

Nature Connected Wellness Practices: The role of forests in improving human well-being

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

HEALTH & WELLNESS TRACK – WORKSHOP #2



Welcome

- ❖ Track & Workshop Goals
- ❖ Our Presenters
- ❖ Dialogue
- ❖ Experiencing Nature
- ❖ Q & A





Nature connected healing

- ❑ Connected with nature in early in life, throughout youth, into young adulthood
- ❑ Became “disconnected” – work environment, work/family balance, role of technology
- ❑ Experienced vicarious trauma and burnout
- ❑ Found my way back to nature, back to my “roots”, discovered my “tree type”
- ❑ Became a member of the Old Growth Forest Network and the NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action
- ❑ Eastern Old Growth Forest Conference Steering Committee member

Nature Immersion,
Nature exposure,
Nature therapy,
Forest Therapy....

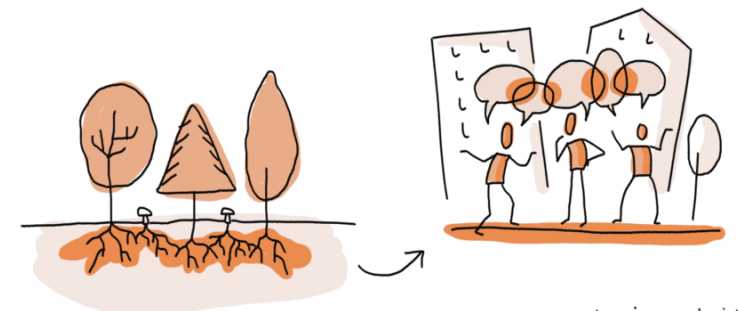
GIBRAN MANCUS





Connection

- My path
 - climbing trees
 - swaying in the breeze
 - walks in the woods
 - camping
 - building forts
- Mountaintop removal & Deforestation
 - West Virginia
 - Ground water
 - Floods
 - Malawi
 - Malnutrition
 - floods
 - droughts
 - monoculture
- Myocellium
 - Old Growth forests
 - Community

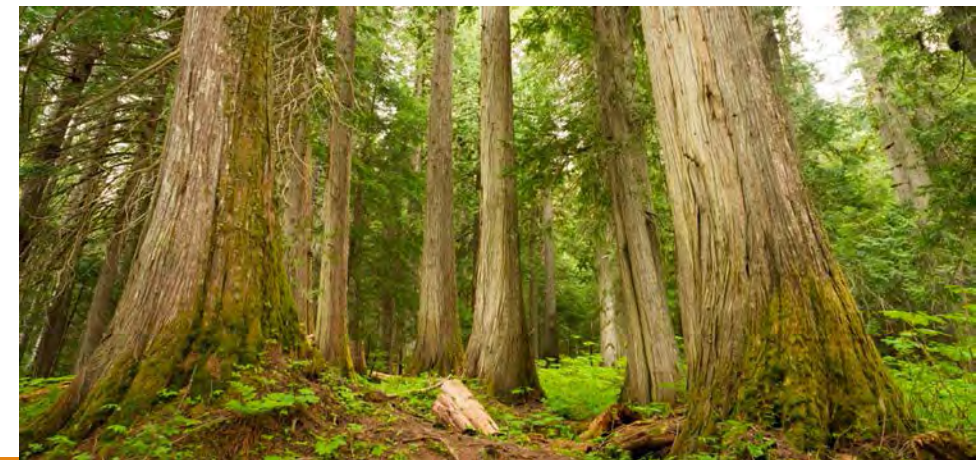


JUST LIKE THE MYCELIUM WHICH HELPS TREES INTERACT AND COOPERATE...

THE URBAN MYCELIUM IS THE INVISIBLE HUMAN DYNAMICS THAT HELP THE CITY GROW BETTER

Biophilia hypothesis: Attention Restoration, Stress Reduction Theory... Rest & Digest-Relax & connect

- Greenspace (NDVI), Parks Visits, Forest Therapy,
 - Community
 - Violence & Aggression
 - Community Cohesion (belonging & Connection?)
 - Built & Social Environment
 - Neighborhood Disorder
 - physiological
 - Hormones (Cortisol, Dehydroepiandrosterone, Oxytocin)
 - Stress, Inflammation, resilience, bonding.
 - Future
 - Interleukin 6, 10, C-reactive protein, TNF-Alpha
 - peripheral activity (Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia-HRV)
 - parasympathetic activity
 - Rest and Digest
 - Psychological
 - wellbeing
 - Stress
 - Attention Restoration
 - Affect
 - Resilience
 - Future
 - Anxiety, Depression, Trauma



Forest Bathing & Mental Health

SUZANNA FLETCHER



Nature connected healing

- ❑ Spent much of childhood and teen years outdoors playing, camping, swimming, and hiking
- ❑ Became disconnected from these roots in adulthood: Overworked, had a stroke, lingering effects most prominently frequent migraines took a remote job, evaluating, and writing reports, frequent migraines continued experienced burnout
- ❑ Came back to nature initially through long walks and then added forest therapy and found relaxation, deeper self-awareness, and profound aliveness.

How might
forest bathing
support health
and wellness?





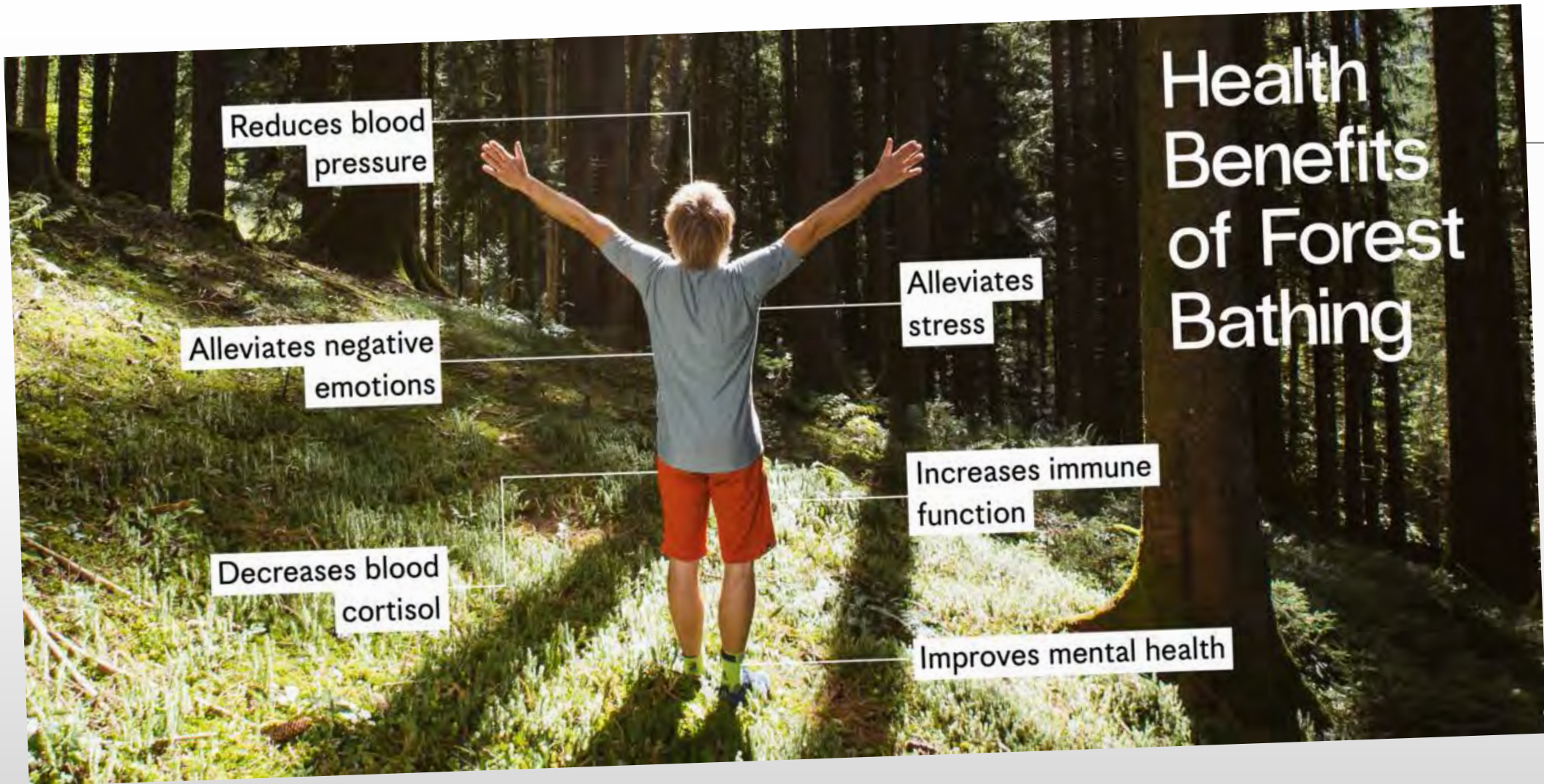
What is Forest Bathing?

Shinrin-Yoku

Shinrin (Forest) and **Yoku** (Bathing)

“The conscious and contemplative experience of opening all the senses in the forest atmosphere and taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of the forest”

Association of Nature & Forest Therapy Programs



Reduces blood pressure

Alleviates negative emotions

Decreases blood cortisol

Alleviates stress

Increases immune function

Improves mental health

Health Benefits of Forest Bathing

Forest Bathing & Health

NADINE MAZZOLA

“There is no human health without forests” —Susan Masino

Phytoncides & Terpenes
—
**Boots Human Immune
Functioning**



**A Sense of Awe
Inspired by the
Natural World**



—
**Human Nervous System
is Calmed**

**Mycobacterium Vaccae
in Soil**

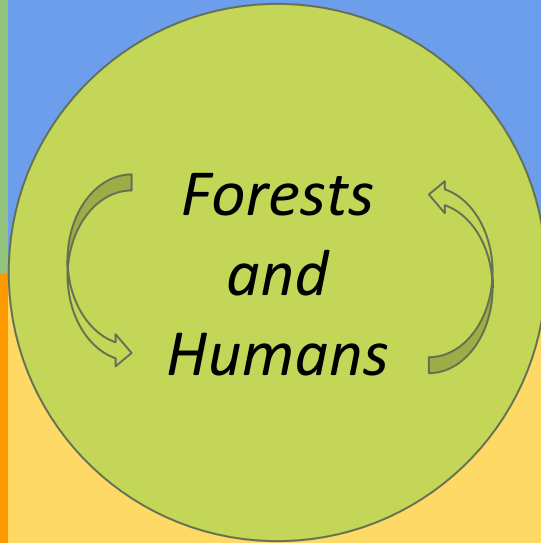
—
**Supports
Human Health**



**Viewing &
Being In Nature**

—
**Attention Restoration
Rebalances Human
Attention Fatigue**

From deliberate and sustained
attention or focus



**Sympathetic Nervous System
Activation**

—
**Nature’s Overall Effect on the
Human Nervous System**

Fractal Patterns In Nature



Repeating patterns that can be found
throughout the natural world.

—
**Human Relaxation
Attention Restoration**

Sounds of Nature



—
**Human Relaxation,
Enjoyment, Safety**



Petrichor & Geosmin Smells

—
Human Relaxation & Survival

Variable Heart Rate



—
**Human Relaxation
Response Activation**

Biophilia Hypothesis

Our affinity for the natural world

—
**Human Belonging &
Interconnectedness with
more than Ourselves**

(Gladys Barragan-Jason 2023)



Water & Negative Ions

—
**Rebalances &
Dispurses Build Up of
Positive Ions in Humans**

**Attachment &
Relationship with Place**

—
**Sense of Interconnectedness
& Belonging**

(Gladys Barragan-Jason 2023)



Nadine Mazzola

Relationships

Another important aspect to health.

What does it mean to be in relationship with trees and other forms of life besides human beings?

*“Did I hear that tree talk?
I’m pretty sure it said something to me.”*

We respond to nature with our human desire to connect. ([Gladys Barragan-Jason 2023](#))

Are there places we can count on?





Simply “being in” nature and opening your senses



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!! QUESTIONS?