



Wellbeing Information and Tips

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Ecotherapy

Last week, as part of our Mental Health Awareness Week campaign, Plumpton College kindly donated plants which we decided to distribute across Brighton and Hove, to people being supported by Time to Talk Befriending, Southdown and The Real Junk Food Project.



Some of the herbs donated from Plumpton College for Mental Health Awareness Week

Ecotherapy is a formal type of therapeutic treatment which involves outdoor activities in nature. There isn't one single definition but it's also used to describe and refer to a wide range of activities that can improve your mental wellbeing through engaging with nature. Find out more on the [National Mind website](#). Connecting with nature can have lots of positive health benefits including reducing feelings of anger, anxiety and stress and increasing your emotional resilience. Engaging in nature based activities can make a significant difference to how you feel, making you feel more grounded, providing an alternative perspective on life, relaxing your mind and body, and particularly in these strange times, it can create a sense of normality. There are lots of ways you can enjoy nature by yourself, in small groups whilst maintaining a safe distance and at home. Please see below for a few ideas to try...

- As Government lockdown advice is relaxing slightly, we are now able to spend more time outdoors so do make the most of this. Try out some [mindful walking](#). Or how about beachcombing at low tide?
- Begin a windowsill herb garden. They are easy to get hold of and you can try out any variety. You can use them in a range of meals & recipes including salads, homemade pesto, summer drinks and even baking.
- Last week would have been the annual RHS Chelsea Flower show. Although the show couldn't go ahead as it usually would, take the opportunity to view the [virtual show](#) for some inspiration!
- Create your own Japanese mini garden, and allow yourself to get imaginative! Have a look at this handy [how to guide](#) to get started. If you are a Pinterest fan, plenty of ideas can be found [here](#).
- Take up the opportunity or ask neighbours if they would like to get involved in herb and plant swapping (where this is safe to do so).
- Enjoy an outdoor picnic. It could be in the local park, on the beach, a local nature spot, or even in your garden. Put your phone away, and simply relax and enjoy taking notice of your surroundings. Notice what you can see, hear, smell and touch.
- If you are a keen gardener and fortunate enough to have outdoor space, have a look at the "[Grow an extra row](#)" campaign. You can donate any surplus to contribute to the meals supplied to the community through the Real Junk Food Project in Brighton.
- Check out the [Wilderness Foundation](#) for lots of ideas for adults, children and families to help you engage with nature in the best way you can, in the current situation. They're posting new ideas every week including for people who can't get outside at the moment and need to bring nature into the home such as videos and listening to the sounds of nature.
- [Sussex Wildlife Trust](#), although events are currently on hold, all nature reserves currently remain open, and they are also keeping a [Wildlife Diary](#) for your 'daily dose of nature.'

We will continue to bring you tips, initiatives and ideas so please keep an eye out! Next edition: What we learnt about kindness during Mental Health Awareness Week.

