

# Counseling Connections

Volume 1, Issue 7

May 11, 2020

## Message from Your School Social Worker

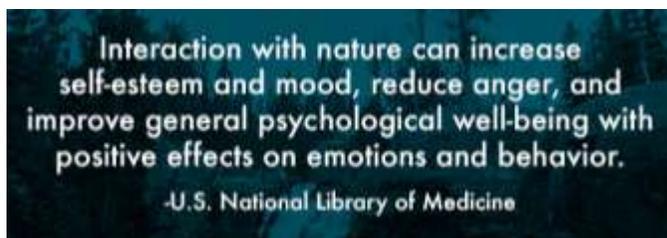
Despite our current conditions, we are still constantly on the move and feeling overwhelmed. Focusing on mental health, now more than ever, should be a top priority in how we take of ourselves.

The last several weeks we have shared different ways to manage intense emotions and cope with the stay at home orders and pandemic. This week we want to focus on our connection with nature, and how it helps to improve our daily mood, as well as, helping to maintain good mental and physical health now and in the future.

If you'd like to talk about more ideas on incorporating connecting with nature into your daily routine or need additional support, please reach out to Mrs. Proctor. [karen.proctor@AmitaHealth.org](mailto:karen.proctor@AmitaHealth.org)

## Nature Therapy

Nature therapy, in its simplest form, is being present in a natural environment. This can be done by doing physical activities in nature or by being aware of our surroundings and experiencing nature through mindfulness practices.



## Ideas for Connecting with Nature

Physical exercise outside, such as, walking; jogging; cycling; or doing yoga in a park.

Kid friendly nature activities:

<https://childmind.org/article/ideas-for-getting-your-kids-into-nature/>

Nature Guided Apps:

<https://www.common sense media.org/lists/apps-that-inspire-kids-to-play-outside>

Nature Scavenger Hunt:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1OgAK2KzKeUfRj9KH6h\\_o8ev8BCsV7f](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1OgAK2KzKeUfRj9KH6h_o8ev8BCsV7f)

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ya5YO6Vf\\_bemNDebVq55Lbg2aK2iRBMK](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ya5YO6Vf_bemNDebVq55Lbg2aK2iRBMK)

## GARDEN Nature Art



## Nature Mindfulness Exercise

This exercise is simple, but powerful because it helps you notice and appreciate seemingly simple elements of your environment. It's designed to connect us with the beauty of the natural environment, something that is easily missed when we are rushing around in our day to day life.

Choose a place to sit or stand outside before starting the steps below.

1. Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for 1-2 minutes. This could be a flower, insect, tree, clouds, or moon.
2. Focus only on the object and relax into watching it for as long as your concentration allows.
3. Look at the object as if you have never seen it before.
4. Visually explore every aspect of its formation and allow yourself to be consumed by its presence. Notice the shape, texture, & any movement from the object.
5. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its purpose within the natural world.

## Where to Get Help

As we're approaching the end of the school year, it's important to continue focusing on mental health now and throughout the summer. For additional resources please contact your school's counselor or social worker.

**IL Suicide Prevention Hotline** - Text "Talk" to 552020  
**National Crisis Hotline** - Text "Home" to 741741  
**AMITA Behavioral Health Services** 855-383-2224  
**www.auntbertha.com** – Search engine for free & reduced community support services