

## **Sustainability | Individual communication**

### **IC - (20815) - THE IMPACT OF NATURE INTERVENTIONS ON FAMILY LIFE IN DUTCH WOMEN'S SHELTERS AND SHELTERS FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES: OVERVIEW OF FOUR STUDIES AS AN UPBEAT TO DISCUSSING NEW AVENUES OF INVESTIGATION**

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#### **Background and objectives**

Visiting a natural environment such as a garden or park can help people to restore from stressful circumstances. Women's shelters and shelters for homeless families have started to integrate nature interventions in their work with the aim to support parents' functioning and resilience. For my dissertation I conducted four studies that explored and tested the impact of these nature interventions on parents. I will briefly present the results as an upbeat to discussing new avenues of investigation.

#### **Process and methods (for empirical research)**

Study 1 was an inductive exploration of the benefits of nature according to shelter professionals, conducted with an action research design. Professionals suggested that nature supported parents by improving feelings of relatedness between parents and child, parental feelings of competence, and autonomy in parenting. This formed the hypothesis for Study 2 and 3. Study 2 was a quasi-experiment, designed to test if experiencing nature was associated with improvements parental basic psychological needs (N=160). Study 3 was a single case experiment (N=3), with repeated and randomized exposure to the indoor environment of the shelter and exposure to a natural environment while assessing parental wellbeing. Both studies showed that a change from indoors to a natural environment was associated with enhanced parental need fulfilment. Study 4 was a qualitative examination of 149 case narratives that professionals wrote about the nature activities they conducted for the support of parents. It showed that professionals opted for specific types of nature activities for the support of parents.

#### **Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)**

These studies gave room to question the impact of place on parenting experiences. I will present potential directions for future research in that domain and hope to open a discussion on the relevance of this topic on the research agenda.

#### **Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution**