

Sara Rhiannon Jones

# ▼ Ecotherapy

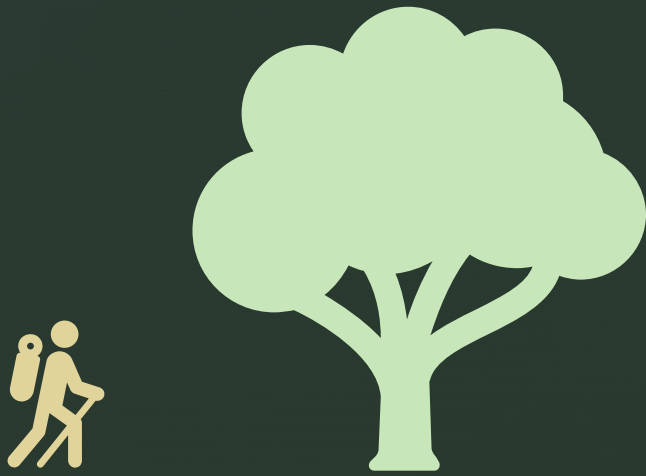
# What is Ecotherapy?

"psychotherapeutic activity undertaken with ecological consciousness or intent". (Jordan & Hinds, 2016)

An umbrella term which encompasses many activities that involve the outdoors with aims to improve mental health and well-being.

Ecotherapy contains various different therapies within it such as mindfulness, exercise, animal assisted therapy and many more.

An environmental movement in reaction to the industrialism of the modern world that began in the 1960's. (Hibbard, 2003)



# Did you know?



Ecotherapy has saved the NHS over £35,000 in medication. (MIND, 2015)

Over half of England and Wales' GPs would refer patients who live with anxiety and depression to some form of Ecotherapy. (MIND, 2015)

Exercise can create a euphoric feeling in the brain due to increased neural activity. (Veale, 1987)

# What are the benefits of Ecotherapy?

Reduces anxiety

Reduces depression

Boosts confidence

Boosts productivity

Reduces aggression

Improves creativity

Increases control

92% of people agreed with the statement:  
"a walk in nature gives me a healthy  
feeling"



# History of Ecotherapy

**Willy Hellpach** (early 20th century)

- introduced the term 'environmental psychology'.
- studied the impact of extreme environments on human behaviour.
- studied the phenomena of overcrowding and overstimulation.

Ecotherapy began gaining recognition in the 1960's

# Important Theorists of Ecopsychology



## Robert Greenway

- considered to be one of the founders of the Ecopsychology movement.
- considered Ecopsychology to be a combined approach of Ecology and Psychology.

(Greenway, 2000)

## Theodore Roszak

- considered another one of the founders of the Ecopsychology movement.
- encouraged people to get back in touch with nature and escape modern and disconnected lives.

(Good Therapy, 2015)

# Research

## Mind, the mental health charity

Ecominds - a project established by Mind, funded by the lottery, to help people suffering with mental health get back in control of their lives.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYmQvEZFx\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYmQvEZFx_8)

Case studies to evaluate the effectiveness of Ecotherapy.

# Example Case Study

Two groups of elderly people in a home, one group were given a plant and told that it was their responsibility to take care of the plant and keep it alive. The other group had no options or responsibility.

The group that had responsibility over the plant reported to complain less and received less dosage of medicine in comparison to other group.

(Langer & Rodin, 1976)





# Ethical Consideration

Is it the right time?

Confidentiality – leaving the confines of a clinical setting can be detrimental to keeping confidentiality of the client.

Competence – being able to assess the risks of the environment.





# Limitations

There is very little empirical evidence to support Ecotherapy as an efficient way to treat mental health.

Weather can impact the efficiency of the therapy.

Because of this, many GP's will not refer patients for Ecotherapy and will prescribe medicine instead.

Ecotherapy is a very broad topic – what exactly is it about Ecotherapy that people benefit from?

## To summarise



Ecotherapy is a therapy which is revolved around taking advantage of the natural world, that benefits us mentally but also benefits the environment.

There are multiple advantages and disadvantages to this form of therapy but that is what will be discussed throughout my project.

*Thank you for listening,  
Any questions?*

# References

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