

HEALING GARDEN MANUAL



2016

Manual Designed for My Refuge House

OUR VISION IS TO OFFER A NATURAL AND THERAPEUTIC
ATMOSPHERE FOR THE GIRLS AND STAFF AT MY REFUGE HOUSE
BY PROVIDING A GARDEN FOR HEALING AND MEDITATION.

Healing Garden Manual

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About this Manual

Hello everyone! Welcome to the Healing Garden Manual. The purpose of this manual is to educate new facilitators regarding horticultural therapy and healing gardens in general. It offers an overview of the importance of healing gardens and who they benefit, basic design principles for healing gardens, and the goals and objectives for this garden. The Healing Garden is open to all people, participants and staff, and can be used by all departments such as therapy, livelihood, education, and so forth. This manual also includes a few nature activities to help shape the program. The nature journal is first on the list because it should be the first thing new participants create; this is because the nature journal will be used throughout the program. The listed activities are a helpful guide to get started but other activities can be included and added to this manual. There are only a few activities to begin because some of these activities can be repeated numerous times, such as the nature journal; but also because an important element of healing gardens is planting, maintaining, and (sometimes) harvesting the plants, and this should be done often in order to care for the garden – these are therapeutic activities by themselves. Have fun!



Healing Garden Manual

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS HORTICULTURAL THERAPY?

- It is the use of gardening as a therapeutic tool to promote physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual well-being
- Horticultural activities aid in the healing process; to help recover from illness and injury and used in conjunction with physiotherapy, counselling and/or medication.
- The Horticultural Therapist creates goals using an assessment and provides interventions to help achieve these goals. Assessments include physical, cognitive, psychosocial abilities and medical history.

WHO BENEFITS?

Horticultural Therapy can help those who feel:

- Depressed
- Anxious
- Socially isolated
- Overwhelmed with life responsibilities
- Hopeless
- Loss of power and control

HT can help those who live with:

- Cognitive challenges
- Physical disabilities
- Sensory limitations
- Emotional imbalances

HT can aid in the process of recovery from:

- Addictions
- Loss
- Life Changes
- Physical Injury
- Abuse



Those who participate in HT feel:

- Empowered
- Inspired
- Competent
- Grounded
- Full and balanced
- Reconnected
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of accomplishment
- Self-confident

(<http://www.gardentherapynotes.com/What-Is-Horticultural-Therapy.html>)

WHAT IS A HEALING GARDEN?

- A Healing Garden is a created space that gives a variety of sensory experiences, and natural plants and flowers
- The plants in the Healing Garden also have healing qualities and can be used for herbal remedies and aromatherapy.
- These gardens provide a place of refuge and promote healing for participants and staff.
- Healing Gardens are places of meditation and sanctuary.
- Healing Gardens promote:
 - Improvement in overall sense of wellbeing and hopefulness
 - Reducing stress and anxiety
 - Spiritual wellbeing
 - Physical exercise
 - Encourage social interaction
 - Enhance a sense of control
 - Enhance self esteem



BASIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR HEALING GARDENS

- Choose plants that engage all the senses
 - Plants with textures
 - Plants with vibrant colors
 - Plants with scents
 - Plants with sound (ex. Bamboo)
- Choose elements that will attract birds
- Choose plants that can be used for herbal remedies, aromatherapy, or cooking
- Choose a path or stepping stone maze
- Choose features that give shade such as a trellis or roof
- Choose group spaces and individual areas
- Choose solar lights for night time visits
- Choose a water feature/s for a soothing sound, such as a small fish pond or fountain



GOAL AND OBJECTS FOR THE HEALING GARDEN

Project Goal 1:

To develop a safe and peaceful environment for nature therapy sessions, small group meetings, and individual meditation for our girls and staff members.

	Objectives	Signs of Success
Objective 1.1	Offer monthly group therapy sessions for girls beginning March, 2016	Discussion and feedback
Objective 1.2	Create a space for personal meditation by March, 2016	Garden is being used on a daily basis for personal care

Project Goal 2:

To grow plants with healing properties, for making herbal remedies or natural body products for personal use, and to promote an educational atmosphere that teaches livelihood skills for the girls.

	Objectives	Signs of Success
Objective 2.1	Offer monthly livelihood classes	Discussion and feedback
Objective 2.2	Use harvest for personal and shelter consumption	The harvest is contributing to the shelter's needs

Project Goal 3:

To foster environmental stewardship by building with natural materials and gardening with sustainable practices to not only maintain the area but to enrich and prosper the land.

	Objectives	Signs of Success
Objective 3.1	To build and create the garden with natural products from the local community	No artificial materials that could be damaging to the natural environment are used in the garden.
Objective 3.2	To teach sustainable gardening practices in the garden	The plants are able to regenerate, recycled water is used, and all natural pesticide and weed killer is produced



Monthly Nature Journal



Introduction:

Nature Journals...

Reinforce observation skills

Allow for creativity

Promote writing

Help us love/care for creation

Objectives:

For participants to spend intentional time in nature and be able to document what they have seen, touched, smelled, and heard.

For participants to share what they have learned as they wrote, drew, or painted in their journals.

For participants to share why they chose their subject matter as a point of interest and why it is important to them.

Materials:

Notebook/Journal

Pens/Pencils

Markers/Crayons

Paint/Pastels

Pressed Flowers/Leaves

Activity:

Write thoughts, feelings, ideas, observations, experiences, and relationship with the natural world.

Encourage participants to choose something to focus on and draw or paint: a flower, a tree, a bug, a bird, etc.

Add poetry or quotes that are meaningful to you.

Place, trace, or press the nature specimens you collect inside of it.

Check out the resources below to gather writing prompts and ideas.

RESOURCES:

<http://ourjourneywestward.com/nature-journals-important/>

<http://www.rhythmsofplay.com/get-outside-connect-create-nature-journal-notebook/>

<http://www.gardentherapynotes.com/How-To-Create-A-Nature-Journal.html>

Flower/Leaf Pressing



Introduction:

Several activities in this manual require pressed flowers or leaves so it is recommended to begin with this activity in order to have the needed materials for later sessions. These flowers can also be used for many other activities not listed in this manual. Be creative!

Objectives:

For the participants to learn how to preserve and press flowers and leaves.

For participants to learn the names of various local plants.

For participants to gain a deeper appreciation of the variety of local plants around them.

Materials:

Fresh cut flowers

Paper

Books

Activity:

Pick flowers when they are dry and have no moisture on them, and begin pressing them soon afterwards. If you wait too long the flowers will begin to wilt.

Choose flowers that have thin petals, but do not have thick centers or stems. You want flowers that will be able to flatten well.

Place the flowers between two pieces of paper and put inside a large book. Then place several books on top for added weight.

Wait two weeks before removing the flowers.

Pressed Flower Face Mask



Introduction:

Inspires creativity and imagination. Can be used to tell stories or role play within a group setting.

Objectives:

For participants to handle leaves and flowers with care and imagination.

For participants to role play various scenarios as presented by the facilitator.

For the participants to share about their design and how it relates to their role play.

Materials:

Cardboard/thick paper
Dried flowers and leaves
Scissors
String

Activity:

Begin by making a mask template based on the participant's face. Cut out eye holes where their eyes will be. Punch holes for string.

Started by gluing leaves to the outer areas of the mask

Then glued flower petals around the eye area

Then tie your string in the punched holes and place the mask on.

Resources: <http://mermagblog.com/diy-nature-mask-with-leaves-and-flowers/>

Nature People



Introduction:

Creating nature people is a fun way to be creative and expressive at the same time. They can be used for story-telling, self-expression, or for card making.

Objectives:

For participants to see nature in a different perspective and interact in a new way.

For participants to create nature people according to specific topics chosen by the facilitator, such as: family members, friends, personal dreams, etc.

For participants to use their creations to tell a story to the group about what the people represent and why they were chosen.

Materials:

Pressed Flowers/Leaves

Cardstock/Paper

Glue

Toothpicks

Scissors

Activity:

Show participants examples of various designs and have them create a favourite memory using the pressed flowers and leaves.

Have the participants choose the flowers and leaves they like and help them cut down certain pieces.

Use the toothpicks to place a small amount of glue on the pieces and carefully glue to the thick paper for support.

Have each participants tell the story they have chosen to tell and why.

Resources: <http://mermagblog.com/make-and-decorate-your-own-nature-paper-dolls/>

Painted Story Stones



Introduction:

These stones can be used to build problem solving skills by giving the participants a scenario and having them act out a response with the stones they have painted. They can also encourage story-telling and imagination.

Objectives:

For participants to paint simple elements that are important to them.

For participants to tell stories related to their stones depending on the topic given by the facilitator.

To engage in problem solving skills by responding to a scenario with their story stones.

Materials:

Smooth stones

Acrylic paint

Paint brushes

Activity:

Collect small, smooth stones for painting.

Have the participants paint simple features such as people, animals, trees, clothing, household objects, toys, food, transportation, places (e.g. park), weather (e.g. rain), elements (e.g. water) or a sun for day and stars on a black stone for night.

Have the participants tell a story with their stones and explain why they painted the picture that they did. The facilitator can also give the participants a scenario and they must provide a solution through telling a story or response with the stones.

Resources: <http://paintontheceiling.blogspot.com.au/2011/10/how-to-make-and-play-with-story-stones.html>

Nature Scavenger Hunt



Introduction:

A scavenger hunt allows participants to look at nature in detail, not only viewing the larger picture. It brings value to even the smallest element.

Objectives:

For participants to look intentionally at nature and the colors, shapes, designs, smells, and textures.

For participants to become familiar with the variety of plants and flowers and their names.

For participants to learn to appreciate the small details and voice what they enjoy about nature.

Materials:

Develop a list of items the participants need to gather. This list could vary depending on season and location.

Activity:

Give Scavenger Hunt handout to the participants and have them search for the items in pairs.

Once the participants have returned, go through all of their items. Ask them why they chose the items they did, what they like about that item. Talk about each item specifically. Naming the flower, plant, etc.

Flowers and leaves that have been picked can be pressed for future projects.

Stepping Stones

**Introduction:**

Stepping stones are creative and practical aspects of a garden. They can be made in many different ways and they add color and design to the garden.

Objectives:

- For participants to learn to make concrete stepping stones
- For participants to create a feature to incorporate into the garden to be seen whenever they visit.
- For participants to share a part of themselves to live in the garden.

Materials:

Cement
Water
Box
Thick plastic bag
Trowel
Bucket
Marbles, glass, etc
Chicken wire

Activity:

The best way to complete this activity is to look directly at the website provided below. The site document each steps with instructional photos which will be helpful for the facilitator as they are preparing for this activity. This is a simple project but it is easier to refer than to list directly.

<http://www.bobvila.com/articles/diy-stepping-stones/>

Wind Chimes



Introduction:

Wind chimes are a great addition to any garden and are one of the suggested features in a healing garden because they provide soothing and meditative sounds.

Objectives:

For participants to use materials they are provided to create a feature for the healing garden which will provide peaceful and soothing sounds for meditation.

For participants to use their imaginations in working with a variety of elements to repurpose and provide new life for the recycled items.

Materials:

Glass

Shells

Stones

Small branches

Spoons/forks

Beads

String

Small branches/pieces of wood

Activity:

Collect suggested materials for participants to use in creating their own wind chimes. There is much creative freedom in this project and participants are free to create however they like. Recommend that participants test out various materials and sound quality before attaching items to strings and hanging them.

Program Monitoring

Task	What?	How?	Who?	When?
Monthly group therapy sessions	Participation	Photo and description of each session kept in binder	Expressive Group Therapy (EGT) facilitator	Monthly
Individual use	Individual involvement	Feedback	Project Leader	Monthly
Monthly livelihood sessions	Participation & Skills learned	Photo and description of each session kept in binder	Livelihood Program facilitator	Monthly
Maintenance	Maintaining the garden	Observation	Project Leader	Monthly

Program Evaluation

What do you want to know?	Where can you find the answers?	How will you collect the info?	Who will collect and analyze?	When will this be done?
Are the girls benefiting from monthly nature focused therapy	Participants and EGT facilitator	Discussion and feedback after group therapy sessions. Review binder of sessions completed.	EGT facilitator	Monthly
Are girls and staff using the garden for personal self care	Participants and staff	House meeting and staff meetings. Results from monitoring individual use.	Program leader	Monthly
Are the girls learning in the monthly livelihood sessions	Participants and Livelihood facilitator	Discussion and feedback after livelihood sessions. Review binder of sessions completed.	Livelihood facilitator	Monthly
Is the garden being maintained appropriately through sustainable practices	Garden	Observation	Program leader	Monthly
Do girls and staff enjoy meeting in the garden	Participants and Program leader	Discussion and feedback from girls and staff	Program leader	Monthly
What can be done for improvement	Participants and staff (family meeting and staff meeting)	Discussion and feedback: What is going well? What is not going well? What needs to change?	Project leaders	Quarterly

Resources

1. <http://www.garden therapynotes.com/What-Is-Horticultural-Therapy.html>
2. <http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/healing-environment/what-are-healing-gardens>
3. <http://ourjourneywestward.com/nature-journals-important/>
4. <http://www.rhythmsofplay.com/get-outside-connect-create-nature-journal-notebook/>
5. <http://www.garden therapynotes.com/How-To-Create-A-Nature-Journal.html>
6. <http://mermagblog.com/diy-nature-mask-with-leaves-and-flowers/>
7. <http://mermagblog.com/make-and-decorate-your-own-nature-paper-dolls/>
8. <http://paintedontheceiling.blogspot.com.au/2011/10/how-to-make-and-play-with-story-stones.html>
9. <http://www.bobvila.com/articles/diy-stepping-stones/>
10. <http://www.growinggardens.org/horticultural-therapy-program>
11. <http://www.garden therapynotes.com/Horticultural-Therapy-Activities.html>