

# Urban, Place-Based Ecotherapists-- Observations on and Experiences Related to Ecological Justice: A Grounded Theory Approach

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## Foundational Literature

An applied wholistic wellness-based model suggests benefits such as:

- stronger muscles (Hanscom, 2016)
- decreases in depression and ADHD symptoms (van den Burg & van den Burg, 2011)
- increased creativity (IPSOS, 2018)
- better sleep (Burns et al., 2021)
- possibly even cancer prevention (Li, et al., 2007).

## Themes Surrounding Safety and Barriers

Most mentioned weather, the health and ability of the client, trip/fall risks, financial constraints, crime and the need for transportation, confidentiality, and physical safety, and historic trauma based on race.

Two mentioned crimes against themselves or their belongings- including stalking and having their car broken into.

## Noted Barriers

- Safety concerns and discrimination (Joyce, 2016)
- Overt and systemic racism (Morrison, 2019)
- Financial Constraints (Roberts, 2018).
- Made to feel unwelcome (Moxon, 2019)
- Urbanization (Sze, 2006)
- Poor access and design for those with special needs (Wooley, 2013)
- Weather and Climate Change concerns (Wamsler et al., 2020)

## Themes Surrounding Training and Modality

90% mentioned some form of external ecotherapy training, many of these trainings included the use of somatic, mindfulness, metaphor, and parts-work approaches.

## Client Demographics and Cultural Sensitivity

As noted, the majority of the participants were white and women. The majority of their clients were also noted to be white, women, and from financially stable or affluent backgrounds. Few mentioned cultural sensitivity or responsiveness, simply based on clientele however, many mentioned concerns over cultural appropriation and the methods used to avoid this practice.

## Themes Surrounding Advocacy

The majority were in private practice and only took “out of network” or self-pay clients. A few did pro-bono work. Those who noted more diverse clientele participated in active connection with other community resources. Connecting with community recourses and partnerships was a frequent desire for most; however, only those were additionally connected to non-profit organizations were able to achieve this. Most noted a desire to work and save the resources we currently have, to connect with city officials to increase green spaces in urban areas, and a desire to see outdoor habits started early, such as in schools



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