




NOTICING ELEMENTS

Think about the elements- Earth, Fire, Water- maybe a chemical element? Choose one that you can connect with. Where do you notice it in yourself? Around you? How are you experiencing that element right now?

ACTIVITIES 1 AND 2:



PREPARING THE OFFICE

The Nature Basket, In Your Element, Scents (Pine), Sounds

What is it?

Also called **Nature-Informed Therapy** or **Ecotherapy-**

Built on the benefits seen from the **Outward Bound Movement** and **Outdoor Education-**

Deeper Roots farther back and aspects are seen in nearly all older religions including **Bhudism, Hinduism, Judiasm, Peganism, and Christianity.**

Modalities: **Attachment, Somatic, Mindfulness, Experiential, and many more**



Why Do It?

- Decreases in depression and ADHD symptoms
- Improved Emotional Regulation
- Mental Clarity
- Increased creativity
- Better sleep
- Stronger muscles
- Possibly even cancer prevention



How do I do it?

Just get outside!!

- Walk and Talk
- Sit Spots
- Surf Therapy
- Garden Therapy
- Equine Therapy
- Adventure-Based Therapy

Private, rural, city and state parks and lands, office gardens or green spaces (sensory garden), home-based services.... The options are endless!



ETHICS

Autonomy

Respecting a client's choice in practice and activities

Justice

Considerations related to access and cultural histories in accessing or relating to the outdoors
Culturally appropriate practices
Climate Grief and Trauma

Non-Maleficence

Considerations related to why am I choosing this activity?

Fidelity

Certifications, training, due diligence

Beneficence

Understanding the benefits (such as those previously noted) and using evidence-based practices



ENVIORNMENTAL ETHICS

Leave no trace
 Don't be a carin
 Pack it in, Pack it Out
 Don't Dam-it
 Never take the last one

Advocacy
 Leave it better than you found it
 Raise awareness to protect
 Personal Enviornmental
 Decisions



MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

- Examine your current policy. Chances are you are already covered for "Walk and Talk" activities.
- Consider the documentation you create - both forms (discussed soon) and progress notes
- Continual Client Assessment
 - Ask: Why am I do this? How is this benefiting my client? How is my client experiencing this activity?
- Remain within the boundaries of competence (next slide)- this is not adventure therapy, but traditional therapy in the outdoors/experiential.

CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAININGS

- **AEE TAPG CCAT**
Association of Experiential Education, Therapeutic Adventure Professionals Group, Certified Clinical Adventure Therapist
- Play Therapy (RPT) (and NB play therapy CEUs)
- **NOLS**
Formerly National Outdoor Leadership School
- Wilderness First Aid
- General/ Other Trainings
- Certifications through Schools

CERTIFICATIONS

NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST

- AEE TAPG CCAT <https://www.aee.org/ccat-application-documents>
- Play Therapy (RPT) (and NB play therapy CEUs)
- NOLS <https://www.nols.edu/en/>
- Wilderness First Aid General <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr/wilderness-sports>
- Somatic Wilderness Therapy Institute (Katie Asmus) <https://www.wildernesstherapyinstitute.com/>
- Nature Wellness Academy Nature <https://www.naturalwellnessacademy.org/nature-therapy/>
- Forest Therapy Guide <https://www.natureandforesttherapy.org/>
- Center for Nature Informed Therapy <https://www.natureinformedtherapy.com/>
- Human and Nature Counselling Society <https://humannaturecounselling.ca/workshops/>
- Southwest College and New Earth Institute <https://www.swc.edu/applying-to-certificate-specialty-programs/ecotherapy/>
- University of Minnesota <https://csh.umn.edu/academics/focus-areas/nature-based-therapeutics>
- Naropa: <https://www.naropa.edu/2s-nature>
- Pacifica University <https://retreat.pacifica.edu/ecotherapy-certificate/>
- East Tennessee State University https://www.etsu.edu/coe/chs/nbi_gradcert/nbtgradcert.php
- Prescott College: [Nature-based Counseling - Prescott College](#)

WAIVERS AND LIABILITY

- Acknowledgement of Risk- **Legal Document**
 - Usually lists out just about everything that could happen: trip, twist ankle, snake, coyote, rocks, fall, bugs, bites, allergies, etc.
 - Many ecotherapists that use this have a **lawyer review** and have used an "Acknowledgement of Risk" and not a Waiver
- Informed Consent (coming up)

COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS

- Do you need permits? Permission?
- Parking
- Water
- Bathroom
- Other thoughts related to safety (coming up)



COUNSELOR SAFETY

- Where and how will you conduct your initial assessment?
- Are you meeting in a place you are familiar with?
- What activities do you feel comfortable or confident doing?

INFORMED CONSENT AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY

- Confidentiality
 - What is our script if we see someone else we know?
 - How do you offer confidentiality out of the office?
 - Compared with Teletherapy
- Consideration of Risks and Safety
- Preparing your client for the experience
- Challenge by Choice

EXAMPLE

Walk & Talk and/or Nature Based Therapy Consent

I _____, have agreed to walk & talk and/or nature based therapy (i.e. therapy sessions that take place outside of the therapy office while walking or sitting in nature with my therapist) as part of my healing process. I understand that I may request that my session take place within the office at any point.

By signing this form, I agree to the following:

- I agree that I am responsible for setting the walking pace of the walk/talk session.
- I understand that this is not personal training and that while movement may be a benefit to me physically, the focus is not on exercise.
- I agree to communicate with my therapist if I am uncomfortable physically or emotionally while participating in walk/talk and nature based therapy.
- I understand that nature-based therapies may involve certain environmental hazards, such as roots, rocks, uneven ground, and unpredictable weather. I understand that I may request outdoor therapy in an area with less environmental hazards (e.g. sidewalks), but that it is impossible to eliminate all environmental hazards in nature based therapy.
- I take full responsibility for my medical and physical accidents, issues, or ailments during or ...

I agree to seek a doctor's approval before beginning walk & talk and/or nature based therapy if appropriate.

If I have any medical conditions that would be detrimental to walk & talk and/or nature based therapy I agree to disclose this and understand my therapist may not be able to offer this as an option.

I understand that if we come into contact with a person that I know, I have the right to disclose or not to disclose that I am in a therapy session. I understand that my therapist will follow my lead should we come into contact with a person I know and my therapist will make every effort to preserve client confidentiality and privacy while conducting my walk & talk and/or nature based therapy session. And if we should come into contact with a person that my therapist knows, my therapist will uphold confidentiality as well.

CHOOSING A SPOT

- Permits, Parking, Bathrooms, Water
- Population/Busy-ness
- Animals- Domestic or wild- dog phobias
- Places to Sit
- Safety? Is it in a safe location? Services? Fire department? Police? Hospital? Cameras?

CHOOSING A SPOT

- Conditions of paths
- Length of paths (timing)
- width of - can two people walk side by side?
- Place to escape change in weather?
- Access?
 - for different abilities and needs
 - transportation

WEATHER CONCERNS

- Prepping your client
 - Shoes
 - Jacket
 - Water

- Extremes
 - Heat, Wind, Lightening, Wind



Application

- Activity 1: Elements (already done)
- Activity 2: Nature Basket (already done)
- Activity 3: Nature Bracelet
- Activity 4: Group: This is a Ball
- Activity 5: Pipeline
- Activity 6: Uncovering Genius
- Activity 7: The Power of Kawa
- Activity 9: Ceremony and Seasonal Change
- Activity 10: Parts Work in Nature (Uncovering Genius)



Nature Bracelet

www.kidsomania.com/simple-diy-nature-walk-bracelets-for-kids/

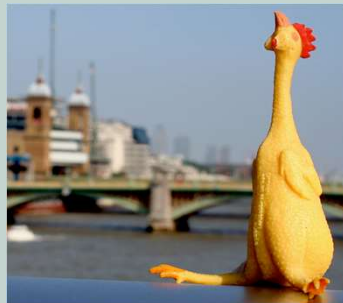
Benefits:

- In touch with natural elements and grounding
- A new way of seeing or experiencing nature
- New uses for old things
- Possibly beauty from ugly or from death
- Appreciating the Details
- or a Holistic (Gestalt) way of experiencing- all the small parts make something greater



Group Activity: This is a Ball

- Benefits:
- Community building
 - cooperation
 - laughter
 - Brain Stimulation
 - perseverance



Group Activity: Pipeline

- Benefits:
- Teamwork
 - Relationship observations and skills
 - Communication development
 - Self-awareness
 - Achievement and Satisfaction



Uncovering Genius

Partnering with Nature to Find True Self

A Parts Based Training from Katie Asmus at Somatic Wilderness Therapy



- 6 Fs of IFS
- Find
 - Focus
 - Flesh Out
 - Feel Towards
 - beFriend
 - Fear

True self is wise.
 We all have a wise self.

Find something on the land with the goal to gain wisdom and ask it and yourself questions:

- What do I notice?
- What do I question?
- What do I see, hear, feel?
- What is surprising?
- What wisdom do you have for me?
- Who taught you this?

The Power of Kawa

Benefits:

- Supervision or with Clients
- Self-Afirming
- Increased Disclosure

Water- Mizu
(movement, flow, source)

Rocks- Iwa
(challenges)

Walls/Bed- Kamazoko
(wider environment, direct impact)

Driftwood- Ryboku
(resources, supports, assets)

Space Between- Sukina
(where interventions can reduce challenges and increase life flow)



In or out of office Activity
Japanese Roots, Used in OT in New Zealand
Cian Brown, David Carpenter, Amy Broadwater
www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/15401383.2021.1950093?needAccess=true



Autumn Sit Spot

thematic reminders of self-care
mindfulness

Autumn may remind us to slow down
Consider what we need to let go of
Take stock of change

Ceremony and Rituals Seasonal Change

Other natural changes that can be observed with mindfulness and mental health benefits:
eclipse, moon cycles, time of day, planting and harvest



“Sacred Questions”

Begin with quiet, slow deep breaths.... and listen
Attempt to mirror (inside and out) what you are hearing, smelling, seeing

Ask:

- What do I notice?
- What does that mean to me?
- What is that telling me?

Other Questions:

- Who or what is leading my life?
- What defines me?
- What do I feel now?
- What do I want to feel?
- What do I want to hold on to or keep from this experience? From life?
- What do I need to let go of?
- What are you now invited to do?

Wild Nights Out

Why is it dark?

Benefits: This activity is excellent for those learning to confront fears and for those who struggle with being present

Count the Sounds p. 30

**Ask the group, family, individual to find a place to sit or lie down quietly, close their eyes, and listen.

**Count the sounds using their fingers. Then ask each participant to hold up the number of fingers.

**Discuss, list, can you identified the sounds, see what made those sounds?

This is a Ball

Consider doing this game at night, around a campfire or just in the dark.

What differences occur? How does the lack of sight impact the activity?



The Power of the Debrief

What? So What? Now What?

Let the Mountains Speak for Themselves