

LIFESTYLE-BASED MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR DEPRESSION

# Interaction with green and blue spaces



People who increase their exposure to green and/or blue space are less likely to report depressive symptoms.

In addition, exposure to green space may improve stress, quality of life, and general mood.

**Scan for more information**



## What are green and blue spaces?

**Green space, or nature-based exposure, refers to increasing our level of exposure to vegetation-rich environments.**

Green spaces can be urban-based (e.g., parks, backyards) or natural environments (e.g., forests).

**Blue space refers to exposure to bodies of water.**

Blue spaces can include coastal (e.g., beaches) or inland (e.g., rivers, lakes, ponds) spaces.

## How can I increase my green and blue space exposure?

**There is no required duration to yield the benefits of time spent in green and blue spaces. Simply aiming to increase the time you currently spend is a great place to start.**

- Start by considering what green or blue space you are exposed to already. Can you begin by increasing the time you spend there?
- Consider new opportunities for exposure to green/ blue space. Identify what kind of green or blue spaces you enjoy.
- Think about logistics. Can you access that kind of space? If not, what is the next best thing? Can you visit the space regularly? Is it safe to use that space?
- Consider convenience – we are more likely to sustain something when it is easy to action.
- Consider choosing green/ blue space that is close enough to fit into your current schedule, like walking through a park or by a river near work during your lunchbreak.
- Structured programs like horticultural or garden therapy, walking groups, wilderness therapy, and outdoor sports and activities (e.g., hiking, camping, swimming, tai chi, surfing lessons) may enhance benefits for people with depression. The benefits of these programs may be amplified because of the presence of trained facilitators, and the social interaction they can afford.