



Mental Health Awareness Week 2021!

Nature Activity Pack

Fun for all ages, connecting us
through nature and wellbeing

Mental Health Awareness Week 2021

Nature!

The theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week is **nature**. Nature is so important for our emotional health; it brings us calm in times of stress, it increases our creativity, empathy and sense of wonder. Even small contacts with nature can reduce feelings of loneliness and protect our mental health and prevent distress.



Mental Health Awareness Week's hosts, The Mental Health Foundation have chosen nature as the theme:

“Despite the benefits of nature, many of us are not accessing or benefitting from it. Around 13% of UK households have no access to a garden. We want to challenge the gap in who is and who isn't able to experience nature. Nature is not a luxury. It is a resource that must be available for everyone to enjoy - as basic as having access to clean water or a safe roof over our heads.”

This week Lancashire Mind want to challenge Lancashire to embrace nature and feel the benefits. We hope this family pack of ideas and activities can be accessible to all, whether you have your own outdoor space or not. We have tried to accommodate for families with children in the early years all the way up to young people at college and university. We hope you find something to enjoy.



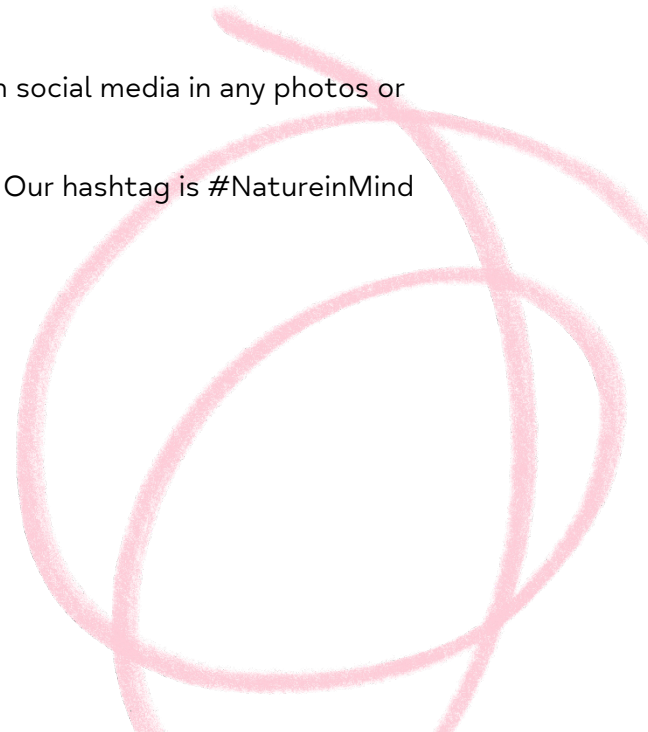
If you complete or take part in an activity, please tag us on social media in any photos or posts and share

your experiences with others, it may inspire someone else. Our hashtag is #NatureinMind

Instagram - @lancsmind

Facebook - @MindLancashire

Twitter - @LancsMind



Pool Sticks!

This simple and popular game lends itself to the famous bear with the same name, created by A.A. Milne. It's really simple and a great one for when you're out and about!

What You Will Need:

- 2 or more players
- A bridge over moving water
- Sticks or twigs

**Suitable for all ages:
Young children to be
supervised by adults
at all times!**

Instructions:

1. Find some sticks or twigs on the ground, that have already fallen from branches or trees.
2. Stand on the bridge over moving water.
3. Make sure you know which way the water is moving. Then you will know which side to throw your sticks from and the water will carry your stick under the bridge.
4. On the count of three **“1, 2, 3!”** everyone must drop their pool sticks from the same side together, into the water below.
5. The stick that floats underneath the bridge the fastest is the winner!



Extra activities to boost your wellbeing:

- Take time to listen and watch the water
- Can you see any reflections in the water?
- Can you spot any wildlife near the water?
- Could you collect some more twigs and create some art using them?

TOP TIP!

Try and pick a place on the bridge where the water looks like it is flowing the fastest!

Small Nature

Sometimes we don't have access to nature in the form of endless green fields or forests. Many of us don't have a garden! This doesn't mean we can't bring a bit of nature into whatever space we have available.

Why not try...

1. Regrowing your own vegetables – in water!

This is a great little trick that works brilliantly with spring onions. Check out the series Regrow on the BBC Earth Facebook page for all the inspiration you need to grow vegetables with as little as a glass of water and some sunlight!



2. Plant some bee friendly species!

Bees are extremely important little creatures, and they need protecting. Try planting some easy to grow flowers, like cosmos. You can put these out in a tub on a balcony, or any yard space you may have.

3. Research the natural world around you

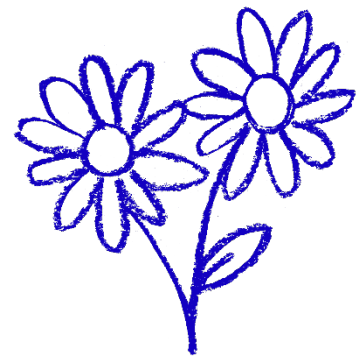
It is easy to overlook the small patches of nature in our local area, we often walk past them every day without really paying attention. Look out for information boards with details of local wildlife, check out your local branch of organisations such as the Canal and River Trust.

Environmental action!

You don't need to have any special skills or experience to look after the environment, but it can be hard to know where to start. Take a look at some of these ideas for inspiration!

Find a local environmental action group and get your family involved. You can often find these groups on your local community social media pages.

These groups can be a great way of finding out what is happening locally – there might be a lot more than you realise!



Help the environment through things you already do.

If you are a part of a group like Scouts, you can work towards badges that reward your action for the environment!

You can also ask your teachers if there are things going on in school that you can help with, like theme weeks, or a school garden club.

Learn about seasonal eating.

Eating with the seasons and finding local food sources is a great way to learn about the environmental impact of food.

Eating veggies that are in season can also be money saving!

Try finding a recipe that uses seasonal produce that you can enjoy as a family.

Have a topic that you particularly care about? Get in touch with your local decision makers!

Check out local Youth Forums or Council youth focus groups for the chance to have your say on environmental decisions in your local area. It makes a big difference!





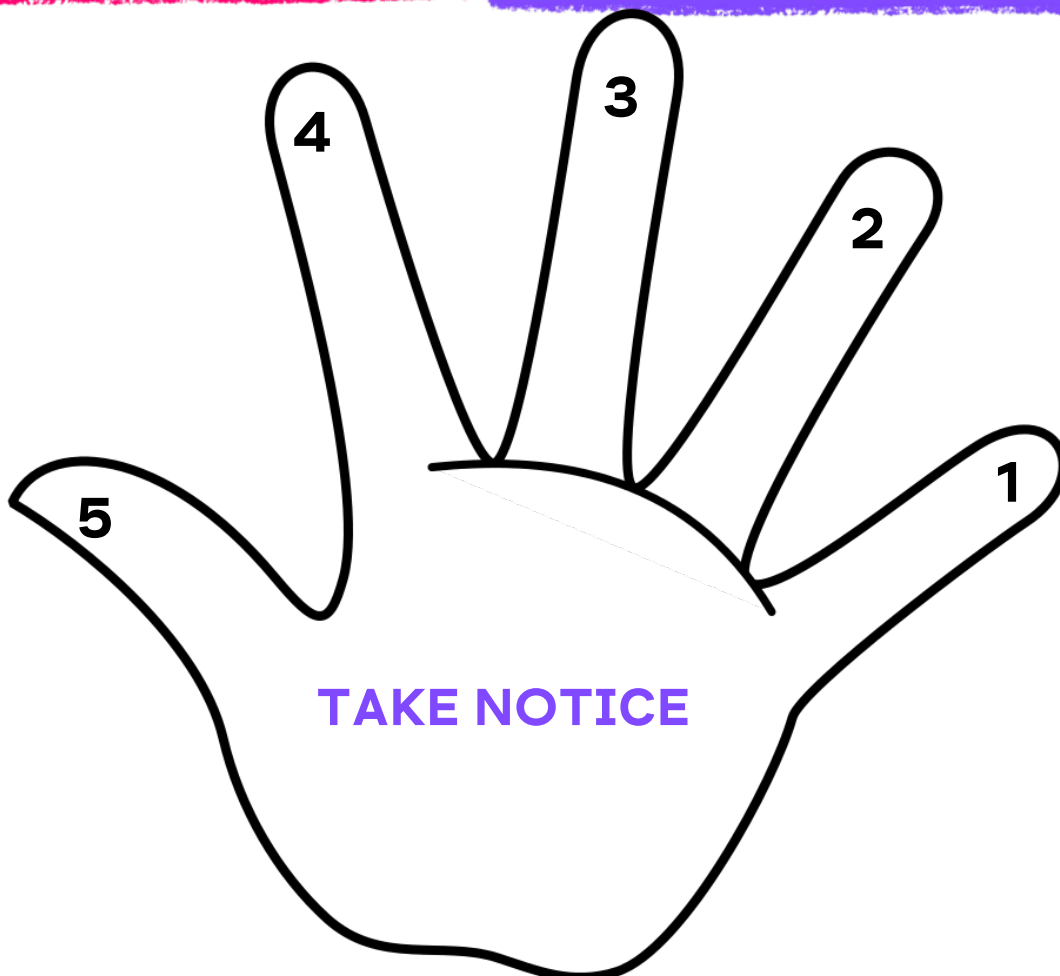
5,4,3,2,1



Connecting with nature can be really simple. When you are out and about try this simple grounding exercise to help you take notice of what is going on around you. This is a good technique to use when you just need to stop and have some time to sit and be.

- 5 colours you can see...
- 4 birdsong you can hear...
- 3 textures you can feel...
- 2 flowers you can smell...
- 1 thing you can taste...

Remember... it's ok if you don't live in an area with lots of green or if you have limited outdoor space. Being out in nature doesn't necessarily mean being in an area with lots of greenery. Just going for a walk around the block and noticing what is around you is connecting with nature. Just use what you have around you!





Nature's Resilience!




The nature we find all around us is **resilient**. Resilience is about bouncing back when things don't always go to plan. Nature has the ability to stay positive, keep trying, and come back stronger and more resilient, year after year.

What have you spotted this week that has come back this year?

1.

2.

3.



Think about how this tree may come across things that might have a negative effect on it's growth and wellbeing (bad weather, not enough sunlight, competitors).

Trees are very resilient, and don't just bounce back, but **bounce forward** to come back stronger and bigger next year.

How might the tree adapt to overcome these things?



We are all like the nature around us, and as human beings, we are very resilient too!

Think about how you are already showing resilience, and what else you could do this week to increase your wellbeing...

Environmental Art!



Go for a walk, it could be in the woods or on the park or even a day out at the beach. See what natural things you can find wherever you are and make some Art. It could be 2D, 3D, woven, or a hanging. Make a pattern or a picture or just let your imagination go wild!

Below is a list of things you could use but you might find other things!

Petals

Pinecones

Acorns

Seaweed

Shells

Rocks/pebbles

Grasses

Leaves

Twigs

Branches

Bark

Mud

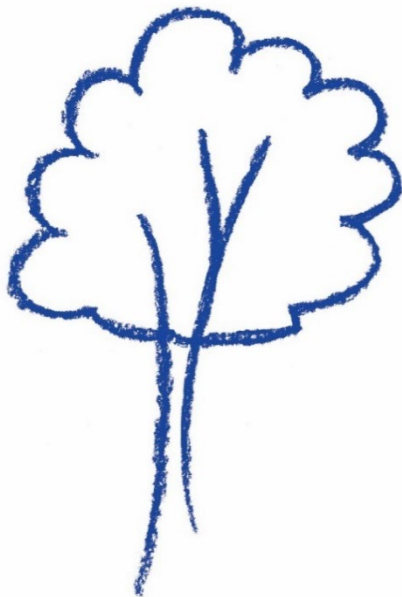
Sand

Driftwood

Shells

Coloured glass

(washed up)



Check out these artists

for inspiration!

Richard Shilling

Andy Goldsworthy

Tim Pugh





Taking pictures of nature!

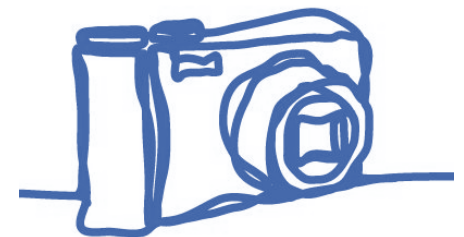


Taking photographs of interesting things in nature is a wonderful mindful activity. It brings us into the moment as we use all of our senses to find interesting living things to snap.

Thinking creatively when taking photos can make it more fun and enjoyable. Look carefully for interesting colors, textures, and angles in nature. Try close-up photographs, or angles which draw the eye deeper into the picture.

Nature is all around us. It might be a garden, a local park, a nearby beach or open countryside. Even in cities where nature can be harder to find, there's things like community gardens or courtyards to discover and explore. Try taking a picture of one of these.

Nature is full of amazing surprises for those of us prepared to watch and wait. So, look around and find some incredible wildlife moments!





Mindful walking!

Mindful walking is a form of mindful movement. It uses the everyday activity of walking as a mindfulness practice to help you become more aware of the sensations in your body. By tuning into what is around you and the sensations in your body as you walk. By doing this it can help you to focus on the present moment.

Here is some top tips on how to do it:

- As you walk, notice how your body feels- light, heavy, excited, tingly...
- Pay attention to how your legs, feet, hands and arms feel with each step you take.
- Feel the contact of your foot as it touches the ground.
- Now using your sense of sight, look around and see what you can spot- a bird, a tree blowing in the wind, a dog running...
- Using your sense of smell, notice the flowers, the grass or even the smell of rain on the tarmac.
- Are you able to notice any tastes as you walk? Can you taste the air?
- Now using your sense of touch, notice how your hands or face feel, the crunching of the ground under your feet.
- Finally, notice any sensations, thoughts or feelings that may come up whilst you walk. Take a deep breathe and let them go.



How to make a leaf rubbing collage

You Will Need:

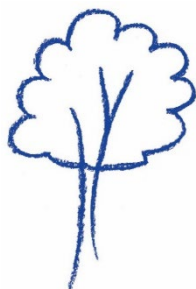
- An assortment of leaves collected from your walk or garden. Make sure to choose different shapes and sizes.
- A large, heavy book.
- Plain, white paper.
- Coloured crayons or pencils.
- Glue or cellotape.
- Plain, white paper.
- Coloured scrap paper or card.

Instructions

1. Gather your favourite leaves on your walk.
2. Place the leaves inside a large heavy book and leave them overnight to flatten.
3. Take a leaf out and place it onto plain, white paper.
4. Put another piece of paper on top.
5. Use your crayons to gently shade over the leaf.
6. Cut out your rubbing and stick it onto your piece of coloured card to begin your collage.
7. Repeat steps 3 to 6 to create a rubbing for all your leaves.
8. Display your collage proudly in your house.



Did you know that engaging in art work can promote calmness?



What lines, shapes and patterns can you see?

Eye spy with my little eye...

This well-known game can promote mindfulness and exploration as you take notice of your surroundings by using your senses. The activity works best on a walk in nature but can be great fun while on a bus, train or even on the walk to school. Once you have used all the examples here, enjoy making up your own Eye Spy statements for a friend or grown-up to find!

Something that makes a crunching sound when you step on it.

Something that smells like a summer's day.

Something that has yellow petals.

Something that is tall and something that is short.

Something that lives under logs.

Something that falls slowly to the ground when you drop it from up high.

Something that falls quickly when you drop it from up high.

Something that sways in the breeze.



Something that feels rough and something that feels smooth.

Something that feels squishy and something that feels hard.

Something that has a trunk.

Something with a green stem.

Something smaller than me and something bigger than me.

Something that makes me smile.

Something slippery.

Something far away in the distance.

Something that has fallen from a tree.

Something singing a bird song.

Something that is cold to touch.

Something with eight legs.

