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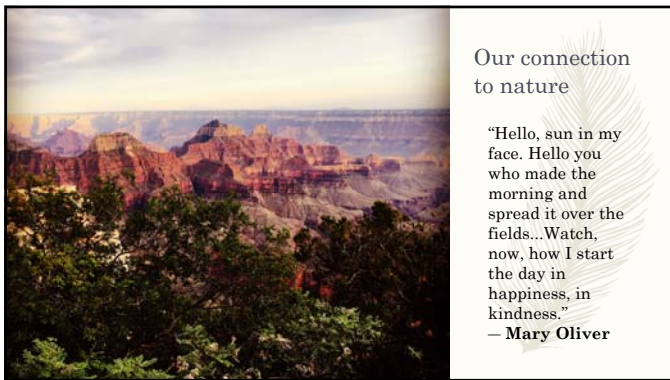
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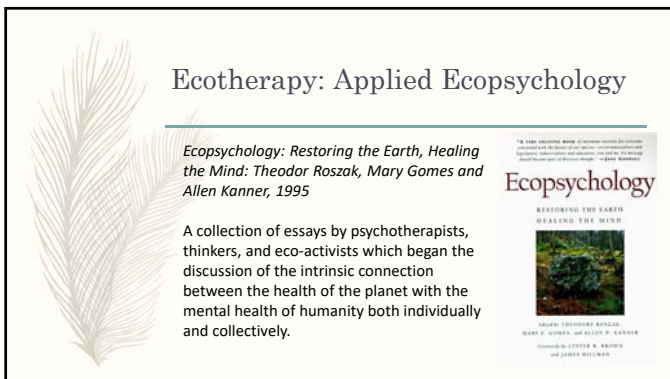
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## The Ecological Circle



*The holistic relationship with nature encompasses both nature's ability to nurture us, through our contact with natural places and spaces, and our ability to reciprocate this healing connection through our ability to nurture nature.*

*Howard Clinebell (1996)*

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## Research Findings

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Research has been conducted on the following concepts:

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Occupational Function
- Cognitive Function
- Social/Emotional Wellbeing
- Play behavior
- Conservation Attitude and Social Justice

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**HEALTHY BABIES**  
Nature exposure for mothers can promote:

- BETTER FETAL GROWTH\*\*
- HEALTHIER BIRTH WEIGHTS\*\*

**HEALTHY EYES AND VITAMIN D LEVELS**  
Time spent in bright sunlight can:

- REDUCE MYOPIA\*\*
- INCREASE VITAMIN D\*\*

**NATURE CONTACT IS**  
Essentially beneficial for members of lower education and socioeconomic backgrounds.\*\*\*

**INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**  
Access to parks and greenspace can foster:

- INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY\*\*
- REDUCED RISK OF OBESITY\*\*

**OUTDOOR PLAY**  
Increases the likelihood that girls will remain active into adolescence.\*\*\*

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**  
Learning in nature can support:

- BIMODAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS\*\*
- REDUCED STRESS\*\*
- ANGER\*\*
- AND AGGRESSION\*\*\*

Children are better able to cope with stress when they live near trees and other greenery.\*\*\*

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**BETTER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**  
Learning in natural environments can:

- BOOST PERFORMANCE** in reading, writing, math, science and social studies.
- ENHANCE** creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving.

**ENHANCED ATTENTION**  
Spending time in nature can help children focus their attention.

- FOCUS AND ATTENTION** skills.
- ADHD** symptoms.

**INCREASED ENGAGEMENT & ENTHUSIASM**  
Exploration and discovery through outdoor experiences can provide motivation to learn.

- INCREASED ENTHUSIASM FOR LEARNING.**
- GREATER ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING.**

**IMPROVED BEHAVIOR**  
Nature-based learning is associated with reduced aggression and fewer discipline problems.

- MORE** impulse control.
- LESS** disruptive behavior.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH ON THE BENEFITS OF NATURE AND USES OF GREEN SPACES BY JILL KENNEDY AND GUY LAWRENCE

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### What is Ecotherapy

Provides clients the opportunity to explore their relationship with nature and includes a range of therapeutic interventions

- Horticulture therapy
- "Green" exercise
- Animal-assisted therapy
- Wilderness therapy
- Counseling in nature
- Environmental Conservation

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### Horticulture therapy

- The most popular therapeutic interaction between people and plants
- Ranges from passive appreciation of gardens to actively gardening

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### “Green” exercises: a readily available therapy with no obvious side effects

- Research shows that acute short-term exposures to facilitated light, not rigorous, green exercise improves both self-esteem and mood
- Effects can take place in as little as 5 minutes
- Younger people experience improvements in self-esteem; middle age and older experience improved mood
- All green spaces are effective in improving mental health including urban green spaces, countryside/farms, forest/woodlands, wild-habitats, but waterside seems to have the greatest effect



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### Animal Assisted Therapy



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Using wild and remote places to provide a context for individual and/or group therapy

The goals of wilderness therapy is to challenge participants (and gauge reactions to these challenges and, perhaps, moments of frustration) in order to create experiences where reflection, self-awareness and discovery can occur.

The wilderness can offer a pure, distraction (modern distraction) free environment where a participant is physically and emotionally challenged.

### Wilderness therapy



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To lift your spirits  
spend time with  
**Nature.**  
She will lend  
you her  
**power**  
until you  
become aware  
of your  
**own.**



*Ecofeminism*

- Links Feminism and Ecology
- Argues that the western paternalism and anthropocentrism has led to a harmful split between nature and culture.
- This movement sees the connections between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women

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**Ecotherapy with Children**




- A "natural" fit for a child's imagination and energy
- Works with every developmental stage/age
- Richard Louv: *nature deficit disorder*
- Bring the play outdoors!

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**EcoWellness**

Seven Factors of EcoWellness in Practice

1. Have a strong working knowledge of EcoWellness (or ecotherapy)
2. Above and beyond informed consent
3. Honor a client's nature worldview
4. Protect confidentiality
5. Be clear with clients about the clinical intent of nature-based therapy and client advocacy
6. Have access to safe places in nature



A sense of appreciation, respect for, and awe of nature that results in feelings of connectedness with the natural environment and the enhancement of holistic wellness (Reese & Myers, 2012, p. 400).

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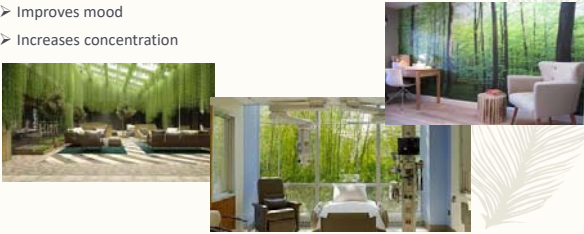
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Interior design characteristics

- High quality natural lighting and window views
- Including natural elements such as plants, natural colors and nature scenes
- Improves mood
- Increases concentration

**Biophilic Design**




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**Ecotherapy in the Counseling Classroom**




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**Counseling in Nature – Can I be an Ecotherapist?**

The simple answer – yes you can!

You don't need to be an expert in ecology, forestry, environmental studies.. You do need to

1. Decide on a group to work with
2. Pick a suitable place
3. Check on your paperwork/insurance
4. Talk to your clients about how, what and why

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- Ask specific questions in the intake interview about a client's connection to nature.
- Make use of nature as a metaphor
- Assign nature-based homework to clients
  - Special Place Assignment
  - Choosing something in nature to represent themselves
- Incorporate nature terminology in your practice
- Green your office space
- Move your practice outdoors
- Include mindfulness practices
- Art based nature activities
- Structured group activities

But how?



Jordan, M. & Hinds, J. (2016). *Ecotherapy: Theory, research and practice*. St. Martin's Press, New York, NY.

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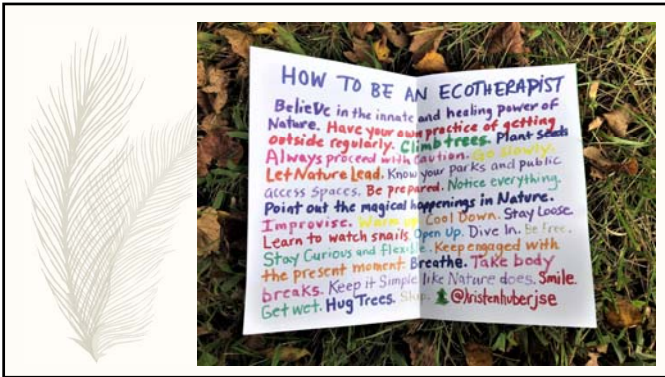
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**HOW TO BE AN ECOTHERAPIST**  
 Believe in the innate and healing power of Nature. Have your own practice of getting outside regularly. Climb trees. Plant seeds. Always proceed with caution. go slowly. Let Nature lead. Know your parks and public access spaces. Be prepared. Notice everything. Point out the magical happenings in Nature. Improvise. When you feel Down, Stay Loose. Learn to watch snails. Open Up. Dive In. Be Free. Stay Curious and Flexible. Keep engaged with the present moment. Breathe. Take body breaks. Keep it Simple like Nature does. Smile. Get wet. Hug Trees. Shout. @Kristenhuberjse

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**NATURE IS NURTURE:  
 COUNSELING AND THE  
 NATURAL WORLD**

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