

IC - (21378) - DESIGNING NATURE-BASED ENGAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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Background and objectives

Nature-based engagement interventions such as mindful or sensory engagement exercises can support psychological benefits of nature experiences. However, there is little research that compares the efficacy of these forms of engagement, which is required to inform the selection and design of interventions for targeted nature outcomes. We aimed to compare and evaluate the effects of three nature-based engagement interventions on psychological well being outcomes of nature experiences.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Participants ($n = 215$) were randomly allocated to one of four groups that received different instructions on how to engage during a 20-minute outdoor experience: mindful engagement, directed engagement, mind wandering, and an unguided control group. Immediately before and after the outdoor experience, participants completed surveys on trait and state mindfulness, connection with nature, affect, and then completed the Sustained Attention to Response Task (SART). Controlling for baseline scores, we analyzed between-group differences on these post-experience outcomes.

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

The groups did not differ on connection with nature or positive affect after the nature experience, however the mind wandering group reported significantly lower negative affect compared to the directed engagement group. SART outcomes indicated that the unguided control group experienced the greatest level of attention restoration overall.

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

Our findings indicate that different forms of engagement in nature may be suited to specific psychological outcomes. Engagement interventions may tax the attention system but some may be suited to improving mood in nature experiences. These findings have implications for the design and implementation of nature-based engagement interventions as pathways to promote psychological well being.

Palavras-chave : health, intervention, engagement, well being, mindfulness