



8.2 Patients in this new mental health building not only liked it more than the old Victorian institute it replaced, but they even rated the medical staff more highly and thought their treatment was better. In fact the staff, patients and treatments were very similar indeed, but patients were shown to be less aggressive and to require shorter treatment periods in the more suitable place

ably articulate about their surroundings. In this case they could tell us quite clearly that they preferred a whole series of attributes of the newer, more carefully designed, hospital to the old one. Not only did they prefer the spaces, colours and so on, but they also preferred the way the building facilitated both community and privacy. In fact they told us that they thought the environment helped them to get better more quickly. Actually this feeling of satisfaction was more generalized, and they also thought their whole medical treatment was better. They even rated the medical staff, who were largely the same as in the older hospital, more highly! In turn, the clinical staff in the newer unit thought the patients were making better progress. This was then confirmed by more objective measurements. We recorded far fewer incidents of serious verbal and physical abuse from the patients, and they required much less restraint. In fact their treatment times came down significantly. In a parallel study we completed in an acute general hospital, we found similar results leading to reduced needs for analgesic medication. What mattered most to patients seemed to be whether they were in a single bedroom or a multiple-bed bay. Neither of these quite different designs produced better results by themselves, but those patients who were in the type of accommodation of their own choice