

# NATUREWELL

The NatureWell approach is an evidence-based, integrated, nature and health programme.

NatureWell supports people to connect with nature for their holistic health and wellbeing.

It also offers a way for people to connect to nature in order to develop healthier communities and care for natural spaces.



# Nature Connection

The NatureWell approach has been developed by Natural Academy, an accredited provider of nature-based training and Ecotherapy. It is based on the Natural Self Model (Natural Academy) and the Five Pathways to Nature Connection (University of Derby).

Research has shown that a person's connection to nature is integral to their holistic health and wellbeing. Nature connection is more than simply being exposed to nature; what matters is how we interact and relate to the natural world – how we think about, feel, and experience nature.

The NatureWell approach encourages participants to cultivate a deeper relationship with nature. When we feel connected to nature, we recognise ourselves as part of the natural world and value our relationship with it. We seek out nature, noticing and experiencing it through our senses. This leads to greater feelings of resource, wellbeing, and connection.

Nature connection not only supports our individual wellbeing but also improves our social connections. Furthermore, evidence shows that it increases pro-environmental behaviour. The University of Derby states that "the closer we get to nature, the happier we are, the more worthwhile life seems, and the more willing we are to take action to help our wildlife and the environment. In the context of the problems our climate and wildlife are facing, closer relationships with nature are more necessary than ever before".

NatureWell has been piloted with NHS staff over five healthcare sites following the stressful impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has since been embedded in NHS trusts across the country, as well as other services, supporting both staff and service users with their wellbeing and mental health.

2021 NatureWell pilot results:

- 84% of staff who participated in wellbeing sessions reported NatureWell improved their wellbeing.
- Participants reported significantly higher levels of wellbeing, life satisfaction and happiness both immediately and one month after the course ended.
- A large majority of participants agreed/strongly agreed that learning wellbeing in nature skills had helped them to cope with stress at work.
- Participants reported that learning wellbeing in nature skills has "helped to improve my wellbeing at work" and has "helped me to cope with stress at work"

<https://nhsforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Green-space-for-Health-2021-22-Evaluation-Report.pdf>





During NatureWell participants are invited to explore their personal relationship to nature through gentle and resourcing nature-based activities, structured around the Five Pathways to Nature Connection.

The programme offers a variety of skills and techniques to facilitate participants to connect with nature. These include nature-based mindfulness techniques and 'grounding'; physical relaxation techniques; gratitude practices involving appreciation of self, other people, and nature; sharing with others the personal meaning drawn from nature using narratives and metaphors; and understanding how the Five Pathways to Nature Connection can facilitate wellbeing.

NatureWell supports people to experience:

**Relaxation:** regulate emotions, reduce stress, and have enhanced feelings of wellbeing

**Restoration:** feel more whole and connected

**Revitalisation:** find meaning, purpose and inspiration





NatureWell is generally delivered via three x 3 hour group sessions, with up to 12 participants (two facilitators), however other options can be explored.

It can also be delivered on a 1:1 basis.

**For more information, and to receive costings contact:**

**Emma Parker at [deepnaturedevon@gmail.com](mailto:deepnaturedevon@gmail.com)  
[www.deepnature.uk](http://www.deepnature.uk)**

Emma Parker is an accredited ecotherapist and NatureWell practitioner. Emma also has a background of occupational therapy, working 18 years in the NHS.



## Evidence-base and further reading:

<https://nhsforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Green-space-for-Health-2021-22-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

<https://nhsforest.org/projects/space-to-breathe-study-shows-value-of-nhs-green-space-for-staff-wellbeing/>

<https://www.naturalacademy.org/naturewell/>

<https://www.derby.ac.uk/news/2021/new-guide-shows-the-pathways-to-a-stronger-connection-with-nature/>

Bringing nature into CAMHS inpatient services: reflections for the implementation and integration of training into practice (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36165746>)

<https://findingnatureblog.files.wordpress.com/2022/04/the-nature-connection-handbook.pdf>

Emma Parker

Ecotherapist and NatureWell Practitioner

[www.deepernature.uk](http://www.deepernature.uk)