

Session 1

Camila Ruiz Figari

Architecture as a tool to support mental well-being

Mental health has become a pressing concern worldwide, particularly among children and adolescents, where early-life stressors can have long-term physiological and psychological consequences. Growing research underscores the importance of interoceptive awareness—the ability to perceive and interpret internal bodily signals—as a key factor in emotional regulation and well-being.

This talk presents a theoretical framework that explores how the built environment can actively contribute to emotional well-being by enhancing interoceptive awareness. Through a narrative review of scientific literature, key concepts related to emotion, predictive processing, interoceptive awareness, and mind-body mental health interventions are examined. Based on these findings, a spatial concept is proposed, aiming to induce varying arousal states to support interoceptive engagement and emotional self-regulation.

By translating neuroscientific insights into architectural design strategies, this research offers a new perspective on how architecture can serve as a supportive tool for mental health interventions. The framework outlined in this talk provides a foundation for future research and practical applications, positioning architecture as an active agent in fostering well-being among children and adolescents.