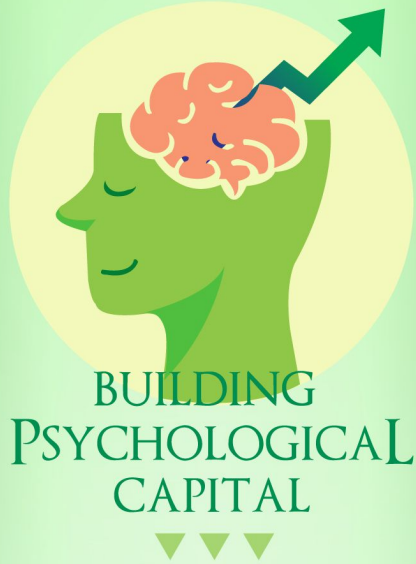


WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2021

MENTAL HEALTH IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD



HEALING STRESS WITH NATURE



آغا خان یونیورسٹی
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

NATURE - A MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE

Nature is everywhere around us in all its various forms and beauty. The trees that greet us on our way to work, the birds singing at the break of dawn, the gentle wind blowing our hair, and the generous sky changing its hues and patterns with sun, moon, stars and clouds – nature abounds all around us.

In a world where people have unequal opportunities to access mental health support, nature offers everyone a free ubiquitous resource to relax and find inner peace. However, our high-stress, workload-laden life makes us shift our priorities and inhibits our ability to derive benefit from it.

HOW DOES NATURE HELP US?

Nature works as a balm for the brain and body as we breathe in fresh air and mindfully exhale all the negativity out. There is scientific documentation that people who live around nature or who embrace nature tend to have a more positive perspective on life and a happier mindset. Even exposure to mere sounds or scenes of nature has been found to have a meaningful effect.

Engaging with nature improves attention, sleep, creativity and emotional state. It enhances our social interactions, work motivation, reduces the chance of burnout and helps us develop gratitude towards life.

"For many, interacting with nature is one of the best self-improvement tools they can use."
- ason Mayer, board certified psychiatrist.

START WITH LITTLE STEPS

The idea of connecting with nature should not necessarily be limited to the outdoors. Mere acts of viewing nature from your office window and letting fresh air in, keeping indoor plants, or putting up landscape pictures as wallpapers or wall hangings can reduce stress level and increase motivation towards work.

Add more blues and greens to your office/home décor, and you'd be surprised at the positive changes you'll experience. Just lighting up a scented candle based on natural aromas can lift your mood. Meditate with visual imagery of nature scenes and breathing exercises, and you have a sure shot strategy to soothe those stressed nerves.

FULLY IMMERSE YOURSELF

"Time spent amongst trees is never wasted time."

- Katrina Mayer, PhD, author.



Exercise or do yoga outdoors, go hiking or simply take a stroll in natural settings to harmonize your senses.



Pick up gardening or grow plants in a window box or plant pot. Feel the joy of watching them grow and bloom.



Try stargazing with your loved ones and friends and be in awe of the beauty and vastness of our universe.



Interact with and develop affection for our fellow inhabitants. Feed the birds and small animals, give water to parched beings on a hot day.



Put in the effort to keep environment clean – it all counts.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

Next time when you are out and about, take a pause and pay attention to what nature is presenting to you. Engage all your senses and mindfully involve yourself with the different ingredients of nature.

See the swinging trees and plants, the butterfly feeding amongst colourful flowers, birds sitting or flying around; notice the blue sky, clouds, sunshine or raindrops on the leaves.

Smell the morning breeze, the beautiful fragrance of flowers, and the tempting smell of ripe fruits. Inhale the refreshing earthy petrichor after rain.

Hear the rustling leaves, waves, birds chirping on the trees, and the pattering of rain drops.

Touch flowing water, delicate petals, the fur of a soft kitten, a feather; walk on grass, feel the breeze on your face and hair.

Taste the sweetness of mango, refreshing taste of apple, or juicy orange bursting in your mouth.

EXPERIENCE NATURE VIRTUALLY

Finding the motivation to make changes can be extremely challenging. Right now, we urge you to just do the bare minimum: sit back, relax, and click on the following link. We hope that this would resonate with you, and you can then find related videos and make a routine.

Trust us, it works!

[Blooming Flowers Time lapse Video](#)

#WorldMentalHealthDay
#MentalHealthForAll

Counselling Services And Wellness Office.
Supported By Aurora (Student Mental Health Group)