



Talk 4. Access to learning and nature: addressing health inequalities



Access to nature and learning: addressing inequalities



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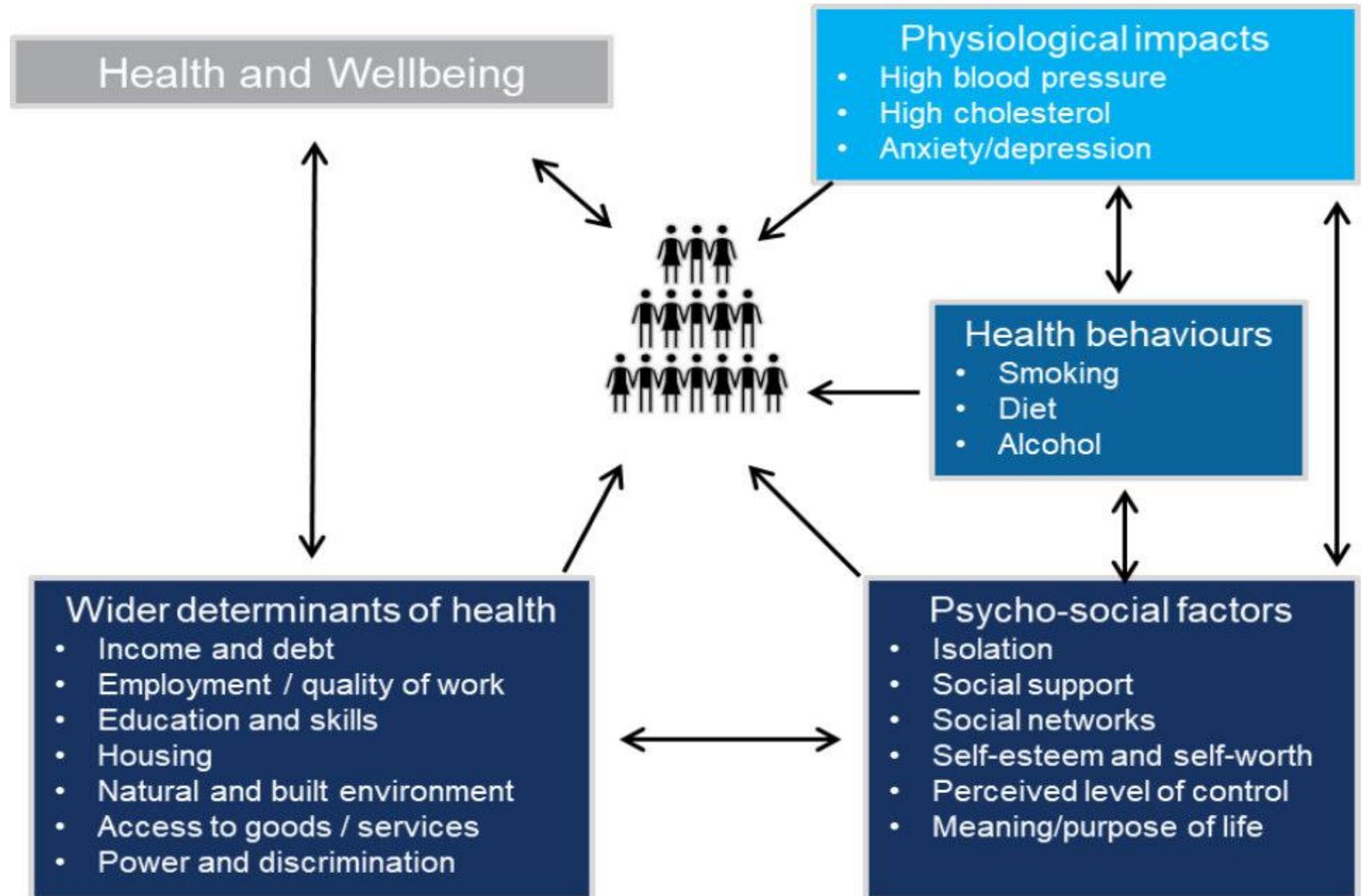
Today's talk

We are going to consider the relationship between health inequalities, learning and access to nature, including:

- The link between health and nature
- Why some groups experience less benefit from nature
- How this can impact cognitive function and learning
- Actions we can take
- Case studies



The main drivers of our health



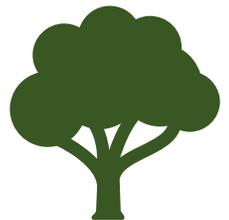
Public Health England -
Place-based approaches
for reducing health
inequalities

Health benefits of nature



There is various evidence of these benefits: Rhee et al. (2023); Bratman et al.(2012); Kuo et al (2019)

These benefits are compounded by learning about them, creating a virtuous cycle of wellbeing



Forest schools



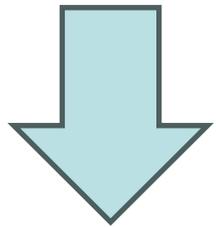
BOARD OF EDUCATION, TORONTO JULY 29 1912 No. 66

City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, s0372, ss0011, I10066

Forest School in Toronto (1912) – encouraging learning through engagement with nature

What are the benefits of nature

Ecosystem services are benefits provided by our environment, ranging from resource, ecological, economical to social and to the cultural.



Wellbeing



©NSF



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Nature and health trends



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

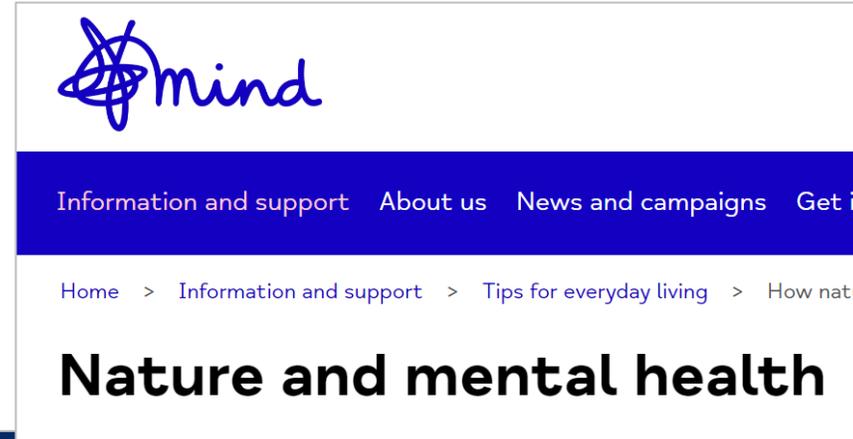
TOPICS PUBLICATIONS & DATABASES RESEARCH & PRACTICE

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FEATURE

Nurtured by nature

Psychological research is advancing our understanding of how nature improves mental health and sharpen our cognition



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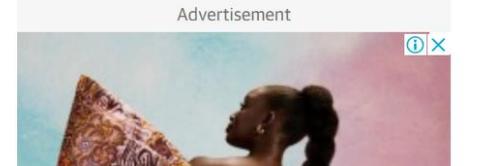
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Nature and mental health

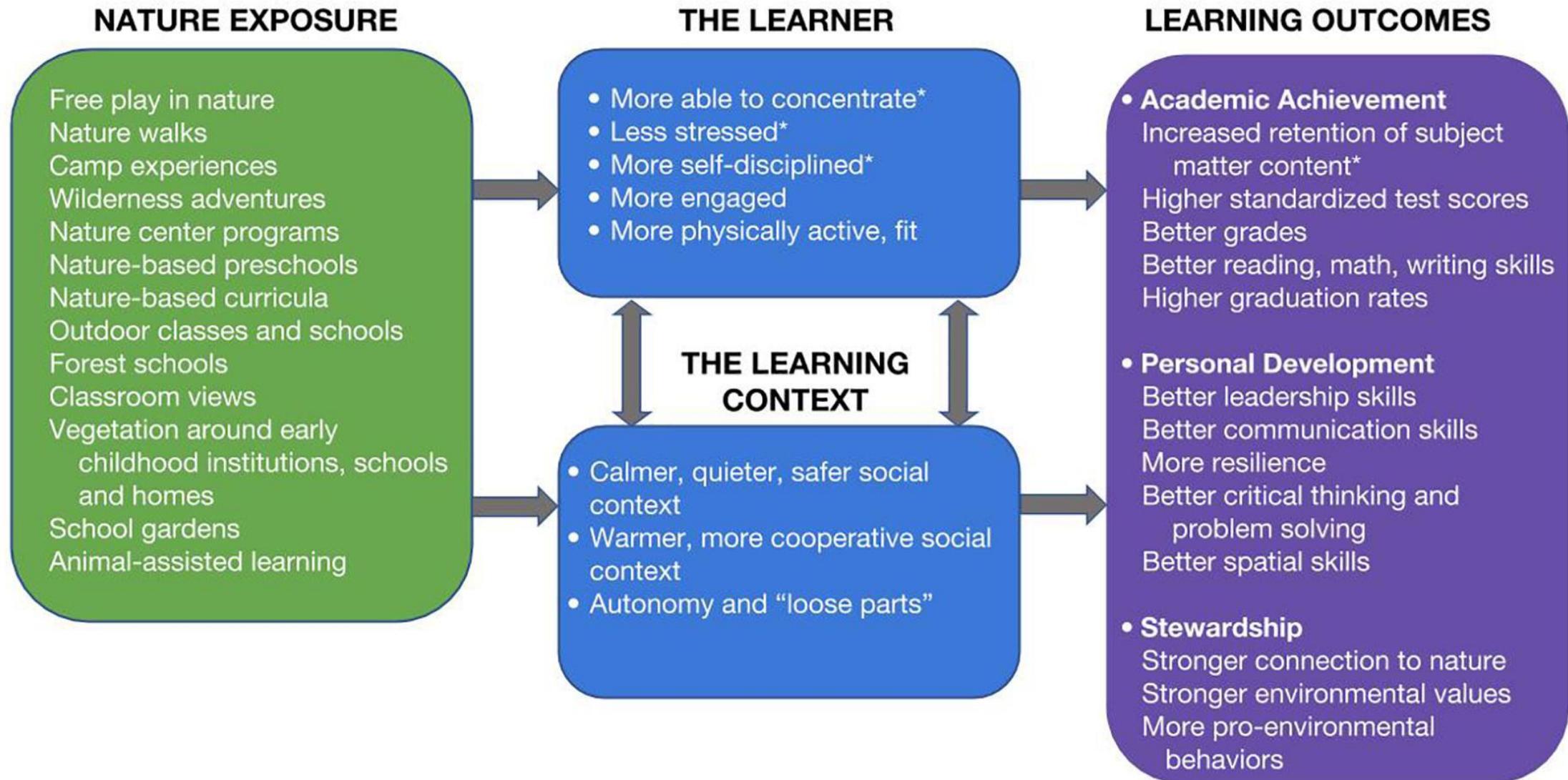


The Guardian Int

Health benefits of being in nature worth £356 an adult in 2020, ONS data shows



How nature helps cognitive function and learning



Why focus on nature now

There is **increasing appreciation and utilisation** of green spaces by various stakeholders and for various activities: learning, worship, sports, entertainment, food production etc.

Nature loss is a major problem from habitat destruction, overexploitation & now climate emergency.

We need nature to **mitigate climate change**, provide food and resources and wellbeing.

Our dependency in nature is a given, yet human disconnect is highly concerning.



©Bernhard_Schuermann, Pixabay

Disconnection from nature

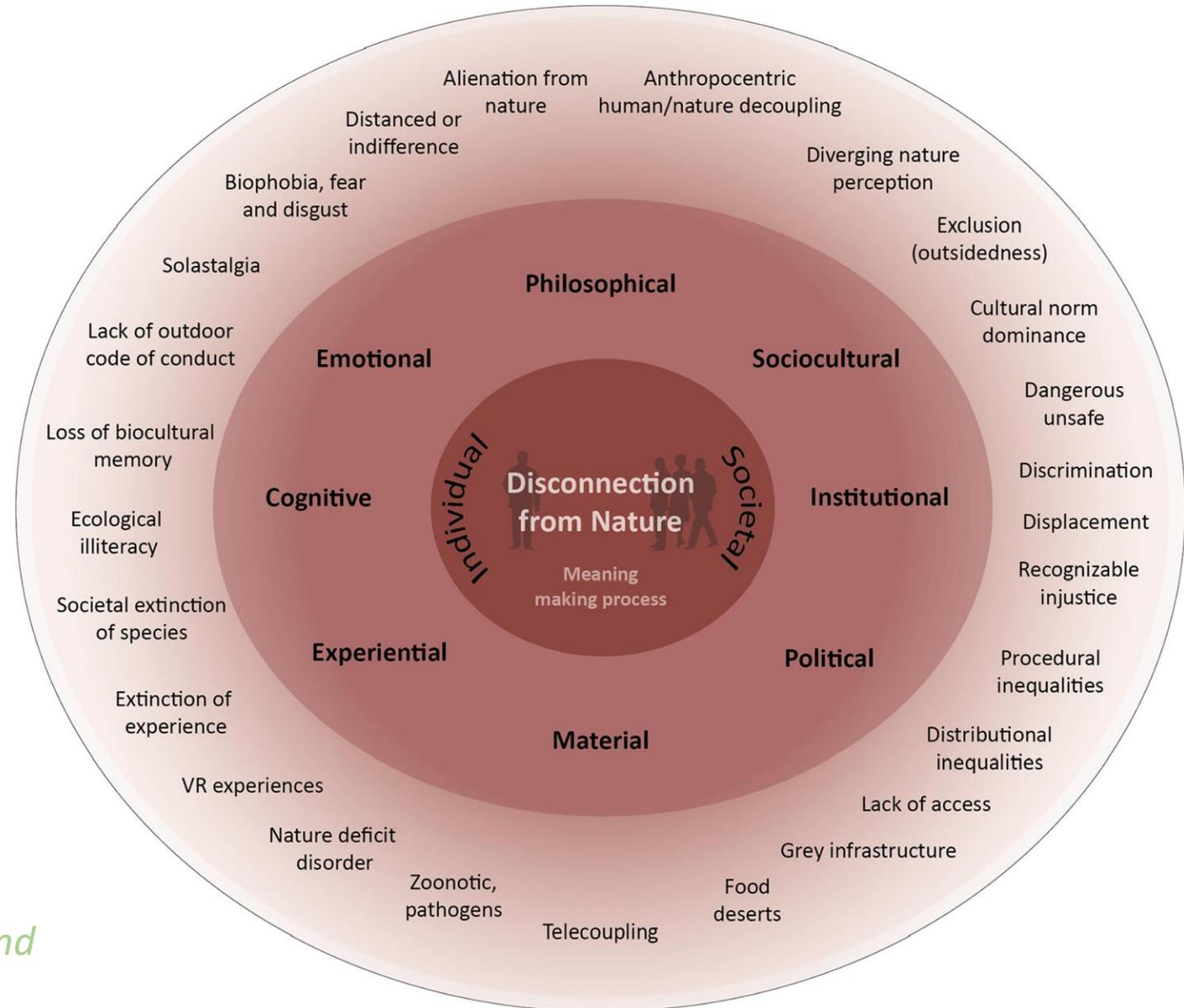
Disconnection from nature is

“ **the lack of awareness or disregard** for human identity in material elements and within flows, energy and other nonmaterial elements and values that constitute nature.

We assert that this disconnection can be traced to many factors, such as ideological orientations, political relations, sociocultural norms and institutional arrangements that prevent awareness or create disregard for people as part of nature. “

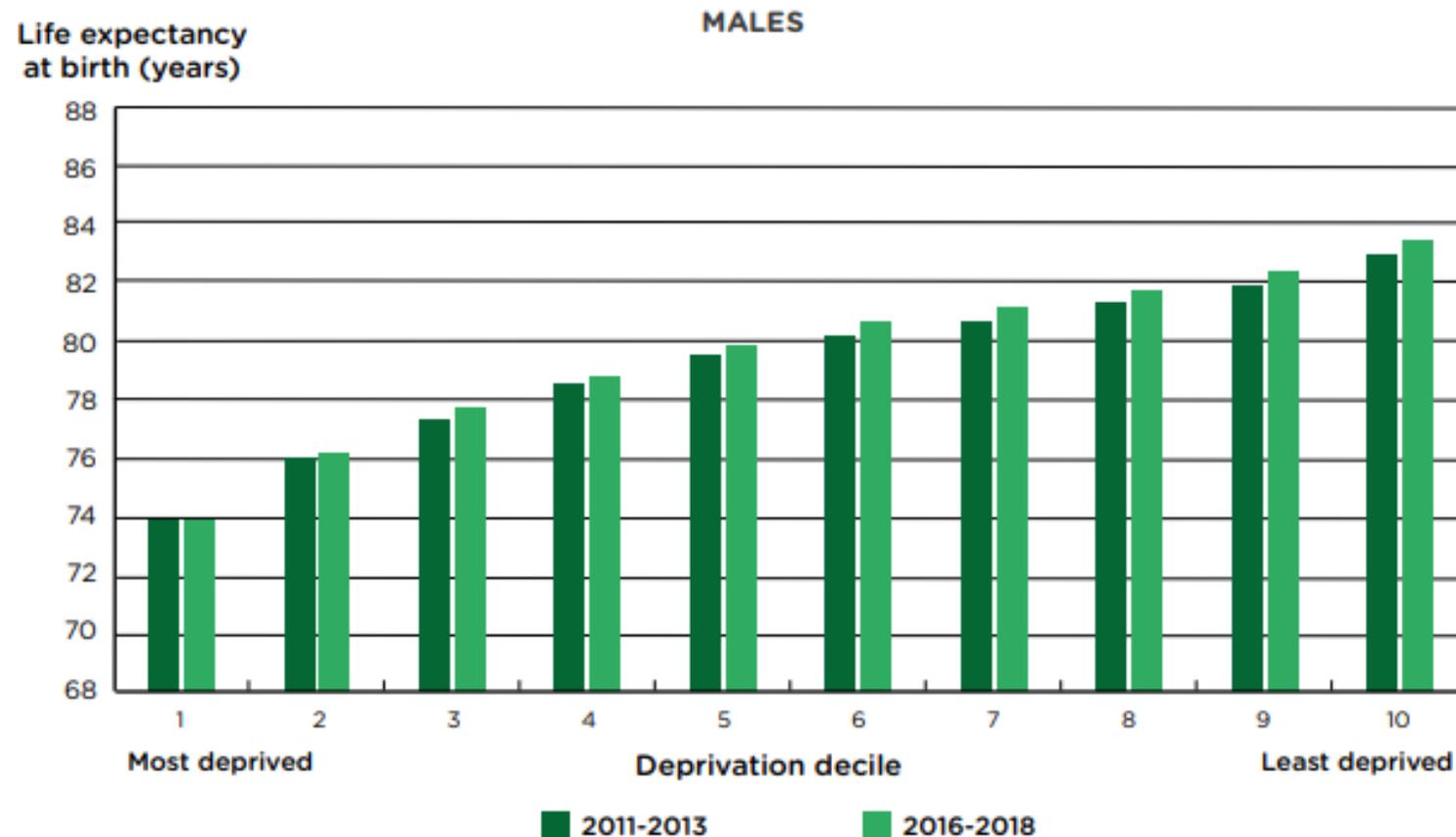
Beery et al. (2023) People and Nature.

We need to create awareness to overcome this and creating engagement.



What are health inequalities?

- Health inequalities are **unfair and avoidable** differences in health status between different groups of people.
- Inequalities in health are recognised by differences in length of life and the number of years spent in good health.



England data - Produced by the Institute of Health Equity

Inequalities in access to & experience of nature



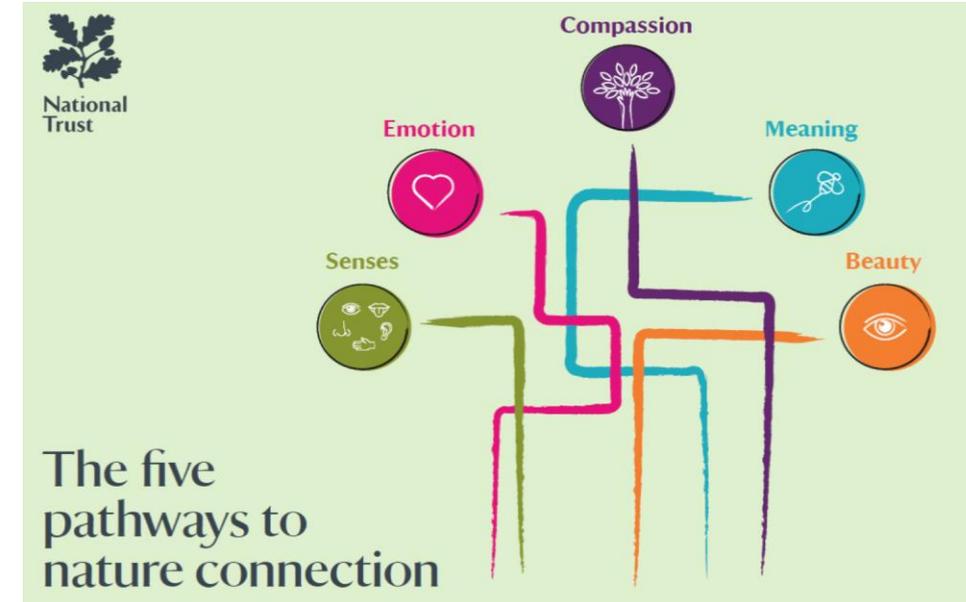
Addressing inequality - call to action

Actions

- Commitment to provision – enshrine in law
- Enable, empower, change, social movement
- Green NHS locally
- Provide access to resources for learning

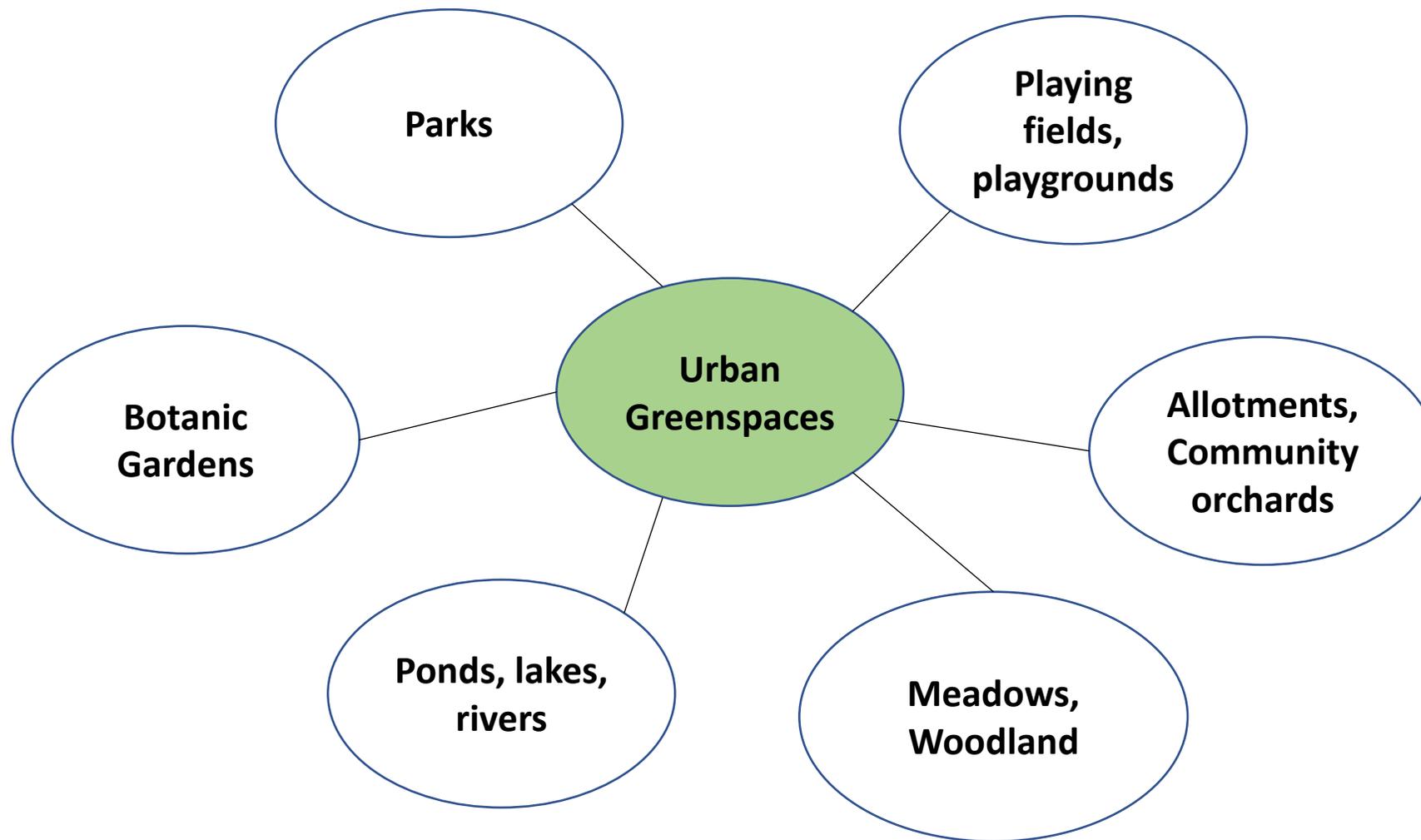
To **engage** effectively with nature:

- Learn about nature
- Go out and experience it
- Meet people and talk in greenspaces
- Work with societies and interested bodies



Action needs at governance, civil society and public level

You don't need wilderness to access nature ...



Since Victorian times public parks in urban areas have been around since 1840's, designed to create physically healthy spaces and for walking and promenading.

Case study 1: an intergenerational in-person community



'Talking hay while the sun shines'
Photo: Sivi Sivanesan

Case Study 3: Milton Keynes and The Parks Trust

Established as an independent charity in 1992, cares for MK's ancient woodlands, lakes, river valleys for ever, for everyone.

The Parks Trust, Milton Keynes

- >2500 ha
- 25% of urban area
- > £140 million endowment



Key takeaways

- Nature has a range of benefits for health and environmental stewardship
- Access to experience of nature means some groups do not benefit as much
- There are things we can all do to engage more with nature

Further resources

<https://findingnature.org.uk/2017/05/10/beyond-knowing-nature/>

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/addressing-health-inequalities-greenspaces-age-well-part-i-socio-economic-and-transport-access-inequalities>

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/addressing-health-inequalities-greenspaces-age-well-part-ii-diversity-and-safety>

Summary of related resources to The Ageing Well Public Talk Series

Podcasts

Vseteckova J & King J (2020) COVID-19 Interview podcast for The Retirement Café: ['Ageing Well Under Lockdown'](#)

Vseteckova J & Broad E (2020) Podcast – Open University & The Parks Trust [Keep Me Walking – researching with people living with dementia and their carers](#) –

Vseteckova J (2020) Podcast – [Areas of research with The Open University](#)

Broad E, Methley A & Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust – [Spotter sheet and mindful walking.](#)

Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Preventing brain decline while ageing](#)



Methley A, Broad E, Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Walking therapy](#)

Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Understanding our memory](#)

Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) [Engaging with our environment](#)

Joannidi H, Araya Y, Broad E & Vseteckova J (2022) [Sense of self during aging: how mindfulness and nature can help](#)

The above podcasts can be also seen on [The Parks Trust YouTube Channel](#)



Vseteckova J & Grimes C (2024) [Six ways to look after your brain health in your 20s and 30s](#)

Vseteckova J (2020) [Ageing Well Public Talks Series](#)

Vseteckova J (2019) [5 reasons why exercising outdoors is great for people who have dementia](#)

Vseteckova J (2019) [Depression, mood and exercise](#)

Vseteckova J (2019) [Five Pillars for Ageing Well](#)

Vseteckova J (2020) [Ageing Brain](#)



Methley A & Vseteckova J & Jones K (2020) [**Green & Blue & Outdoor spaces**](#)

Vseteckova J, Borgstrom E, Whitehouse A, Kent A, Hart A (2021) [**Advance Care Planning \(ACP\)**](#)

Vseteckova J (2020) [**Walking the Parks with The OU and The Parks Trust**](#)

Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) [**Understanding our memory**](#)

Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) [**Engaging with our environment**](#)



Hedges V & Vseteckova J (2023)

[What should I expect when I am nearing the end of my life?](#)

Joannidi H, Araya Y, Broad E & Vseteckova J (2022)

[Sense of self during aging: how mindfulness and nature can help](#)

Mehta S, Vseteckova J (2023) [Ageing, health inequalities and person centred care](#)

Mehta S, Vseteckova J (2023) [Ageing, health inequalities and integrated approach to care](#)

Araya Y, Broad E, Vseteckova J (2023) [Ageing well by connecting and learning about nature outdoors](#)



Vseteckova J (2022) [Pharmacotherapy while ageing](#)

Joannidi H, Araya Y, Broad E & Vseteckova J (2022) [Sense of Self during ageing – how mindfulness and nature can help](#)

Mehta S (2022) [Medicines and personalisation while ageing](#)

Gale B (2022) [How can we prepare for death while ageing?](#)

Gale B (2022) [Valuing death at home: making preparations](#)



Care and caring related

Vseteckova J, (2020) [How to age well, while self-isolating](#)

Vseteckova J, (2020) [SHORT FILM - Ageing Well in Self-Isolation](#)

Vseteckova J, (2020) [ANIMATION - Keeping healthy in Self-Isolation](#)

Vseteckova J et al (2020)

[COVID-19 The effects of self-isolation and lack of physical activity on carers](#)

Taverner P, Larkin M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) [Supporting adult carers during COVID-19 pandemic](#)



Robb M, Penson M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) [**Young carers, COVID-19 and physical activity**](#)

Penson M, Vseteckova J et al. (2020) [**Older Carers, COVID-19 and Physical Activity**](#)

Vseteckova J & Methley A (2020) [**Acceptance Commitment Therapy \(ACT\) to help carers in challenging COVID-19 times**](#)



[AGEING WELL PUBLIC TALK SERIES WEBSITE](#)

[Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2023/2024](#) repository on ORDO Collections

[Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2022/2023](#) repository on ORDO Collections

[Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2021/2022](#) repository on ORDO Collections

[Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2020/2021](#) repository on ORDO Collections

[Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2019/2020](#) repository on ORDO Collections

[Midlife MOT OpenLearn Course](#)

OpenLearnCreate Course on [Ageing Well' 2019/2020](#)

[Home exercise no equipment – no problem](#) *Blog*