



# Spiritual Care Matters

## Connecting with Nature

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# Spirituality

meaning “breath of life,” is a way of being ...that is characterised by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the ultimate.’ (Elkins et al 1988).

Meaning

Purpose

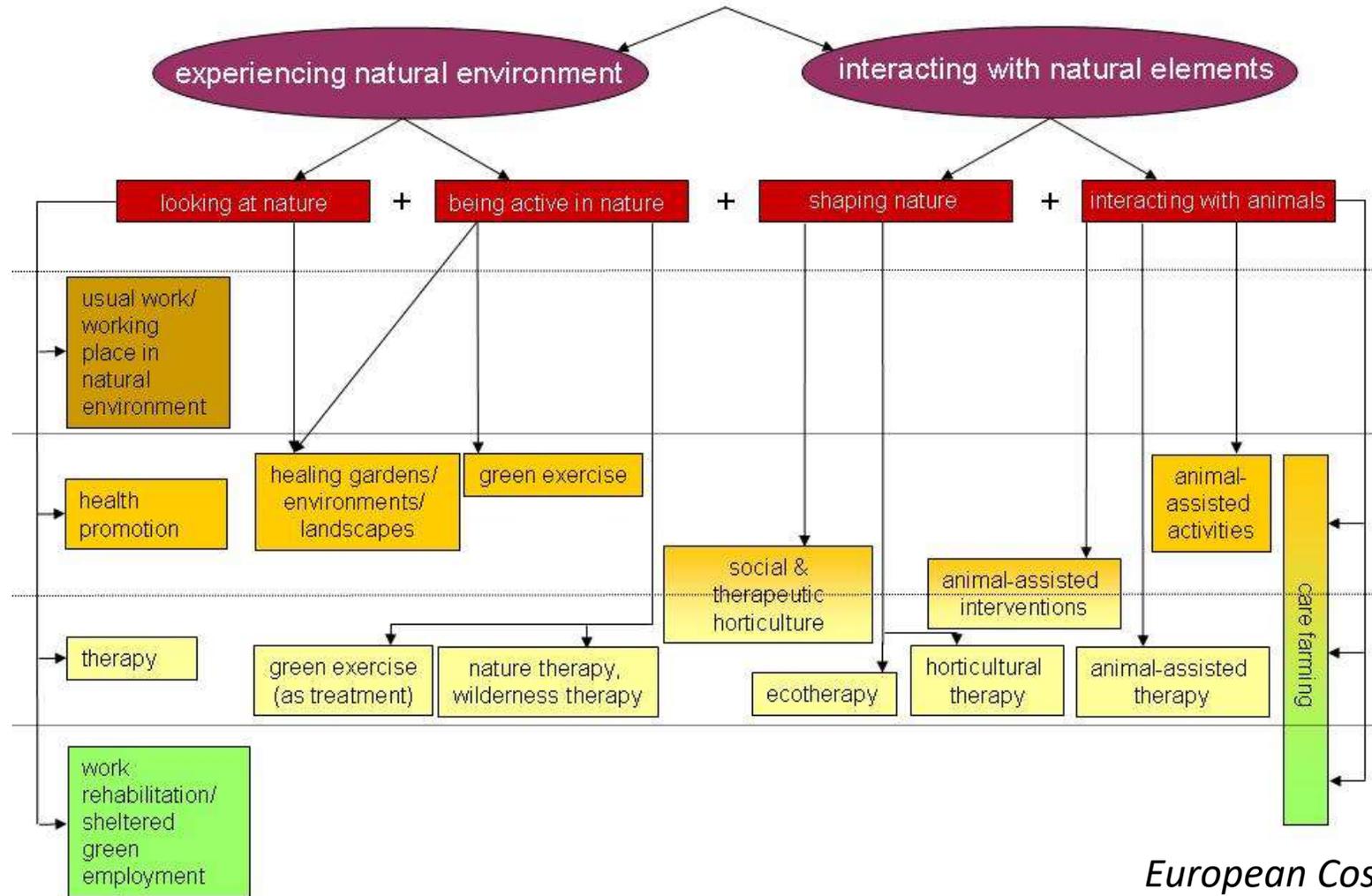
Integration - attending to life as a whole

*“Green care” is an inclusive term for many ‘complex interventions’.*

*What links this diverse set of interventions is their use of nature and the natural environment as a framework in which to create these approaches. It is important to remember that green care is an intervention i.e. an active process that is intended to improve or promote health (physical and mental) and well-being not purely a passive experience of nature.*

*European Cost Action 866 (2010)*

## Mapping the influence of nature – nature as care and therapy



*European Cost Action 866 (2010)*

# Reviews of evidence: Natural England and Wild life Trust reports

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/>

- **Good practice in social prescribing for mental health: the role of nature-based interventions (NECR228)**
- **Expanding delivery of care farming services to health and social care commissioners (NECR194)**
- **A review of nature-based interventions for mental health care (NECR204)**

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/nature-health-and-wild-wellbeing>



# Connecting with our local care spaces



# Connecting with other species : Human-Animal Bond

**“The Human-Animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviours that are essential to the health and well-being of both”**

AVMA 2006

# What are the reported benefits of interaction with animals?

## Psychological

- increases self esteem, community integration, well-being, self-definition
- reduces stress, loneliness, social isolation
- Reduces treatment anxiety

## Physiologically

- benefits health by improving cardiovascular risk (heart rate, blood pressure, hypertension, cortisol, cholesterol)
- enhances well being by exercise and social support,
- supports an active life, fitness and health,
- Improves nutritional intake in dementia ?

## Social

- increases social contacts
- promotes interaction between strangers
- increases perceived trustworthiness
- increases number of favours people exchange

# Spiritual Growth/Being

## Western and Eastern traditions

- Forest bathing – as part of the Japanese health system
- Mindfulness – moving from doing to being – focusing attention and attending to those processes that arise with curiosity, openness, acceptance and kind regard (Epstein 2008)
- Enabling opportunity for reflection on inner life and therefore avoiding exhaustion and being unavailable to others
- Drawing on St. Benedict .... hospitality, welcoming space, enabling safe space for critical reflection, learning and sometimes change



# Describe an experience in nature that felt spiritually uplifting

- What was it about the experience that you connected with?
- What words or pictures came to mind ?
- What sense did you get about the things that are important for you ?

# Being spiritually competent practitioners

- Knowledge of personal world view
- Empathic appreciation of others world views that are different from own
- Ability to develop strategies that reflect the individuals worldview and cultural perspectives
  - Supporting
  - Compassionate care
  - Communication
  - Being present

Jones (2017)

# Being different with different species

- relating without words
- broadening the circle of compassion
- modelling our values



# Five ways to well-being .....

## Connect

Feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need. Social relationships are critical for promoting well-being.

## Give

Research has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in well-being.

## Take Notice

Being aware of the present directly enhances well-being. Heightened awareness enhances self-understanding and ability to make positive choices.

## Keep learning

Learning enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction. The practice of setting goals has been strongly associated with higher levels of well-being.

## Be Active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.



Connecting with our surroundings

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