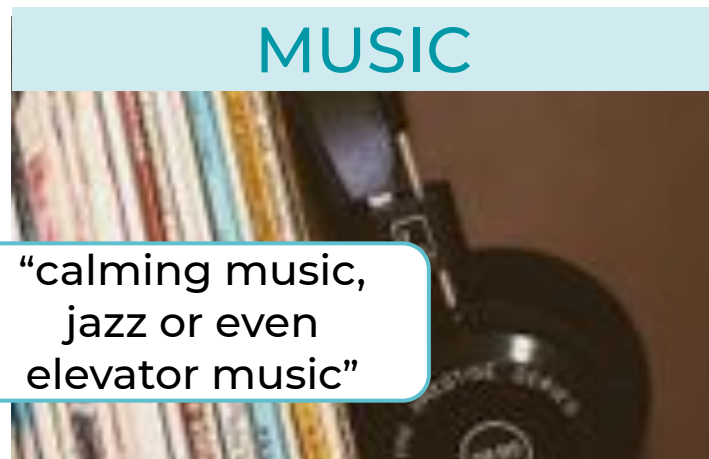
The majority of workshop participants would like something done with the floor in both the waiting and conference rooms. This entailed either laying new flooring, such as tile or wood flooring, or bringing in throw rugs. The layout example shows wood flooring and a throw rug.



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Sounds

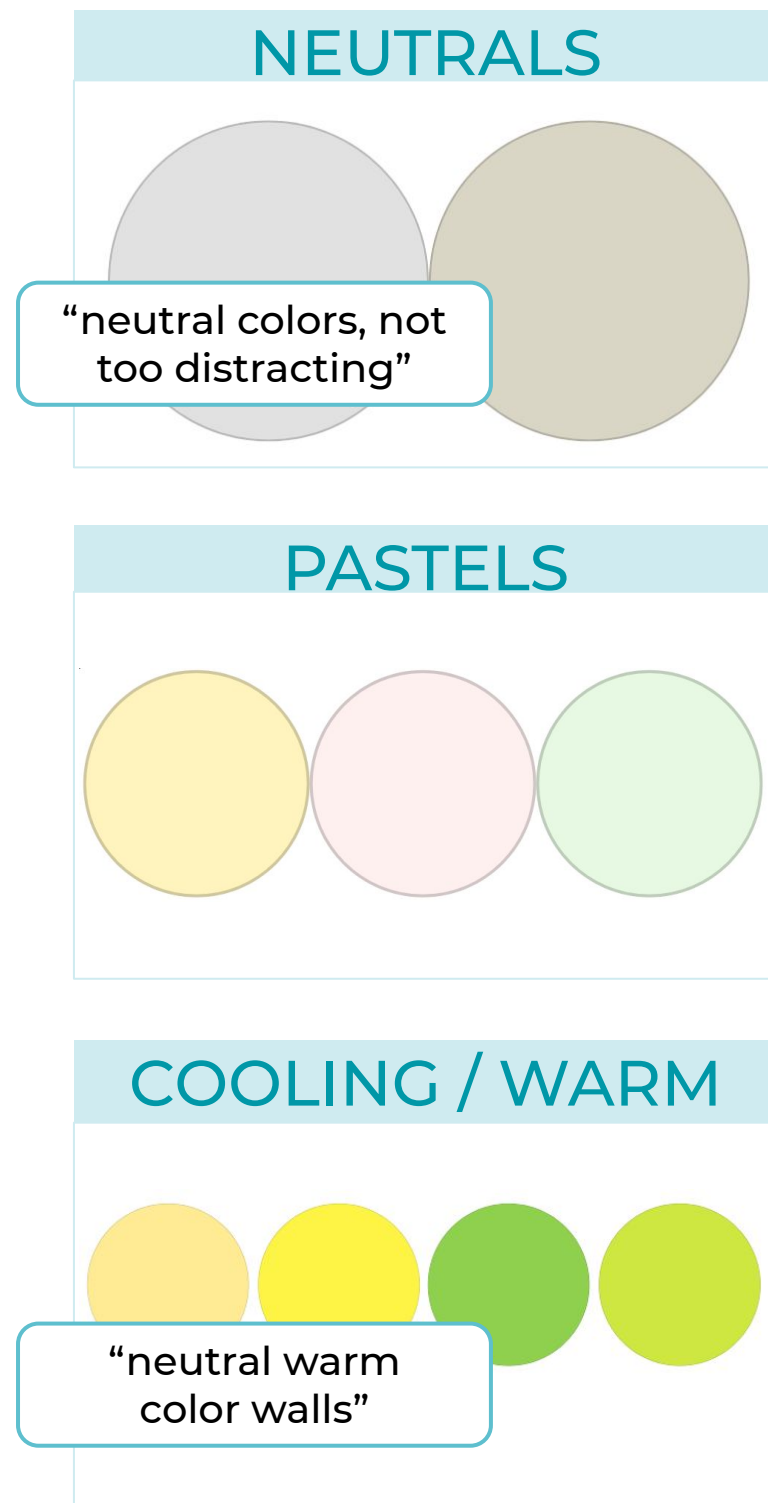
In both the design work and survey, about half of participants wanted some kind of sound, almost evenly split between music and nature sounds. There was more support for sound in the waiting area than the conference room, likely due to the differing purposes of the spaces. The layout example (left) shows a design where there will be music.

Workshop participants frequently complained about hearing detectives and prosecutors talking about cases and going about their work. There is a strong desire to minimize survivors' exposure to these conversations because of how it can be revictimizing. The layout example on the right shows how a door in the waiting area could be used to minimize this type of intrusive sound.



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Color

Workshops suggest a desire for "calming" and "warm" colors (e.g., neutral and light colors). The survey shows that about 40% prefer purples; 33% prefer teal, green, and white; and 28% prefer neutral colors. Continued analysis will provide clarity on the specific colors that participants prefer. The layout example shows the color palettes of two waiting rooms.



DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS — Other Explorations

We are also doing analysis in the following four categories. We do not yet have firm preliminary findings to report, but we can discuss survey results from Part A.

Thermal comfort — The majority of survey participants prefer a moderate/mild temperature, with either a hint of humidity or with dry air.

Textures and materiality — About half of survey participants want both textured and smooth surfaces to be present.

Scents — About half of survey participants want to smell the aroma of hot beverages (like coffee, tea, or cocoa); the smell of water (like the ocean) is also preferred by 42%, and floral scents are preferred by 38%.

Size — 25% of survey participants want a space that is intimate and cozy, while 67% want a space that is a mix between large/expansive and intimate/cozy.

The research-design team is also open to new themes that emerge as the rest of the data is analyzed.



Closing Thoughts

Many people take environmental design for granted. Either they don't consciously pay attention to it, or they feel like they have no power to change it. The survey and design workshops demonstrate that when they are asked, survivors and justice professionals have clear ideas of how the design of justice spaces can support and serve violence survivors and help or hinder the justice process. They also know how to improve those spaces to better serve survivors. The key is inviting both survivors and justice professionals into the design process.

“I think everyone who's doing some work in this field should sit down and do this.”

– Survivor

