



WELCOME TO THE SLOW ZONE

A Peel Law Association Library Initiative



Background – broad perspective

Mental health

- psychological distress
- depression and anxiety
- work-related burnout
- vicarious trauma & compassion fatigue

Neurodivergence

Research - Mental Health and Lawyers

Psychological Distress

- 59.4% of legal professionals surveyed report psychological distress
- Highest levels of psychological distress are noted in:
 - Female legal professionals
 - Public sector legal professionals
 - Legal professionals aged 26-35
 - Those with less than 10 years of experience
 - Articling students
 - Legal professionals with a disability
 - Those identifying as LGBTQ2S+

Depression & Anxiety

- 28.6% of legal professionals report moderate to severe depressive symptoms
- They are more likely to be:
 - Those with less than 10 years of experience
 - Those under the age of 40
 - Indigenous legal professionals
 - Legal pros working in the education sector
- 35.7% of legal pros report anxiety symptoms
- They are more likely to be:
 - Those under the age of 35
 - Those with less than 15 years of experience
 - Female legal pros
 - Those in private practice
- Groups reporting both depression and anxiety are most likely to be those
 - with a disability,
 - articling students,
 - paralegals and
 - those identifying as LGBTQ2S+

Work-related Burnout

- 55.9% of legal professionals experience work-related burnout
- Burnout is more frequently noted among
 - those between 31 and 35
 - women under 40
 - those with a disability
 - those identifying as LGBTQ2S+

Neurodivergence

- It is estimated that about 600,000 Canadian have some form of neurodiversity (EY Canada)

Background – PLA perspective

Our lawyers need one quiet place for self care, a place to pray, and even a place to nurse.

We needed to reclaim a dead zone - it had become a dumping ground for library items

Lawyers returning post-pandemic were expecting to find study carrels in this area.

We worked hard to carve out this space and wanted to reserve it for something special.

Inspiration

We looked at what worked:

- Low stimuli rooms in schools
- Worship rooms in hospitals
- Calming spaces at large events like conferences or in malls
- Spa environments

Space

We wanted to lean into **biophilic design elements**:

- Natural light
- Plants
- Minimal furnishings
- Soothing colours

We wanted to create **psychological safety**:

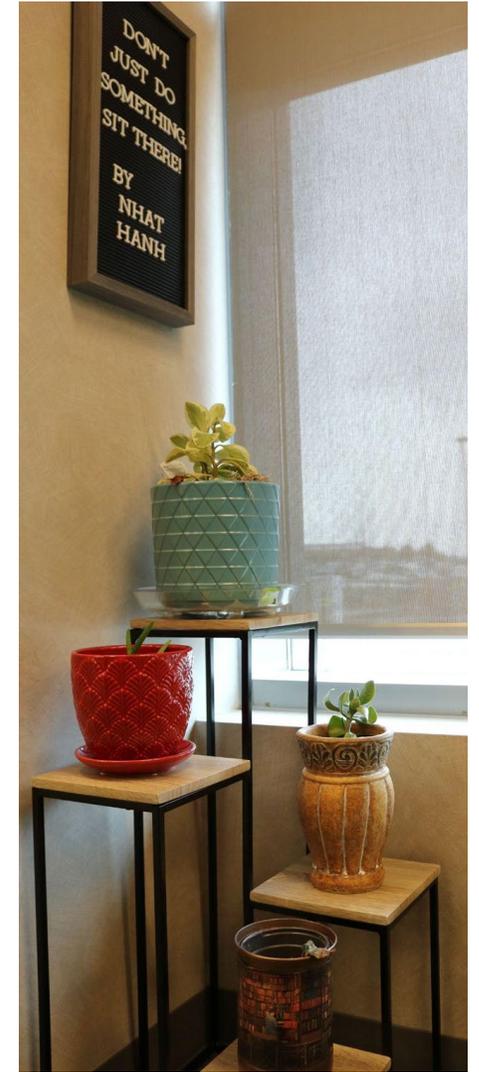
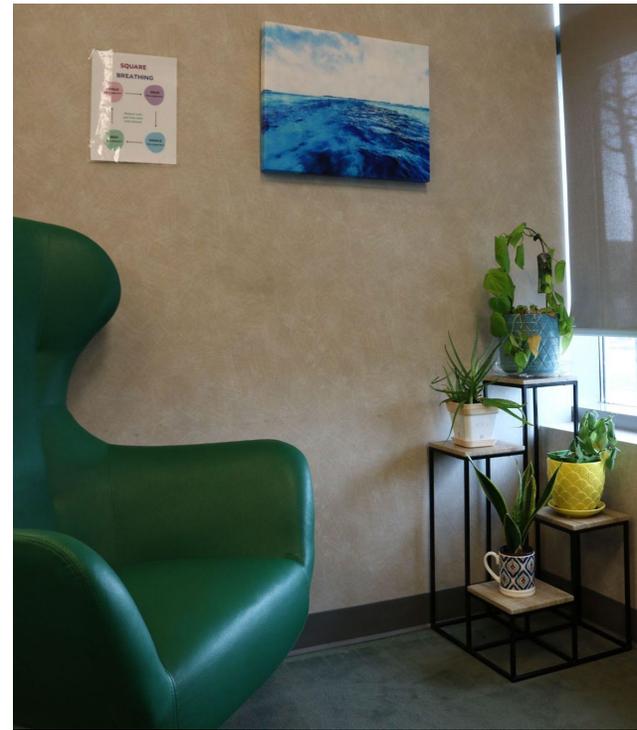
- Easily observed from law librarian office
- Not covered by surveillance cameras
- Tucked away from general pathways through library

Furnishings

Chairs



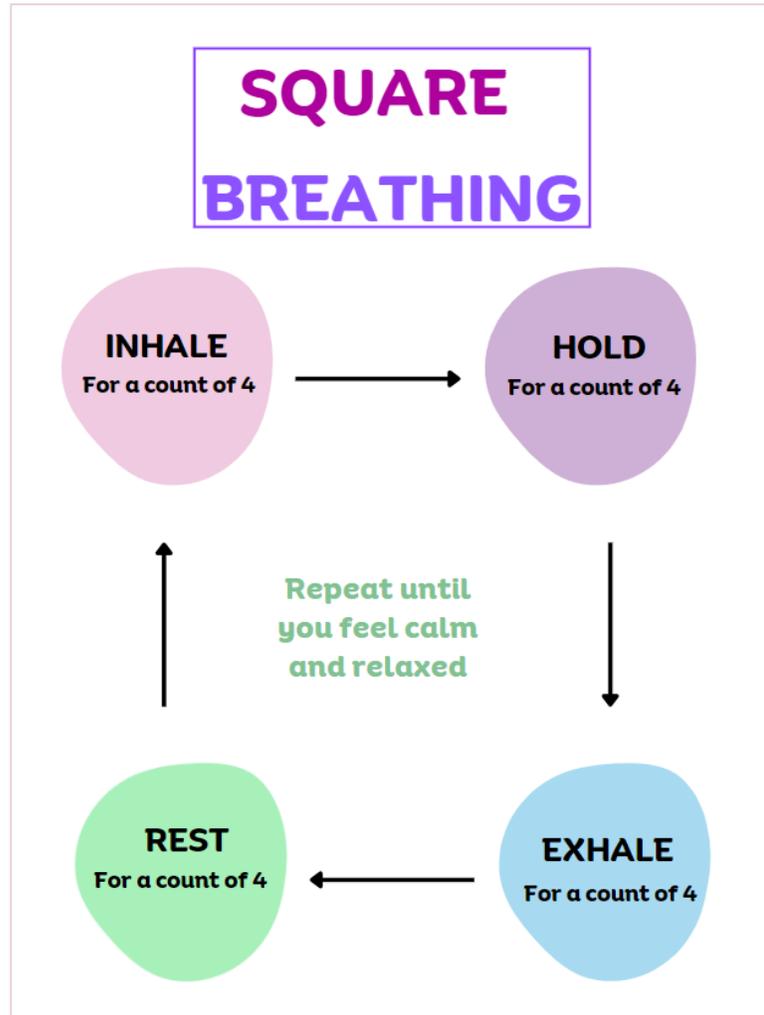
Plant stands



Additional touches

- Plants
- Signs
- Artwork
- Tissues
- Prayer mat and Quran
- Squeeze balls
- Mental health resources

Promotion



CHILL OUT IN THE SLOW ZONE

Need a place to disconnect, nurse, pray or, have a quick power nap?

We have a new spot in the PLA Library just for you: the Slow Zone.

We get it - sometimes a lawyer's life is really stressful. Sometimes you need to step away from the chaos, to gather your thoughts, recharge your spirit, to have a little cry or to simply be alone.

Experience the calming effects of our quiet space and super comfy chairs.

This space has been created with your wellbeing in mind.

The Slow Zone is also available for nursing mothers needing a bit of privacy.

You can even do your prayers in our space (a prayer mat is available).

This is a no-phone call space so tranquil silence awaits you.

Check out the Slow Zone in the PLA Library next time you need a change of pace.



Usage

We are starting to see some people use the space



Next steps

DEFINITE

Side tables

Privacy screen

Bible

Mental health training

Wayfinding signage

MAYBE

Privacy decals on windows

Footrests

Daybed

Sound cancelling headphones

Playlist

Recommended Resources

Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Practice of Law in Canada PHASE I |
2020-2022 RESEARCH REPORT *National Study on the Health and
Wellness Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada*

https://flsc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EN_Preliminary-report_Cadieux-et-al_Universite-de-Sherbrooke_FINAL.pdf

Interface's DesignLab. *Creating positive spaces using biophilic design.*

<https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/biophilicdesignguide-en.pdf>

Questions?

Please contact me any time!

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