



Engaging with nature

Why are we talking about Ecopsychology?

Decades of research has led to the consensus that a relationship with nature is not only beneficial but necessary to evoke pro environmental behaviours, Pereira and Forster (2015).

Teifi Pools during our solo camp 2023

“We are not like animals, we are
animals.”

Midgley (2002 [1979], cited in McGeeney, 2016)

Why are we drawn to nature?

Biophilia hypothesis

Wilson and Kellert (1993) Suggest our mental and physical well-being is positively influenced by interactions with nature.

“the passionate love of life and of all that is alive.” Fromm (1973)





Nature Connectedness

Simple contact with nature is not enough to increase nature connectedness

Lumber, Richardson, Sheffield (2017).

Try Pitch



What are nature's benefits to health?

- Stress reduction Louv (2005)
- Autonomy and independence Pirchio (2020)
- Social-emotional skills Romar (2019), Pirchio (2020)
O'Brien and Murray (2006 cited in Mc Geeney (2016))
- Mental health and attention McCormick (2017)
- Higher academic attainment Yildirim and Akamca
(2017 cited in Freidman et al, 2022)
- Pro environmental behaviour Pirchio et al (2021),
Lumber, Richardson and Sheffield (2017), Martin et al (2020)



Attention Restoration Theory

Kaplan and Kaplan (1989,1995)

1. Experience new environments with no pressures - Being away
 2. Expansive new environments to add perspective - Extent
 3. Interested and motivated by the activities undertaken - Compatible
 4. Surroundings, interesting enough without being over stimulating - Soft fascination.
- Attention Restoration Theory, suggests that we need exposure to nature to help improve our concentration, focus and to unwind, Kaplan (1995).
 - Ohly, et al (2016) has uncovered weaknesses in the quality of some research supporting Kaplan's theory.



Morrier and Ziegler (2018) Children with ASD need structured activities with buddies during outdoor interventions which is opposed to much data regarding nature connectedness.

Pretty et al (2009) positive for children with ADHD as a whole.

Stronger effects on the poor behaviour groups, restorative effect on anger, energy, stress and hedonic tone.

Forest school is not a one size fits all programme.

What does the research say about nature and children with additional learning needs?

Final thoughts...

Health and well-being challenges are being more frequently diagnosed and in younger children, with research suggesting a disconnect from nature to be a contributing factor.

Additional longitudinal research should be carried out, more inclusive of children with additional learning needs.

References

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