

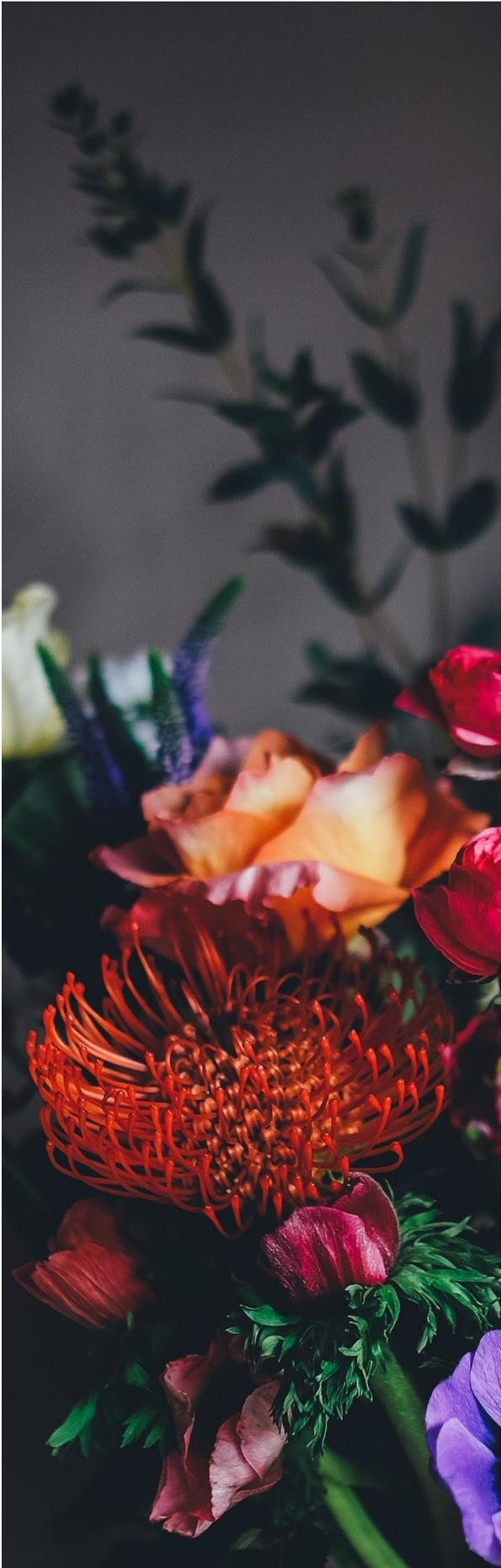
Mental Health Toolkit, Part 4: Nature as Therapy

We've seen an increased amount of society working from home as a result of the pandemic, meaning an increased dependence on technology and more screen time (Zoom fatigue anyone?).

On top of economic uncertainty, heightened social anxiety, a surge in social media usage, and feelings of isolation, people are dealing with information overload, which has therapists recommending an age old remedy: nature ([Healthline](#)).

The therapeutic benefits of gardening and interacting with nature have been written about for centuries, across cultures, with undoubtable proof of healing benefits. It is now increasingly being prescribed as treatment for pandemic-related stresses, anxiety, depression, mental illness, PTSD, and addiction.

Whether it's taking a mindful walk, watering houseplants, meditating near a body of water, creating sand mandalas, turning your yard into raised beds, creating a garden plan, or helping out in a community garden, cultivating a relationship with nature will invite presence, a sense of accomplishment and numerous other benefits to your mental & physical health.



What Is Ecotherapy?

One thing to be said about 2020 is that it was a year of gardening and indulging in the outdoors for many.

With the onset of the pandemic and new stresses to be dealt with, many turned to caring for plants or spending time in nature as a form of self-therapy. Others have been prescribed ecotherapy to deal with the heightened intensity of the past year.

Ecotherapy as a formal type of therapeutic treatment can be a structured activity related to exploring & appreciating the natural world.

It may involve spending time with other people in a natural setting, working in nature, or simply experiencing the great outdoors – such as enjoying a stroll through the woods ([Healthline](#)).

Types of Ecotherapy

Ecotherapy is an umbrella term used to describe therapies that involve interacting with nature as a way to reduce stress, depression, anxiety, promote healing, and increase a general sense of well-being; it's an approach that recognizes the importance of the human-nature connection (Good Therapy).

Additionally, it prioritizes this relationship as a two-way street, meaning it involves giving back and nurturing nature, which may also help with anxiety related to environmental degradation.

These therapies range from nature meditations, horticultural therapy, animal-assisted therapy, and conservation activities to help with feelings of worthiness, reduce aggression, and/or create a sense of belonging.

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