

Introduction





This assembly will cover:

- How connecting with nature can be good for our mental health and wellbeing.
- The ways we can connect with nature.
- The challenges we may face accessing nature.



What do we mean by 'connect with nature'?





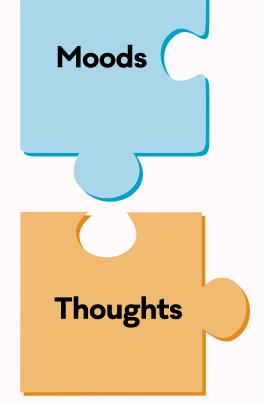


Connecting with nature is noticing and becoming sensitive to the environment around us.

What is mental health?







Mental health is made up of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours.



Behaviours Feelings

SLIDE 4

How is connecting with nature good for our mental health?





Connecting with nature can have mental health benefits such as:

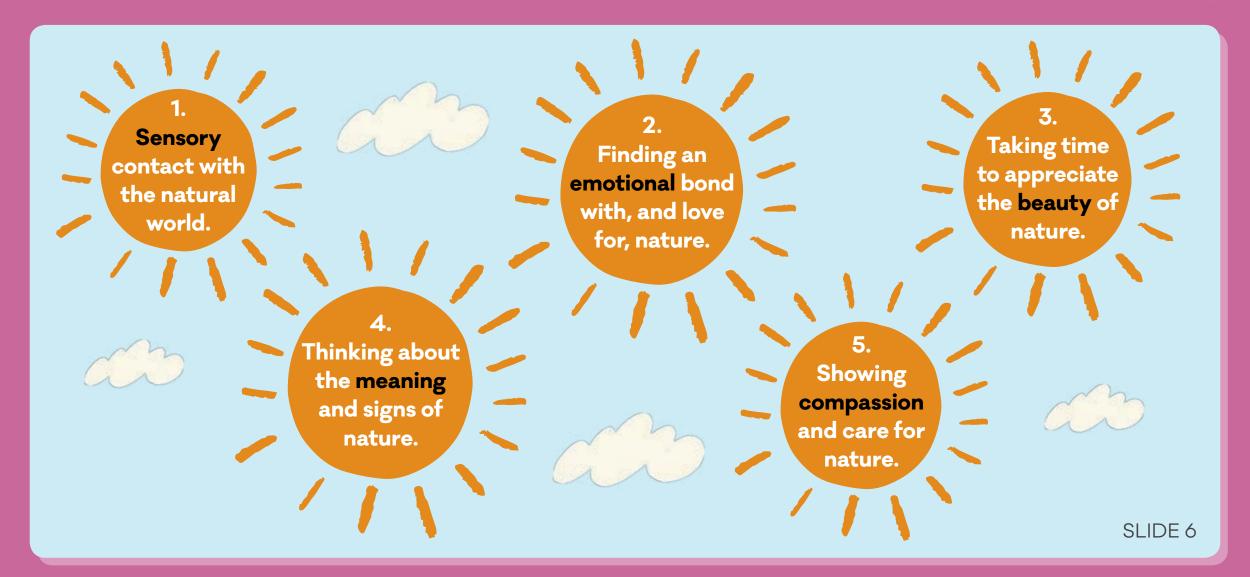
- Increased happiness
- Reduced stress
- More and better-quality sleep
- Reduced anxiety

- Increased life-satisfaction
- Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improved attention and concentration

The pathways to a new relationship with nature











Bring nature in. We can bring nature indoors by:

- Eating breakfast in front of the window, observing the nature outside.
- Growing vegetables from your windowsill.

- Watching a wildlife programme.
- Opening a window and listening to the different sounds.







Explore your local nature spaces.







Stay active. We can stay active by:

Going for a walk, run or cycle.

Playing football with friends.

Stretching or practising yoga outside.







Take a moment to be mindful.

You could take a mindful moment as you:

- Walk in your local natural space.
- Water indoor or outdoor plants.
- Draw or paint the view from your window.







Get creative. Creative activities you could try:

Writing creative sentences about a natural object or landscape.

Playing music outside.

Doing a sketch of a natural object.

Writing a poem or song lyrics about your favourite nature spot.



Collecting
natural objects
and making
a handmade
card for a
loved one.

Taking photographs of landscapes and natural objects.



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Connecting with others





Nature often provides a great space to connect and socialise with family, friends, and the wider community. You could:

- Have a picnic.
- Go for a group walk.
- Do gardening with others.
- Visit local heritage spots.



Connecting with others





It is not always possible to connect with nature and meet with others outdoors.

Here are ideas of how we can connect with others through nature from inside our own homes:

Run a competition with your friends – who can grow the tallest sunflower or the most tomatoes.

Watch live webcams from zoos across the UK.



Connecting with others





We can also connect with nature together as a school by:

- Going on a class nature walk in the local area.
- Organising a big litter clean-up.
- Signing up to the RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch.



Being part of something bigger, taking action





We all have the potential to make a difference to the nature around us. We could:



- Put a birdfeeder in the garden or leave seeds on windowsills for the birds.
- Use reusable drink bottles.
- Recycle as much as possible.

- Grow flowers on windowsills that are good for bees.
- Pick up litter.
- Sign and share a petition or campaign about protecting our environment.

Connecting with nature and inequalities





There are many circumstances that can limit people's level of access and opportunities to connect with nature in a meaningful way. Some of these include:

- Health conditions or disabilities.
- Living in an area with limited or no access to green or blue spaces.
- The cost of taking part in different nature-based activities.
- Living in an urban location where the air is more polluted.
- The nearby outdoor spaces might not feel safe.

How can we help improve access to nature for everyone?





If we come together, we can use our collective voice to campaign for changes such as:



- Improving lighting in public spaces such as parks.
- Developing wheelchair accessible paths in natural spaces.
- Encouraging the use of public transport to limit air pollution from vehicles.

Final thoughts





Our relationship with nature is reciprocal, which means that we can protect and look after each other.





Further information and support







MHF Tips for Young
People on Connecting
with Nature by the Mental
Health Foundation

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