

# Wellbeing with Nature

## Participant Feedback



**Avon**

**89% of participants reported improved health and wellbeing  
72% have gone onto additional activities**

*“The wellbeing in nature course helped me prior to lockdown to build confidence and structure to my life and helped me to go on and study a part time admin course.*

*It gave me the opportunity to be in peaceful surroundings amongst understanding people and give me time to recover, there is very little other places in Bristol that offer this.*

*It has taught me skills and techniques that I continue to use and did so to help me through lockdown by getting out in nature with the daily exercise allowance and being aware and appreciating my surroundings which helped with my mood and anxiety levels as I spent the 4 months on my own. In the autumn, I was so grateful to have a space back on the course even though it is short term as I literally find it to be life saving.*

*Mhairi and Jason are excellent along with the other participants too.”*

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*“Before I started the course I was in a very dark place and felt like I didn’t have anything to live for. I remember Christmas last year I just shut myself away, not wanting to mix with people or celebrate the festive season*

*One year on, I have finished the course and my life has been turned around and coming has really benefited my life. This Christmas I have been buying presents and feeling really good and looking forward to taking part and being with family. I have also stopped going to the doctors to see the mental health nurse and I have felt that I am now able to start reducing my medication.*

*I have now joined other groups and even started a bush craft course which I would never have done before coming on the Wellbeing through Nature course-It really has opened the doors to other things.*

*I have really enjoyed using the folder we were given at the start of the course, I may even continue to use the wellbeing reflection tool after the course.*

*I loved meeting new people and taking part in a lots of different activities. Something which was new to me was the nature based mindfulness and was a bit cautious of it at first, but now I am really enjoying it and I have been using what I learnt at home to help me with my sleeping.*

*This course allowed me to focus my life, to think about what I am doing by learning lots of positive things”.*



***“The course has pretty much saved my life. Before I started, I was homeless and I didn’t have any connections to anyone, I was really low. The course has given me connections to people and to nature that I never had before. It’s the first time in my life that any mindfulness practice has worked for me, and I tried for years and years before coming on the course. I was shielding and I definitely wouldn’t have been able to get through lockdown without the resources that the wellbeing team have given me.***

*I am now able to relax and connect to what’s around me, I have all the resources I need to survive thanks to what I’ve learnt. I’m finally going to university next month and I wouldn’t have been able to do that without Avon Wildlife Trust. I’m going to focus on sustainable product design. I’m even choosing to move closer to Dundry Slopes so I can be more involved with volunteering there”*

*“The course has really helped my wellbeing. I really enjoyed the nature based mindfulness exercises which extended out to going into nature. I enjoyed all the creative aspects-growing, crafts, cooking and group work.*

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*“I used to pace around the park when walking the dog, I now slow down and take more notice of the surroundings”.*

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*The course has increased my confidence and made me realise that there are lots of things I am interested in. I now want to learn more about how nature works, gardening and growing my own food. I am now going on to do another outdoor course. I also want to get out more regularly and keep noticing nature. I want to be out in nature doing volunteering work.*

*I’ve realised that nature is an inspiration to be creative, and I want to keep using it to stimulate my creativity. The nature based mindfulness is something I will integrate in to my current meditation practice. It’s a great course that fulfils it aims really well”.*

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*“You can get isolated very easily when you’re depressed, and then you don’t see anybody. So to come out and see different people helped..... I’m doing different things now that I wasn’t interested in before. I started to follow things up in my own time. I did a lot of wildflower identification, bought books and looked out for plants in the garden. I feel this wellbeing course guides you on how you can use nature to alleviate stress, and enables you to cope better with everyday problems that everyone faces. It’s something that you can use - at home in the park or outdoors wherever you are.”*

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*“The course has helped me educationally and to have a constructive routine. It also increased my interest in nature by looking after plants and the environment. I enjoyed the group activities. The best is the cooking and improving my motivation. I thought the course would just be about planting but it incorporates a lot more.*

*I am going to do an 8 week mindfulness course after here as it has intensified my mindfulness-it’s what I really looked forward to”.*

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*It has given me a sense of purpose, coming out. It’s enhanced my love of nature and I look more at what I do. I’ve appreciated the mindfulness and I observe more on what’s around me.*



Strategies we learned on the Wellbeing with Nature Course helped me immensely during lockdown.

I regularly did grounding, mindfulness and '3 good things in nature' list.

It gave me focus to concentrate on positive things other than the bleakness of the virus and hope that while everything else was going bit crazy, nature was getting on with it's stuff.

Even when the weather is a bit rubbish, you can look out the window and see something that will raise a smile.

The course just helped me realise what was actually important to me and it's ok to take time out to observe it.

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*I am more mindful and taking notice a lot more. Working and socialising is good and feels natural as if we have known each other for years. I calm down when connecting to nature, I am less anxious, less panicky than I used to be for example I was late for the bus today and did not panic like I used too.*

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*"I've realised that I haven't been noticing things around me all my life. Now I walk by the river and I am noticing more all the time. I enjoyed the tree ID and I did remember a few trees which I didn't think I would with the damage I've done to my brain. The course allows you to have the chance to leave stuff (issues) at home and I always feel better going home at the end of the day. I missed one week and it was really noticeable to me. I'm not rushing around like I used too. I like the social aspect of the group and eases my social anxiety. I'd really recommend the course to other people.*

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*The course is an opportunity for me to join a new group and not be alone, being with other people in similar situation. This course is about positive wellbeing but it also points you in the direction and is a stepping stone to other MH therapy services. The wellbeing interventions are stimulating, I noticed a London plane the other day I am taking more notice around me. I am now moving slower and less rushing around. I am shy and wanted to be more connected to people. I really like the grounding, it's a great way to start the day and I do it at home.*

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*Being a buddy is helping me to give back and to encourage others to have the same improvements I had. It's really rewarding to see people improve and develop themselves.*

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*"I feel more relaxed and safe coming to this group".*

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I attended the course in 2017 and it was the best thing I have ever done and the best medicine for my anxiety. I started to reduce my anti-depressants near the end of the course and by January I had stopped completely. 2 years on I am still connecting with nature, going for walks with a friend I met on the course and involved in lots of activities. I continue to do nature-based mindfulness and sit spots and with the folder with all the resources help to give me back up when I need it.

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*"I joined due to high stress levels. I enjoyed meeting new people and making friends. The group bonded very well and I liked making the raised beds and cooking over a fire. In general I enjoyed the whole course. Since completing the course I have been doing a lot more gardening. Next year I'm hoping to attract more bees and butterflies using plants that I learnt about from the course".*

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*"Improved feeling of wellbeing. I have a better knowledge of growing plants and gardening skills".*

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