

The benefit of nature on adolescence mental health

Mygind, L., Kjeldsted, E., Hartmeyer, R., Mygind, E., Bølling, M., & Bentsen, P (2019) Mind (2021)
Nejade, M.R., Grace, D., Bowman, R, L (2022) Santrock, W.J (2019) Tillmann, S., Tobin, D., Avison, W., & Gilliland, J (2018)



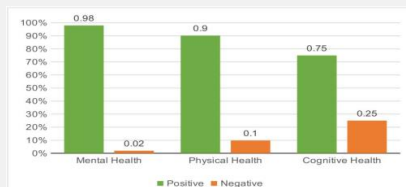
"Children's mental health includes their emotional, psychological and social well-being and affects how they reach developmental milestones"

WHAT IS ADOLESCENCE?

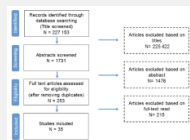
- Adolescence is a transitional stage in development from a child into adulthood, between the ages 12-24.
- It is also the most important stage in our development in which anything that happens in these years can contribute to our future development, it is also the time in which puberty starts.
- Our thoughts are known to be maximised within these years due to the mass changes to our hormones. Making these years potentially difficult for adolescence mental health (Santrock, W, J 2019).

EVIDENCE OF POSITIVE IMPACT

Nejade, M.R., et al (2022) reported outcomes after nature-based interventions, which resulted in 98% of adolescents stating positive mental health after these interventions, 83.3% stating positive psychological and physical health and 75% better cognitive health.



- Mygind, L. et al (2019) showcased evidence of positive interaction of nature involvement with children and adolescents physical and mental wellbeing.
- The benefits that were stated included improved self-concept, problem solving, improved mood, social skills and behavioural improvements.
- Ranging from 11-18 years with 85% of the studies being male and female and one of each being sourly one of each, their participants involved adolescents that had behavioural and emotional disturbances such as ADHD, anxiety and depression.
- Participants stated an increase in self-esteem by being in a natural environment, improved self-awareness, sense of relaxation, resilience and cognitive performance.



Tillmann, S., et al (2018) states that mental health issues which are developed at a young age have the likelihood to carry onward into adulthood with increased known benefit of importance of outdoor influences on mental health, within the home, school and environments. By studying those aged 0-18 years through academic databases.

RESULTS

IMPROVEMENTS to emotional well-being, controlling actions of ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), self-esteem, stress, resilience, confidence, depression and overall health-related quality of life. Doing more outdoors showcased major positive results to mental health.

KEY POINTS

- Improves our mood
- Reduces loneliness
- Relaxation
- Reduction in stress and anger
- Improves activeness and connectiveness
- Improves confidence
- Improves communication with others
- Improves physical and mental wellbeing



What is important? What can be done outdoors?

What support is available that is nature based?

Whether you're an active person or just enjoy a small stroll or have never thought of going outdoors to be 'fun', nature can benefit your wellbeing in several ways. Especially at the time of adolescence as it can be such a confusing and pressuring stage in our life, taking yourself away from everything for even just a few minutes outdoors can have a great impact on your mood, thoughts and outlooks!

1. Helping with growing foods outdoors or doing it independently
2. Being creative, painting or drawing outside in your favourite spaces or even doing a bit of photography – taking photos of your favourite places which can then be displayed in your surroundings indoors.
3. Doing activities outdoors, this can be a variety of things such as doing yoga, walking, running, group activities and more!
4. Volunteering – this is a good way of meeting new people and trying new things without any pressure of failure
5. Eating meals outdoors, with family or friends or independently!
6. Going to beaches, have food down the beach, watch the sun set/sun-rise or even have a swim in the sea!

ECOTHERAPY

- Ecotherapy is a type of therapy in which is focused upon doing outdoor activities in aid of improving our well-being and health, it is a type of therapy led by professionals which focuses on doing an activity rather than your health adding less pressure. Working to improve appreciation for the natural world, spending time with others or working at your own pace.
- Rural or urban places (parks, gardens, woodlands, farms) with the focus on working in nature, gardening or farming or working with a project, going for walks, cycling or simply enjoying views. Or other choices being, physical outdoor activities such as rafting, rock climbing, caving, simple walks or runs.
- Animal-assisted interventions/ animal-assisted therapy which involves being in places such as farms, helping with feeding and petting, building a therapeutic relationship. A further aspect being care farming, looking after animals, growing crops and helping manage woodlands

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

- In a guide provided by the Mental Health Foundation, The way that nature benefits us is known to relate to how our senses connect to our environment from the scents, views in shapes of trees which can benefit our mind to rest and take a moment to breathe.
- Across multiple studies has found a link between access to green space such as fields, forests, parks and gardens with a reduced likelihood of mental health issues and an increase in improved mood and life satisfaction.
- Especially thought to be difficult to find in urban settings but once you stop and take in the place around you, green spaces can be found in the least likely of places to things such as parks, canals and rivers. The activity of 'mindfulness' a way of directing our thoughts and feelings through meditation or relaxation has been also found to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety outdoors.

References

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