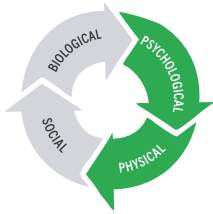


4. Support and therapies for work, education and things that you do

Using green spaces like parks, gardens and woodlands



The main focus of this approach is physical and psychological.



A sideways thumb means that not enough people have done research yet to show whether this works for unusual distressing experiences, but there is a good amount of evidence that it is helpful for your mood and wellbeing in general.

What is it?

Green spaces are natural spaces like parks, gardens, woodlands, heaths and wetlands.

What does it aim to do?

Green spaces are part of the natural countryside that are available for public use. Using green spaces like parks and countryside may improve your mental well-being.

How does it work?

In general, green space may be linked to better air quality, and using green spaces may encourage physical activity, as well as reducing stress. Being outside also boosts your vitamin D levels!

Does it work?

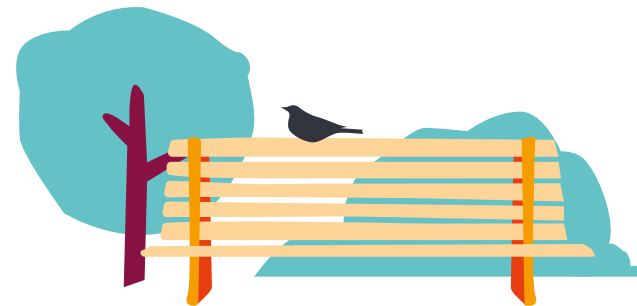
Four reviews of published studies have found evidence that access to green space is associated with a range of better health and mental health outcomes.

For example, studies have suggested that the more access you have to green spaces like countryside, parks and gardens the less likely you are to feel anxious or depressed, and the better your self-esteem and mood.

In addition, some studies suggest that if you use green spaces you are less likely to have cardiovascular problems, type 2 diabetes and are more likely to live longer. And studies that looked at people's mental health over several years, found that moving to an area with easier access to green space can help to improve your mental health.

There isn't much evidence that green spaces can help with unusual distressing experiences specifically. A new study that was published in 2018 found that Danish children who lived in areas with less green space were more likely to develop psychosis as adults, but, this is the only study so far.

As using green spaces are free, it seems worth a trip outdoors to try to improve your general wellbeing!



“ Green space has given me meaningful activity and has helped to reduce nearly all of my mental health symptoms, to a place where I now have balance. I’m now looking at pursuing paid work in this environment that is so important to my wellbeing. ”

Lawrence, 27

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

There is currently no specific guidance from NICE about using green spaces to improve unusual distressing experiences (e.g. psychosis). This is probably because there is not enough evidence specifically for these experiences. However, there is a lot of evidence for general wellbeing, and stress reduction.

In fact, research suggests green spaces are so beneficial for general wellbeing that Public Health England (a government department) put together a document to show the government that they need to spend more money on creating more green spaces across the most built up locations in the UK.

How can I get this treatment?

The good news is that most green spaces are free to visit. Use this link to help you to find your local green spaces:
getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/greenspaces/

✓ Main pro

Using green spaces is free, there are no waiting times, they are easy to access, and there’s good evidence that accessing green spaces can help with general wellbeing and stress reduction.

✗ Main con

It is not clear whether green spaces can reduce unusual distressing experiences (e.g. psychosis). More research needs to be done.

