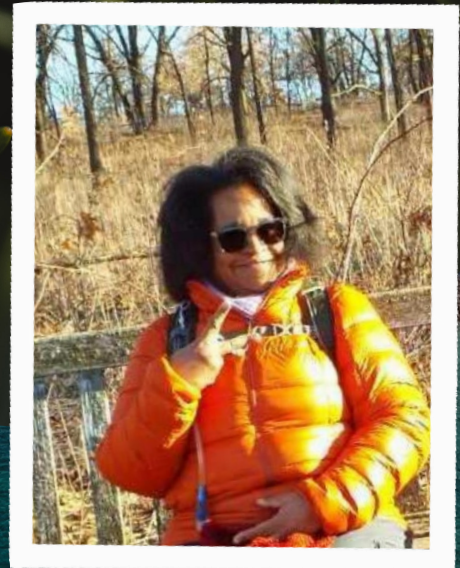


**SEEIN' IS BELIEVIN'S
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH RETREAT
WORKBOOK**

**"HEALING IN THE
OUTDOORS"**



Seein' is Believin'

LEAD BY JASMINE BANKS



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Healing in the Outdoors

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Today's Schedule:

10:45 AM - Arrival at the Rainbow Shed in Warner Park

11:00 AM - Opening ceremony and introduction

11:30 AM - Nature walk and exploration

12:15 PM - Interactive learning activities (using the Merlin)

1:00 PM Dismissal and Lunch



Welcome TO

HEALING IN THE OUTDOORS

Hello, young explorers! We're so excited you've decided to join us on this adventure of discovery and learning. This workbook is your trusty guide as we embark on a journey that's all about connecting with nature and discovering how it can help us build our mental resilience.

What's that you ask? Well, mental resilience is like a superpower that helps us bounce back when things get tough. And guess what? Nature has a secret toolkit to help us boost this superpower!

In this workbook, you'll find everything from exciting activities like a photo contest and a scavenger hunt, to cool mindfulness exercises and fun-filled group activities. Not only that, but we'll also learn how to use awesome apps like Merlin Bird ID and SEEK to help us explore the outdoors like real nature detectives. And the best part? You get to reflect on your experiences and jot down your thoughts right here in this workbook!

As we move through the day, remember that this journey is all about YOU. There's no rush, and there's no right or wrong way to experience nature. The goal is to have fun, learn something new, and become more connected with the world around us.

We can't wait to see where this adventure takes us. Let's dive in and let the healing power of the outdoors work its magic! Happy exploring!

Who IS



JASMINE BANKS?

Lifelong Madisonian, Jasmine Banks began her reconnection to the outdoors in August 2021 when she attended her first Birding event with the BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin. After being invited to and attending a multitude of events, Jasmine was hooked. And not only was she hooked she invited her sister to come along, it was truly too good to keep to herself.

From there, her love of the outdoors continued to grow as Jasmine signed up to complete the 52 Hike Challenge, a nationwide program started during COVID to encourage folks to get outside. She accepted the challenge and once again invited her sisters to join her. Over the course of 393 days and many stories later they completed their 52 hikes and continue to hike to this day.

If you ask Jasmine what has been her favorite hike, she will respond by saying, it's like asking someone to pick their favorite child. They have truly all been my favorite because they are so different each and every time.

During this time of reconnection with the outdoors, Jasmine has hiked ten miles in Anchorage Alaska, went down hill skiing for the first time, banded birds with the BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin and was selected to be an Outdoor Afro (OA) Volunteer Leader for the Wisconsin-Iowa Network. She completed the Outdoor Afro Leadership Training in April where she camped in a tent for the first time, and will lead her first OA event in June.



Let's GET

OUTSIDE

*** Photo Contest Instructions****

In this exciting activity, you'll get to be a nature photographer! Your mission is to capture the unique and beautiful moments that nature offers us. Here are some instructions to guide you:

1. ****What to Look For:**** Seek out the small moments – a bird taking flight, a leaf falling, the colors of a sunset. Look for things that make nature special to you.
2. ****How to Capture:**** Remember, you don't have to be a professional photographer! Just focus on the subject, try to hold your camera steady, and click! Experiment with different angles and lightings to make your photos interesting.
3. ****How to Submit Entries:**** Once you've taken your photos, select your favorite one and send it to us. If you're using a phone, you can email the photo to [email address]. If you're using a camera, you'll need to upload the photos to a computer first.

Remember, this contest isn't about who takes the "best" photo – it's about capturing what you love about nature!



Let's

THINK ABOUT IT!

REFLECTION PAGE

1. ****Reflect on the photo you chose to submit for the contest. What drew you to that particular scene or moment in nature? How did it make you feel? Why did you choose this photo to represent your experience in nature?***

2. ****While participating in the photo contest, you had to observe your surroundings closely to find the perfect shot. How did this change your perspective or appreciation of the natural environment around you? Did you notice anything new or surprising?***



Let's GET OUTSIDE

****Scavenger Hunt Instructions****

For this activity, we'll be turning nature exploration into a fun game! You'll use the Merlin Bird ID and SEEK apps to help you identify different species. Here's how it works:

1. ****Download the Apps:**** If you haven't already, download the Merlin Bird ID and SEEK apps onto your smartphone. You'll need these to identify different birds, plants, and insects.
2. ****Scavenger Hunt List:**** We'll provide you with a list of items to find. Your challenge is to find and identify as many items as you can using the apps!
3. ****Identifying Species:**** When you spot a possible item from the list, open the relevant app and follow the instructions to identify it. The Merlin Bird ID app will help you identify birds, while the SEEK app can identify a wide range of plants and insects.
4. ****Keep Track:**** Write down or take a picture of the items you've found along with their names as identified by the apps. This will be your record of items found during the hunt!

Remember, the scavenger hunt isn't a race – it's about taking your time, observing closely, and enjoying the process of discovery. Happy hunting!



Let's GET OUTDOORS

1. ****Think back to the scavenger hunt. Was there a specific item on the list that was particularly challenging to find? How did you feel when you finally found it? How might this experience relate to facing challenges in your daily life?***

2. ****Using the SEEK and Merlin Bird ID apps during the scavenger hunt allowed you to identify different species. Which species did you find the most interesting and why? Do you think being able to identify different species might change how you view your surroundings in the future? Why or why not?***



Using Our 5

SENSES

IN THE OUTDOORS

Objective: The objective of this game is to engage your senses and explore the world around you. You will name a certain number of things you can perceive with each of your five senses: sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste.

Instructions:

Find a comfortable and quiet spot where you can concentrate and focus on your senses. Take a deep breath and relax. Clear your mind and prepare to engage your senses.

See:

- Look around your immediate surroundings and name five things that you can see. They can be objects, colors, or anything visually perceptible.

Touch:

- Reach out and explore your environment with your hands. Identify four things that you can touch and feel. Pay attention to textures, temperatures, and surfaces.

Hear:

- Listen attentively to the sounds around you. Identify three things that you can hear. It could be the chirping of birds, the hum of a fan, or any other audible elements.

Smell:

- Take a moment to focus on your sense of smell. Identify two things that you can smell. It could be the scent of flowers, freshly baked bread, or any other aroma in your vicinity.

Taste:

- Finally, focus on your sense of taste. Identify one thing that you can taste. It can be a sip of water, a piece of fruit, or any food or beverage available to you.

Reflect:

- Take a moment to reflect on the exercise. How did it feel to engage your senses in this way? Did you discover anything new or surprising about your environment? Share your experience with others if you'd like.

Remember, this game is designed to help you become more aware of your surroundings and appreciate the sensations you experience every day. Enjoy exploring the world through your senses!

Using Our 5

SENSES

IN THE OUTDOORS



See



Touch



Hear



Smell



Taste



Let's

THINK ABOUT IT!

REFLECTION PAGE

1. How did engaging your senses in this exercise enhance your perception of your environment? Did you notice any details or aspects that you hadn't paid attention to before?

2. What was the most surprising or intriguing sensation you experienced during this exercise? How did it make you feel and what insights did it provide about the significance of our senses in our daily lives?

What IS

MENTAL RESILIENCE ?

Have you ever had a tough day, but found a way to bounce back and smile again? That's mental resilience! It's like a superpower that helps you deal with tricky stuff, like problems at school, fights with friends, or even just feeling sad or worried. It's not about never feeling upset, but about knowing how to dust yourself off and keep going, even when things get tough.

****How Does Nature Help Us Be More Resilient?***

1. ****Move and Groove:**** When we run, jump, and play in nature, our bodies create a special kind of happy-making magic called endorphins. These help us feel less stressed or worried and more able to handle tough stuff.
2. ****Chill Out Time:**** Have you ever noticed how peaceful it feels to sit in a park, listen to the birds, and watch the leaves sway in the wind? That's nature's special way of helping us feel calm and relaxed.
3. ****Be a Nature Detective:**** Nature is like a giant puzzle waiting to be solved. Whether you're figuring out which bird just flew by or which path to take on a trail, being a nature detective can make our brains super strong and ready for any challenge!
4. ****We're All Connected:**** Ever feel like you're a tiny part of a big, beautiful world when you're outside? That's because we are! And feeling connected to everything around us can help us feel good about ourselves and see that even big problems are just a small part of our life.
5. ****You Did It!**** Think of that proud feeling when you've climbed to the top of a really tall tree or built an epic fort. That's nature's way of showing us we're stronger than we think and we can tackle any problem we face.

So, spending time outside in nature is like a workout for your brain, helping it become stronger, happier, and ready for anything. Next time you're feeling a little down or overwhelmed, why not head outside and let nature do its magic?



Let's

THINK ABOUT IT!

REFLECTION PAGE

1. ****Think back to a time when you faced a challenge in nature, like climbing a tall tree or crossing a stream. How did you feel when you finally did it? Can you think of a time when you faced a difficult situation in your daily life and felt the same way?***

2. ****Imagine you are outside in your favorite natural spot. What sounds do you hear? What do you see around you? How does being in this place make you feel? When you're feeling upset or stressed, how can you use this memory to help you feel better?***



How to CONNECT

NATURE TO YOUR DAILY LIVES

1. **Regular Outdoor Time:** Make spending time in nature part of your routine. This could be a daily walk in a local park, a weekend hike, or even a picnic with friends and family. The key is to make it a regular habit!
2. **Nature Photography:** Continue with the photography skills you learned during the workshop. Try to capture the beauty of the different seasons or focus on specific subjects like birds, insects, or plants.
3. **Bird Watching:** Use the Merlin Bird ID app to identify birds in your neighborhood or local parks. This can be a fun and educational hobby that keeps you connected to nature.
4. **Plant Identification:** Similarly, use the SEEK app to identify plants and other species around your home or school. You'd be surprised how much biodiversity exists in your own backyard!
5. **Mindfulness in Nature:** Practicing mindfulness outside can be a great way to feel more connected to the natural world. Next time you're outdoors, take a few moments to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and simply observe the nature around you.
6. **Gardening:** If you have access to a garden space, consider starting your own vegetable or flower garden. Gardening is a great way to connect with nature and learn about the life cycle of plants.
7. **Volunteer:** Look for local environmental organizations and see if they have any volunteering opportunities. This could be helping with a community garden, cleaning up a park, or participating in a tree planting event.

Remember, the goal is not just to be in nature but to be present with it. Pay attention to the sights, sounds, and smells around you. The more you connect with nature, the more you'll come to appreciate its beauty and importance.



Let's

THINK ABOUT IT!

REFLECTION PAGE

1. ****Which of the suggested activities for staying connected with nature do you find the most exciting or interesting? Why? How might you incorporate this activity into your routine?***

2. ****Imagine it's been a month since the workshop. You've been regularly spending time in nature. How do you think your experiences outdoors have affected your feelings or thoughts during stressful or challenging moments?***

STAY CONNECTED!

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