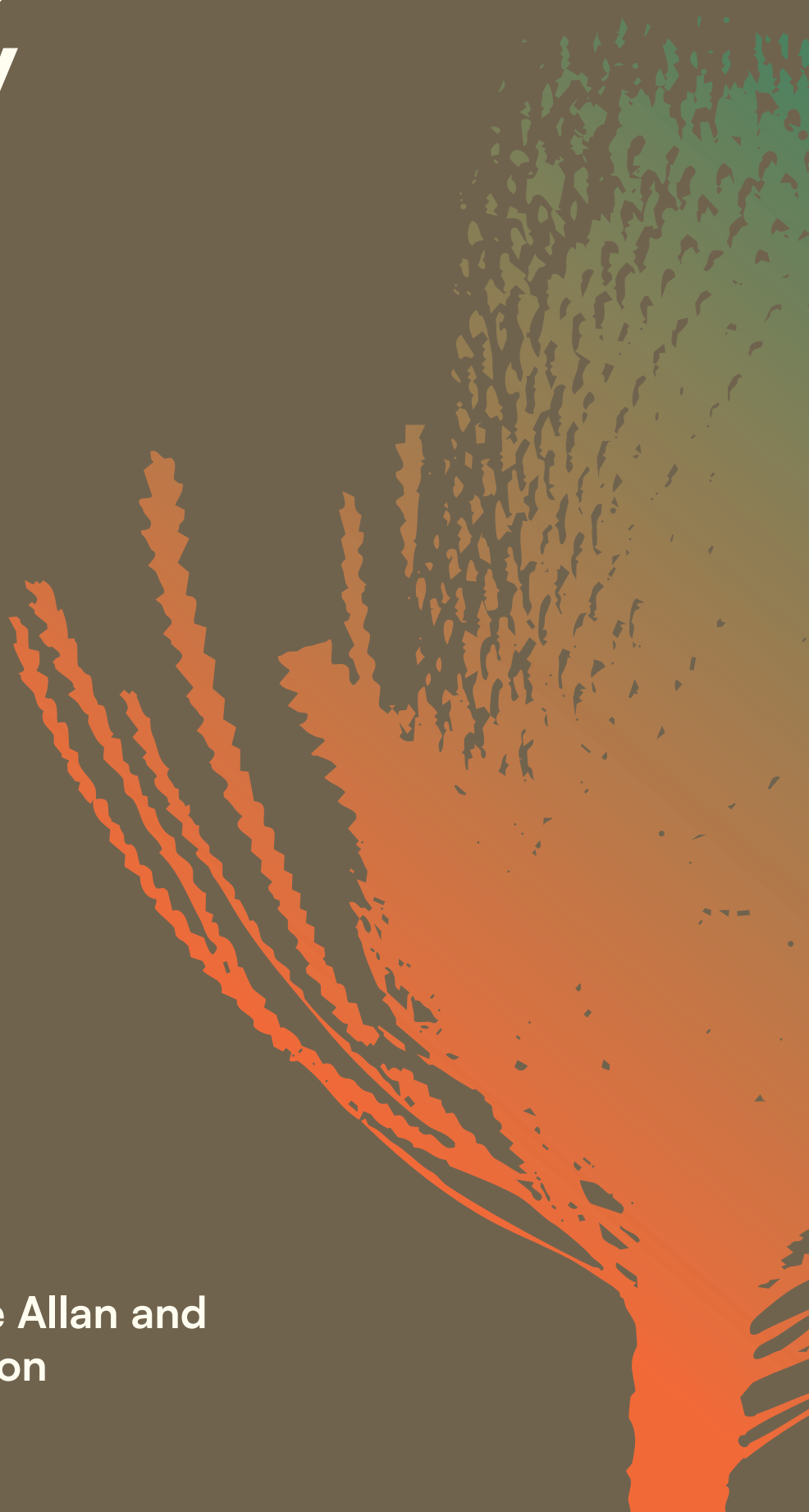


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A  
Practical  
Guide  
for  
Frontline  
Workers

Professor Julaine Allan and  
Dr Nicole Snowdon



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# **Nature Walking Therapy for Mental Health**

## **A Practical Guide for Frontline Workers**

Professor Julaine Allan and  
Dr Nicole Snowdon



Charles Sturt  
University

An initiative of the Charles  
Sturt University Rural  
Health Research Institute



## Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we live and work together. Charles Sturt University and its staff pay respect to Elders within First Nations communities and acknowledge the continuity of cultures, languages, leadership and knowledge systems. We acknowledge First Nations peoples' continuous connection to Country, recognising the unique, diverse identities and cultures of peoples in our communities, regions and nation. As such, we value the collaboration to strongly position First Nations peoples in our university, through languages, leadership, cultures, knowledges, research and ceremonies.



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## Rural Health Research Institute

The Charles Sturt University Rural Health Research Institute (RHRI) is committed to advancing health and wellbeing in regional and remote communities across Australia and internationally. Through high-quality research and strong community partnerships, RHRI aims to address the unique challenges faced by rural populations.

By focusing on practical, evidence-based solutions, RHRI ensures that its research leads to meaningful, lasting improvements in healthcare. Findings are designed to be adaptable and scalable, benefiting rural and remote communities across Australia and beyond.

# Foreword

The relationship between nature and mental well-being is well established, with growing evidence demonstrating the benefits of nature-based interventions for mental health. For individuals with long-term mental health conditions, structured engagement with natural environments has provided a valuable pathway to recovery and well-being.

However, effectively integrating these approaches into mental health services remains a challenge.

This guide is based on the findings and recommendations from the first evaluation of structured Nature Walking Therapy groups in Australian mental health services. Conducted by researchers at the Charles Sturt Rural Health Research Institute, the study examined how guided Nature Walking Therapy could be incorporated into mental health care, emphasising the importance of organisational readiness, facilitator training, and sustainable implementation strategies.

The research was conducted in 2024 and 2025, in two mental health service settings in New South Wales—one in a community-based NGO and the other in a public mental health service. Participants attended weekly facilitated nature walks that incorporated structured mindfulness-based stress reduction activities. Data gathered from surveys, interviews, and observations demonstrated that Nature Walking Therapy contributed to improved mood, enhanced social connections, and a greater sense of calm and restoration.

Key factors for successful implementation included careful planning, clear communication, and solutions to logistical challenges, such as transport and resourcing. Notably, the impact of the program extended beyond the initial study sites, with additional mental health services recognising its value and seeking training to integrate Nature Walking Therapy into their practice.

This guide is designed to support mental health professionals in embedding Nature Walking Therapy into routine care. By providing practical insights into program delivery, facilitator training, and evaluation measures, it aims to contribute to a broader shift toward holistic and nature-integrated approaches in mental health services.

We acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the participants, clinicians, and organisations involved in this study. Their experiences and insights have laid the groundwork for future innovations in mental health care, ensuring that nature-based interventions are accessible, effective, and sustainable for those who need them most.

**Professor Julaine Allan**

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# 1. Why Nature Walking Therapy

## Benefits for mental health and community well-being

Nature Walking Therapy is an effective intervention for improving mental health, particularly for individuals with long-term mental health conditions. Integrating nature into mental health care offers significant benefits, including enhanced mood, stronger social connections, and improved overall well-being.

Research conducted by the Charles Sturt University Rural Health Research Institute (2023–2025) demonstrated that Nature Walking Therapy, supported by trained mental health providers, positively impacts individuals with severe and persistent mental health concerns.

**Purpose of this guide:** This guide provides mental health professionals with key insights into implementing Nature Walking Therapy, addressing logistical considerations, and ensuring long-term sustainability. It aims to support the widespread adoption of nature-based interventions in mental health services.

**Mental health context in Australia:** Mental health conditions affect nearly half of all Australians aged 16 to 85<sup>(1)</sup>, contributing significantly to the national disease burden. Mental illness and substance misuse account for 23% of the non-fatal burden of disease in Australia, with \$9.9 billion spent on mental health services in 2017–2018<sup>(1)</sup>. Given the prevalence and economic impact, it is essential to improve access to effective, evidence-based interventions that support mental health recovery. Structured programs, such as facilitated Nature Walking Therapy, offer a cost-effective means to enhance access to mental health care, increase access to natural environments and complement traditional treatments<sup>(2)</sup>. Additionally, these programs provide mental health clinicians with a way to simultaneously maintain their own well-being<sup>(3)</sup>.



**Key therapeutic components + their benefits:** Nature Walking Therapy is deceptively simple. It provides a powerful approach to enhancing mental health by incorporating five key therapeutic components: time in nature, mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) activities, socialisation, physical activity, and clinical support. Each of these elements independently improves mental health outcomes.

1. Time in nature: Spending time in nature enhances mood<sup>(4, 5)</sup> and decreases stress<sup>(6, 7)</sup>.
2. MBSR activities: MBSR activities have been shown to reduce stress and anxiety<sup>(8)</sup>, improve emotional regulation<sup>(9)</sup>, and enhance overall quality of life and well-being<sup>(10)</sup>.
3. Social interactions: Positive social interactions prompt the release of oxytocin<sup>(11)</sup> and dopamine<sup>(12)</sup>, reduce loneliness<sup>(13)</sup> and are associated with positive mental health outcomes<sup>(14)</sup>.
4. Physical activity: Physical activity lowers cortisol levels<sup>(15)</sup>, improves sleep quality<sup>(16)</sup>, and boosts overall well-being by increasing endorphin<sup>(17)</sup> and serotonin<sup>(18)</sup> levels.
5. Clinical support: Access to care providers with expertise in mental health enables people to manage conditions that would otherwise limit their social and economic participation<sup>(19)</sup>. Engaging with clinicians in a natural environment can facilitate open conversations<sup>(3)</sup>.

By combining these components in a Nature Walking Therapy program, health organisations can provide access to an effective intervention that may not otherwise be available to them<sup>(20)</sup>.

“When I started nature walking, I was very inside a lot and I had lost my confidence and had a lot of anxiety. Even though there’s anxiety now, I’m pushing it back for a walk more. I’m appreciating nature around me and I am aware that nature is what heals and it’s in you know, the trees and the birds and just the air around us, but being inside is in your head. So yeah, it’s benefitted me and I actually have grown quite a lot.”

Heidi — Nature walking participant

“Just being in nature can make you feel so much more at ease and more comfortable, and [it has] helped with feeling in more of a meditative, sort of relaxing state rather than being on edge or an anxious sort of state. It can change your mood.”

Damien — Nature walking participant

“Seeing the nature itself really puts everything into perspective.”

Subash — Nature walking participant.



## 2. What the Program Involves:

### Overview of Structure, Goals, and Outcomes

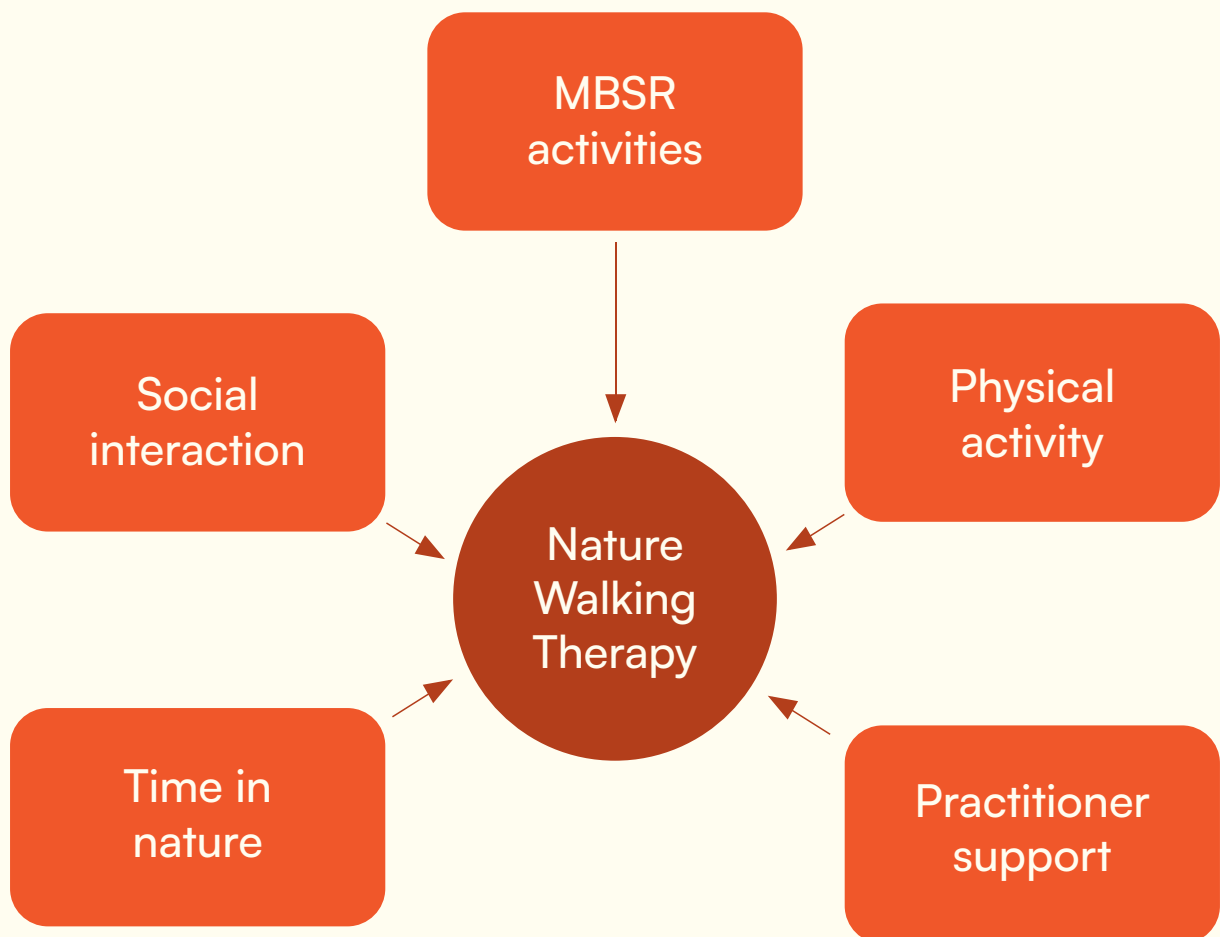
To maximise the effectiveness of your Nature Walking Therapy program, incorporate all five key treatment components:

1. **Time in nature:** Ensure participants spend time in natural environments, such as parks, forests, or nature reserves. Each session should include at least 20 minutes in nature to ensure adequate exposure. Engage participants in discussions on how they can access nature between formal sessions to promote continued practice after the group ends.
2. **MBSR activities:** Each session should include one to two guided MBSR activities. Tailor the length of these activities to the needs and capacities of the participants. Encourage participants to incorporate MBSR activities into their daily lives, as increased MBSR practice is linked to improved outcomes.
3. **Social interaction:** Facilitate group discussions at the end of each session on accessing nature, incorporating MBSR activities, and general reflections. This fosters social interactions and builds connections among participants.

4. **Physical Activity:** Regularly incorporate walking into the sessions, adjusting for participants' capabilities.
5. **Clinical support:** It is crucial for skilled mental health clinicians or peer workers to remain engaged with participants throughout Nature Walking Therapy sessions to maintain rapport, manage group interactions, and ensure participants' emotional safety. Further, facilitators should provide check-ins with participants between sessions to ensure their well-being, relay program changes, and reiterate plans. These check-ins can be part of the usual treatment or an added component of the Nature Therapy program.

A program planning template is provided in Section 10.5 on pg. 32.

**Figure 1: Five key components to Nature Walking Therapy**





# 3. How to Deliver the Program

## 3.1. Preparing Your Organisation

**Identifying and engaging program leaders:** A crucial element for a sustainable Nature Walking Therapy program is identifying and engaging a leader who is passionate about this therapy. Embedding any new intervention into regular practice requires a time commitment and strong organisational skills. Program leaders will plan, organise, and help deliver the program.

**Securing organisational support:** Once program leader(s) are identified, support from organisational leaders and managers is essential. This support is pivotal for securing the necessary resources and staffing for the program.

**Resource requirements:** Consider the resources needed to deliver the intervention, including time, funding, staffing, and materials. At least two staff members should be engaged to deliver each Nature Walking Therapy group. This ensures coverage in case of staff illness and when conducting therapy in more isolated locations. Consider approaching potential collaborators, such as local parks, community organisations, and other health organisations, for additional support and resources. A list of the resources required to establish and deliver Nature Walking Therapy is detailed in Table 1.

**Staff time allocation:** Evaluate the number of hours staff will need to allocate for establishing, organising, and delivering the Nature Walking Therapy. Consider how this impacts other areas of service delivery.

**Budget preparation:** Based on the required resources, prepare a budget detailing the estimated costs and staffing time requirements for establishing and delivering the program. This will support advocacy for funding allocation and donations.

**Table 1: Resources needed to establish and deliver Nature Walking Therapy**

Resource	Example
<b>Personnel</b>	<p>Program leader(s): Passionate about Nature Therapy and capable of leading sessions.</p> <p>Support staff: Administrative and logistical support.</p>
<b>Training</b>	<p>Trainer fees: Compensation for trainers.</p> <p>Training materials: Manuals, guides, and MBSR routines.</p>
<b>Program materials</b>	<p>Safety equipment: First aid kits, communication devices.</p> <p>Marketing materials: Flyers, brochures, and online content to recruit participants.</p> <p>Participant guidelines: Information on program expectations, preparation, and safety protocols.</p>
<b>Logistics</b>	<p>Transportation: Arrangements for participants and staff if needed.</p> <p>Permits and fees: Any necessary permissions for using natural spaces.</p>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<p>Insurance: Coverage for participants and staff.</p> <p>Administrative costs: Office supplies, communication expenses.</p> <p>Contingency fund: Reserve for unexpected expenses.</p>

## 3.2. Training and Supporting Your Staff

Once program leaders have been identified and engaged, and in-principle support has been obtained from organisational leaders, consider formal training in Nature Walking Therapy. NatureFix is a reputable Australian organisation that offers comprehensive training on the theoretical and practical components of Nature Therapy for mental health clinicians (see <https://www.naturefix.life/>). The training is conducted in natural settings and includes a comprehensive suite of MBSR routines. Following training, provide newly trained staff with the opportunity to conduct practice sessions to refine their skills and build confidence. Finally, establish ongoing supervision and additional training opportunities for continuous professional development.



## 4. Who the Program Is For

### 4.1. Recruiting and Engaging Participants

**Consider the organisation's client profile:**

This is an opportunity to involve consumer groups and peer support workers to gain support and advice on the need for the program. Review the needs and preferences of existing clients to ensure that the program is relevant and beneficial. Take into account both physical and mental health status, as well as the likelihood of the program's acceptability.

**Develop marketing materials:** Develop marketing materials, such as flyers, brochures and social media posts detailing information about the program (see Section 10.2 for an Example recruitment flyer on pg. 29).

**Tell people what is happening:** With the organisation's client profile in mind, develop a recruitment plan. Use the marketing materials to approach existing clients, leverage the client bases of key stakeholders and use social media to reach a broader audience.

## 4.2. Health Screening and Risk Management

**List clear eligibility criteria:** When creating eligibility criteria to screen participants for the Nature Walking Therapy program, consider their physical health history, limitations, and mental health status. It may also be beneficial to match clients to their level of mental health recovery for an improved group experience. An example of the eligibility and exclusion criteria is as follows:

- Currently receiving mental health services at [Host Organisation],
- Shows interest and commitment to participate in a 6-week program of weekly Nature Walking Therapy groups,
- Completed and passed the exercise screening tool, or received GP clearance (see Section 10.4 for the Example exercise screening tool on pg. 31),
- Ability to walk unassisted for up to 60 minutes at low intensity,
- Can participate in at least four of the six scheduled sessions,
- Mental health is currently stable (e.g., there is no current intent or plan for suicide).

**Devise safety protocols:** In line with organisational risk management processes, consider potential risks and mitigation strategies. As well as identifying any potential risks in chosen sites (see Section 5.1 Choosing Suitable Locations on pg. 11), consider the management of allergic reactions, dehydration, sunburn, and the possibility of getting lost. Ensure that first aid kits are available and that facilitators are trained in first aid procedures. In more isolated locations, consider using a buddy system, and check mobile coverage for emergencies. Additionally, develop a plan for managing adverse weather conditions and other environmental factors.

**Communicate information to participants:** After participants have been screened and included in the program, provide them with information and include general details about the program (e.g., objectives, structure, benefits, session times, locations and expectations) as well as information on preparation and safety protocols (see Section 10.3 for an Example Nature Walking Therapy group participant guidelines on pg. 29). Prior to each group session, advise participants about potential hazards and appropriate clothing and footwear. Upon arrival at each site, orient participants to the available amenities and review potential hazards and safety protocols.







# 5. Where Walks Take Place

## 5.1. Choosing Suitable Locations

Ideal locations for Nature Walking Therapy should offer a natural environment, such as parks, forests, coastal areas, or nature reserves. These locations should provide a variety of natural elements, including trees, water bodies, and open spaces. When choosing locations, consider assessing the area for potential risks and hazards. Here are some factors to consider:

**Terrain:** Avoid uneven terrain, loose rocks, or overgrown vegetation that is difficult to traverse.

**Environmental hazards:** Identify potential risks such as wildlife, poisonous plants, or areas prone to flooding.

**Seasonal changes:** Assess the impact of seasonal changes on the route, such as slippery paths during rain, to prepare for varying conditions.


**Mobile coverage:** Ensure that there is adequate mobile coverage for emergencies.  
**Shelter and shade:** Ensure the availability of shaded areas or shelters along the route to protect participants from the elements.

**Water accessibility:** Check for the availability of fresh water or ensure that water bottles are provided.

**Amenities:** Check that restrooms are available and that there are seating areas for participants' comfort.

## 5.2. Managing Transport and Logistics

When establishing a Nature Walking Therapy group, transport can be a significant barrier to participation. To address this potential barrier, first gather information on where participants are coming from and any specific transportation challenges they might face. If possible, the host organisation should provide transport to and from the chosen sites. If this is impractical, consider exploring other local transport services or mapping out public transport routes that participants can use. Finally, it is essential to communicate transport plans clearly and regularly with participants. Provide details well in advance, send regular reminders and updates via participants' preferred communication channels (e.g., SMS, phone call, social media), and designate a point of contact for transport-related queries.



# 6. When to Run the Program

## 6.1. Seasonal Considerations

Nature Walking Therapy can be conducted throughout the year, depending on local weather conditions.

**Weather review:** Review local weather patterns (e.g., months with the most rainfall, UV levels) and incorporate this information into program planning to ensure participant comfort and safety.

**Optimal scheduling:** Schedule walks during periods with the most favourable weather, avoiding extreme temperatures, heavy rainfall, or very cold conditions.

**Spring and autumn:** These seasons offer interesting foliage and milder temperatures, making them ideal for walks during most parts of the day.

**Summer:** With longer days and warmer weather, schedule walks during the cooler parts of the day to avoid heat-related issues.

Winter: Depending on the location, winter walks are feasible. Schedule them during the warmest part of the day to ensure participants' comfort.

**Contingency plans:** Develop contingency plans for bad weather. Plan alternative indoor activities or reschedule walks if necessary.

Clear communication: Clearly communicate contingency plans to all participants so they know what to expect and how to respond if the weather changes.

## 6.2. Program Duration

Typically, programs run for 6 to 12 weeks, allowing participants to experience the benefits of regular nature walks. This duration helps participants build a routine and fully engage with the therapy. Each session usually lasts 60 to 90 minutes, providing time for walking, MBSR activities, and group interactions.

## 6.3. Scheduling Walks Effectively

Plan walks at regular intervals to establish a routine for participants (e.g., once a week). When determining the program's duration, frequency, days, and times for walks, consider participant availability, work schedules, commitments, and sufficient staff coverage. Communicate the dates, times, and locations of walks to participants well in advance and provide regular reminders to keep them informed and engaged (e.g., via email, text, or social media). Ensure that any changes to the schedule are communicated to participants as early as possible.





# 7. Monitoring & Evaluation

## 7.1. Pre- and Post-Program Data Collection

Collecting meaningful data to identify the impact of the Nature Walking Therapy program provides a way to reflect on progress with participants, inform continuous improvement, and strengthen funding applications. At a minimum, include mental health surveys to assess mental health and well-being at baseline, directly after the intervention, and at the three-month follow-up. Table 2 describes several validated measures that can be used to measure the program's impact, and an example survey can be found in Section 10.1 on pg. 24. Other means of verifying the program's impact include physical health metrics (e.g., blood pressure, heart rate, fitness levels) and qualitative feedback from participants through interviews, focus groups, or open-ended survey questions.

Table 2: Suggested data collection tools

Measure	Description	Number of questions	When to use
<b>Visual single item mood scales</b>	Measure changes in mood before and after each session.	2	Before and after each walk
<b>The Patient Health Questionnaire for Anxiety and Depression (PHQ-4) <sup>(21)</sup></b>	An ultra-brief screening tool designed to assess both anxiety and depression.	4	Baseline, post intervention, 3-month follow-up
<b>Personal Well-Being Index <sup>(22)</sup></b>	Measures an individual's perceived quality of life across multiple domains.	7	Baseline, post intervention, 3-month follow-up
<b>Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index <sup>(23)</sup></b>	Assesses sleep quality over one month.	2	Baseline, post intervention, 3-month follow-up
<b>DeJong Gierveld Loneliness Scale <sup>(24)</sup></b>	Measures emotional and social loneliness.	6	Baseline, post intervention, 3-month follow-up
<b>Nature Relatedness Scale — short form <sup>(25)</sup></b>	Measures an individual's connection to nature.	6	Baseline, post intervention, 3-month follow-up
<b>The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale <sup>(26)</sup></b>	Assesses mental well-being, focusing on both feeling and functioning aspects.	7	Baseline, post intervention, 3-month follow-up

## 7.2. Reporting Outcomes and Insights

To effectively report outcomes and insights from the Nature Walking Therapy program, highlight any changes in participants' mental and physical health, using data from surveys, physical health metrics, and qualitative feedback. Use these insights to refine and improve the program by identifying ways the program can be improved and developing strategies accordingly. Share the findings with stakeholders, including participants, staff, and funding bodies, to demonstrate the program's value and help secure ongoing support.



# 8. Evidence for Nature Therapy:

## Global Research

Extensive research supports the therapeutic benefits of nature for mental health. Contact with nature is associated with improvements in memory, cognition, and attention<sup>(27,28)</sup>, a reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety<sup>(29–31)</sup>, lower stress levels<sup>(32–34)</sup>, and healthy sleep patterns<sup>(35)</sup>. Studies have also found that nature interventions such as forest bathing<sup>(36)</sup>, and community gardening<sup>(37)</sup>, result in greater levels of confidence, feelings of self-worth, happiness, feelings of safety, and a sense of purpose and empowerment<sup>(35, 38–40)</sup>. Nature exposure has also been linked with a lower incidence of loneliness<sup>(13)</sup>. When offered in groups, nature interventions create opportunities for social connections, alleviating loneliness<sup>(31)</sup>, which is one of the main indicators of mental and social well-being<sup>(41)</sup>. Participating in nature interventions with others who have similar lived experiences can enhance engagement, feelings of togetherness and belonging, and improve social skills<sup>(31, 40)</sup>.

**Barriers to nature contact for people with mental health conditions.** The impact of persistent mental health conditions on people's circumstances is significant. It limits many people's ability to work, study and socialise, resulting in poverty-related disadvantages, such as poor housing, poor physical health, and social isolation<sup>(42)</sup>. By middle-age, people with enduring conditions are likely to have experienced multiple episodes of illness and treatment. For these reasons, many people with enduring conditions prioritise improvement in social and functional outcomes over the reduction of clinical symptoms<sup>(43)</sup>. Nature Walking Groups have the potential to achieve social and functional outcomes for participants. People who regularly use green spaces (parks, gardens, bushland) and blue spaces (rivers, lakes, beaches) are more likely to have better mental, physical and social health than those who do not access these environments<sup>(13, 27, 32)</sup>. Nevertheless, it is easier for healthy, employed people who live in wealthy suburbs usually close to safe green and blue spaces<sup>(44, 45)</sup>, while people with enduring mental illness face barriers to accessing nature due to the same socio-economic factors that impact their mental health<sup>(42)</sup>. These barriers restrict their ability to engage with and benefit from natural environments. Nature walking therapy can change this.



# 9. Implementation Tools & Checklists:

## Practical Resources for Planning and Delivery

### Planning checklist

#### **Program leaders, organisational support & resourcing**

- Support from organisational leaders and managers obtained
- Nature Walking Therapy program leader/s identified and engaged
- Required resources identified (e.g., staffing, funding for training)
- A budget has been prepared based on the required resources, which includes staffing time requirements
- Potential collaborators identified and approached

#### **Staff training and support**

- Suitable Nature Therapy trainers identified and engaged
- Staff trained in Nature Therapy
- Trained staff conduct practice sessions
- Ongoing staff supervision and support identified and established

#### **Program development**

- The program incorporates the five key treatment components of time in nature, MBSR activities, social interaction, physical activity, and clinical support
- The organisation's client profile has been considered in program development
- Program length agreed upon, considering the target population's needs and preferences, allowing for sufficient time to include all program components (walking, MBSR activities, group discussions)
- Frequency of sessions planned to be conducted at regular intervals (e.g., weekly), taking into account the availability and preferences of participants
- Local weather patterns reviewed and timing of walks incorporated into the plan to ensure participant comfort and safety
- Plan in place for managing adverse weather conditions and other environmental factors



### **Risk management**

- Participant screening tools identified and approved (including physical and mental health conditions)
- Participant eligibility and exclusion criteria devised
- Safety protocols devised and agreed upon, and organisational risk management processes adhered to
- Facilitators are trained in first aid and emergency procedures
- Water and sunscreen availability
- Participant guidelines are prepared and disseminated to participants to inform of safety precautions
- Participants are informed of any potential hazards and risk management prior to each session

### **Site selection**

- Suitable locations identified
- Identified locations have necessary natural features — bush, water, plant varieties
- Selected sites have been assessed for safety and accessibility (e.g., available restrooms, paths are maintained, seating areas available, mobile coverage ensured)
- The identified location meets the needs of participants' physical capabilities
- Associated costs identified (e.g., parking or entry fees)

### **Transport**

- Participant transport needs identified
- Transport organised
- Plans clearly and regularly communicated to participants

### **Participant recruitment**

- Marketing materials developed and approved
- Recruitment strategy devised (including approaching existing client base, use of social media, leveraging client base of key stakeholders)
- Participants screened and, where necessary, given clearance by medical professionals

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

- Standardised forms for pre- and post-program assessments agreed upon
- Timing of measures agreed upon
- Plan devised on how to report outcomes and disseminate to key stakeholders

# 10. Appendices

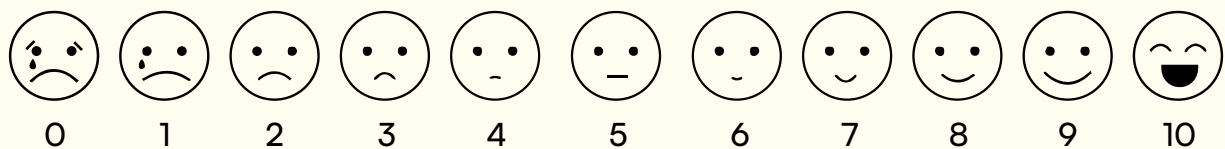
## 10.1. Data Collection Tools

### Before walk mood scale

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Walk Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Before the walk — please show how you feel right now by **circling** the number:

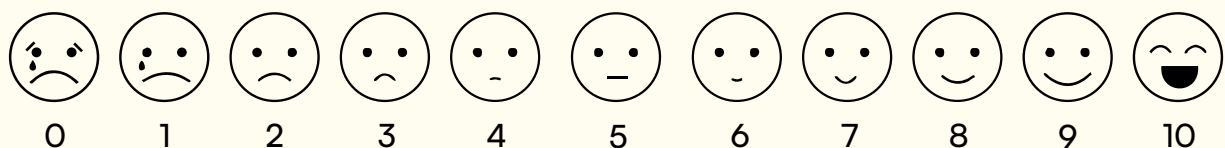


### After walk mood scale

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Walk Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

After the walk — please show how you feel right now by **circling** the number:



## Participant survey

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Gender: How do you identify?

- Man
  - Woman
  - Non-binary
  - Prefer not to say
  - Other (please specify)
- 

2. What race or ethnicity best describes you?

---

3. In which country were you born?

- Australia
  - England
  - New Zealand
  - India
  - Philippines
  - Vietnam
  - Italy
  - South Africa
  - Malaysia
  - Scotland
  - Prefer not to say
  - Other (please specify)
- 

4. Which of the following mental health diagnoses apply to you?

- Depression
  - Anxiety disorder
  - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Schizophrenia
  - Bi-polar disorder
  - Other forms of psychosis
  - An eating disorder
  - Prefer not to say
  - Other (please specify):
- 

5. How long have you been receiving services from your Mental Health Service?

- Less than 2 weeks
- Between 2 to 5 months
- Between 6 and 12 months
- Between 12 months to 2 years
- Between 2 years to 3 years
- Between 3 years to 5 years
- 5 or more years

The next set of questions asks about your well-being, sleep and how connected you feel with nature.

Office Only

Survey:                      Baseline                      Follow-up                      3-mth

Personal Well-being Index <sup>(22)</sup>

The following questions ask how satisfied you feel on a scale from zero to 10. Zero means you feel no satisfaction at all and 10 means you feel completely satisfied.

How satisfied are you with...	No satisfaction at all					Completely satisfied						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1. Your standard of living?												
2. Your health?												
3. What you are achieving in life?												
4. Your personal relationships?												
5. How safe you feel?												
6. Feeling part of your community?												
7. Your future security?												

Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index <sup>(23)</sup>

1. During the past month, how many hours of actual sleep did you get per night? (This may be different to the number of hours you spent in bed).

2. During the past month, how would you rate your sleep quality overall?

Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
0	1	2	3

### The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale <sup>(26)</sup>

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks.

	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All the time
1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
2. I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
3. I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
4. I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
5. I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
6. I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
7. I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5

### The Patient Health Questionnaire for Anxiety and Depression <sup>(21)</sup>

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge?				
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying?				
3. Feeling down, depressed or hopeless?				
4. Little interest or pleasure in doing things?				

### DeJong Gierveld Loneliness Scale <sup>(24)</sup>

	Yes	More or Less	No
1. I experience a general sense of emptiness	1	2	3
2. I miss having people around me	1	2	3
3. I often feel rejected	1	2	3
4. There are plenty of people I can rely on when I have problems	1	2	3
5. There are many people I can trust completely	1	2	3
6. There are enough people I feel close to completely	1	2	3

### Nature Relatedness Scale <sup>(25)</sup>

For each of the following, please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement, using the scale from 1 to 5 as shown below. Please respond as you really feel, rather than how you think “most people” feel.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly
1. My ideal vacation spot would be a remote, wilderness area.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I always think about how my actions affect the environment.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My connection to nature and the environment is a part of my spirituality.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I take notice of wildlife wherever I am.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My relationship to nature is an important part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel very connected to all living things and the earth.	1	2	3	4	5

## 10.2. Example recruitment flyer



The flyer is set against a background image of a river flowing through a lush green forest. On the right side, there is a vertical wooden fence. The text is arranged in several blocks: a main title at the top left, a call to action at the top right, three informational sections in the middle, and a contact section at the bottom right. The 'Who?', 'What?', and 'Why?' sections are each preceded by a dark blue rounded rectangle containing the question in white text. The contact information is in a red box. A logo placeholder is at the bottom right.

**Join our Nature  
Therapy Group!**

Join our Nature Walking Therapy group to experience the benefits of walking in nature.

**Who?**

We're looking for 1) adults aged 18-65 years old,  
2) able to walk for 30-60 minutes at a time, and  
3) no bushwalking experience required!

**What?**

You will: 1) participate in a 6-week Nature Walking program, 2) go on guided walks through local parks and trails once a week (transport provided).

**Why?**

The benefits of participating are 1) improved mental and physical well-being, 2) spend time outdoors in beautiful natural settings (walking group only), 3) make new friends and connections.

To learn more contact us:  
(12) 3456 78910

**{LOGO HERE}**

## 10.3. Example Nature Walking Therapy group participant guidelines

Welcome to the Nature Walking Therapy group! We are happy to have you join us. Here are some important details to help you prepare and enjoy your time with us.

### **Our goals for the Nature Walking Therapy group are to:**

- Help improve your mental health and well-being.
- Teach you ways to reduce stress and connect with nature.
- Help you make new friends and feel supported.
- Encourage you to be active.

### **Here's how the program works:**

- Weekly sessions: Each session lasts about 1.5 hours.
- Activities: We will do mindfulness exercises, have group talks, and go on nature walks.
- Group size: Each group will have 8—12 people to keep it friendly and supportive.

### **By joining the group, you can:**

- Feel happier and less stressed.
- Learn to manage your emotions better.
- Make new friends and feel supported.
- Improve your physical health through walking.

### **You can join if you:**

- Are 18 years or older.
- Have a mental health condition or are facing mental health challenges.
- Physically well enough to walk unassisted for up to 40 minutes at a time. We will check if you have any physical health problems before we start the program.
- If you are currently experiencing severe mental distress, the walking group may not be suited for you now. Your mental health clinician can talk more to you about this.



### **Session times and locations**

- **Session times:** Every Saturday from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM.
- **Locations:** We meet in different natural places like parks and forests. We will tell you the exact location before each session.

### **We ask that you:**

- Come to sessions regularly and be on time.
- Take part in all activities and discussions.
- Respect the privacy of other participants.
- Follow the instructions given by the facilitators.

### **To get ready for the sessions:**

- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes for walking.
- Bring a water bottle and anything else you need to be comfortable.
- Let us know if you have any medical conditions or concerns.

### **To keep everyone safe:**

- We will have a safety talk at the start of each session.
- Stay with the group and follow the paths we take.
- If the weather is bad, we might reschedule or move the session.
- We will collect emergency contact information.

### **Additional support**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the program facilitators. We are here to help you and make sure you have a great experience.

We look forward to walking with you and supporting your journey to better mental health and well-being!

## 10.4. Example exercise screening tool

Instructions: Please circle either yes or no for the following 8 questions

1	Has your doctor ever told you that you have a heart condition, or have you ever suffered a stroke?	Yes	No
2	Do you ever experience unexplained pains in your chest at rest or during physical activity/exercise?	Yes	No
3	Do you ever feel faint or have spells of dizziness during physical activity/exercise that cause you to lose balance?	Yes	No
4	Have you had an asthma attack requiring immediate medical attention at any time over the last 12 months?	Yes	No
5	If you have diabetes (type I or type II) have you had trouble controlling your blood glucose in the last 3 months?	Yes	No
6	Do you have any diagnosed muscle, bone or joint problems that you have been told could be made worse by participating in physical activity/exercise?	Yes	No
7	Do you have any other medical condition(s) that may make it dangerous for you to participate in physical activity/exercise?	Yes	No
8	Are you pregnant or have you given birth within the last 12 months?	Yes	No

If you answered **NO** to all 8 questions and you have no other concerns about your health, you may proceed to undertake light-moderate physical activity/exercise such as this program.

If you answered YES to ANY of the 8 questions, please seek guidance from your GP prior to starting this program.

## 10.5. Example Nature Walking Therapy activities and locations

Date	Walk location	MBSR activity type	NatureFix routines	N/A	Quieter location	Sensory diversity	Natural lighting	Natural sounds	Diverse view	Sitting	Standing	Walking
		Breathing	Conscious		X					X		
			Five finger breathing		X					X		
		Listening	Kangaroo ears					X			X	X
			Listen up					X		X	X	
		Sight	Eye of an artist				X			X	X	
			Focus on fractals			X			X	X	X	
		Gratitude	Introduce yourself to Country	X						X	X	
			Thank you nature		X				X			
		Immersion	Willing smile & open hand		X					X		
			Connection on the move	X								X
			Mindful moments			X				X	X	

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