

Graduate School

What did you receive?

The Graduate School received a grant to help transform a storage space into a break space/ meeting space, and make the communal kitchen area into a more inviting space. In short, both spaces were drab and not places people felt they could go and enjoy. With simple things like paint, artwork and some updated furniture, we have created spaces for staff to get away and read, eat, do puzzles and feel like they can get away and take a break without having to leave the building. With the grant, we purchased paint, a coffee stand, artwork and chairs to help create the space. We also found furniture and artwork from other areas of the university to reuse at no cost to us and we had a staff member donate a couch.

What space(s) did you transform and how is it used?

The back room used to be full of cabinets and basically a dumping ground for storage. It was unused space that we recognized needed to be used in a more useful, engaging way. The Graduate School staff now has a place they feel they can “get away” to grab a coffee, unwind the mind with a few puzzles, and even have informal meetings and chats so that we didn’t disturb the rest of the office. It’s been a great improvement from what we had. It’s amazing what a coat of paint can do and just giving employees a place away from their desks and work to regroup. It’s nice to step back into this room and find staff connecting with each other and having an area where they can truly get some peace and quiet if they need it. The kitchen space, in short was very drab and institutional looking. Old chairs, old tables and white walls. Not the most ideal area to want to take a break and have lunch.

Please share how this has positively impacted your employees/patients/students etc. both physically and mentally and why you feel it’s important to change the environment in which we work to support wellness.

Both spaces are a reminder to people that it IS important to take a break and reset the mind and that it’s possible without having to take much time or leave the building. Having a space like this gives people permission to take a break and avoid burnout. In turn, it creates more productive employees.

Share any feedback you've had.

It’s been appreciated by everyone in the graduate school.

