



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Champlain East  
*Mental health for all*

Association canadienne  
pour la santé mentale  
Champlain Est  
*La santé mentale pour tous*

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Submitted by: Canadian Mental Health Association Champlain East

## The Benefits of Nature

As the weather is getting warmer and summer is arriving soon, spending time in nature can be a great way to take advantage of this season. Did you know that a growing body of research shows that spending time in nature or enjoying some green space in urban settings is good for our mental health? Indeed, it is a low-cost and highly effective way to improve both physical and psychological wellbeing.

### Increased Happiness

A study conducted by Bratman and his colleagues (published in *Science Advances*), found evidence that being in contact with nature can increase happiness, a sense of well-being, positive social interactions, and a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

### Decreased Anxiety, Stress and Depression

According to a study by Meredith and colleagues (2020), which examined 14 already-published studies comparing participants living in urban areas with those in natural environments, nature-rich environments definitely helped reduce mental distress. Furthermore, the study revealed that a minimum of ten minutes spent either sitting or walking in a wide range of natural settings had a significant positive impact on the participants' mental health.

### Cognitive benefits

A research by Schertz and Berman (2019) also showed that interacting with nature is good for our brain. Indeed, it has cognitive benefits such as better performance on attentional-control tasks, improved working memory and mental flexibility.

### Bringing nature indoors

If you don't have easily access to natural environments or have limited time to spend in green space, you can still enjoy the benefits of nature from your indoor space. Here are some strategies you can try:

- Add plants to your space or pick up a bouquet of fresh flowers.



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- Listen to music that is nature-based with sounds of the ocean, rivers, waterfalls, wind or birds. You can also download some apps that play soothing nature sounds you can listen to while working or relaxing.
- Decorate your house or work office with paintings or photographs of nature. You can choose beautiful landscapes, gardens or natural scenes.
- Watch a YouTube video of nature.

### **References:**

[How Nature Therapy Helps Your Mental Health \(verywellmind.com\)](http://www.verywellmind.com)

[Nurtured by nature \(apa.org\)](http://www.apa.org)

### **DO YOU NEED HELP?**

Dial or text 2-1-1 for free and confidential service that easily connects people to the critical social and community supports they need.

**If you are thinking of suicide, please call 9-8-8 which is a mental health crisis and suicide prevention line.**

***The information provided is not a substitute for professional advice. If you need advice, please consult a qualified health care professional. For further information or if you want to access our services at CMHA, please call 1-800-493-8271 or visit our web site at [www.cmha-east.on.ca](http://www.cmha-east.on.ca)***