

Benefits of Horticultural Therapy



Wise, J. (2015). *Digging for victory: horticultural therapy with veterans for post-traumatic growth*. London, England: Karnac Books.

Joana Wise published a book on the benefits of horticultural therapy titled *Digging for Victory: Horticultural Therapy with Veterans for Post-Traumatic Growth*. This book explores various studies conducted on horticultural therapy and the evidence-based support that back up findings of positive outcomes for horticultural therapy meeting the therapeutic needs of the veteran population suffering from PTSD. Horticultural therapy has emerged as a therapeutic intervention that helps foster emotional and spiritual healing through connecting individuals with nature and fostering a social environment for individuals to heal in, which can be especially beneficial to often isolated veterans. Horticultural therapy is able to incorporate aspects of other therapeutic interventions such as mindfulness training to help relate horticultural work and gardening to the life cycle to help veterans process their place in nature and in life and work through moral "injuries" to their mental and emotional health.

Kamioka, H., Tsutani, K., et al. (2014). Effectiveness of horticultural therapy: a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/science/article/pii/S096522991400137X?>

The Complementary Therapies in Medicine Journal published a study on the *effectiveness of horticultural therapy: a systematic review of randomized controlled trials*. This study looked at the outcomes for randomized controlled studies that implemented a horticultural therapeutic intervention that covered treatment of mental health illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc. This review focused on looking at outcomes from horticultural therapy with emphasis on the cure and rehabilitation affects that this therapeutic intervention had on individuals. This review stated there is a need for more studies on horticultural therapy for a more reliable and better data pool, however this study did show support for horticultural therapy as a potentially effective treatment for mental and behavioral disorders with disorders such as bipolar and even with terminal-care cancer patients.

Horowitz, S. (2012). Therapeutic gardens and horticultural therapy: growing roles in health care. *Alternative & Complementary Therapies*, 18(2), 78-83. Retrieved from: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=b7cfda71-96c2-48de-8ddf-78dc9a2e346c%40sessionmgr101>

Alternative and Complementary Therapies published a journal article on *therapeutic gardens and horticultural therapy and their growing role in healthcare*. This journal article reviewed current evidence-based practices surrounding horticultural therapy, and highlighted the use of therapeutic gardens and bringing nature elements into healthcare as a way to increase optimal health healing environments and act as buffers against stress and the negative health. This article discusses reviews of horticultural therapy interventions that have occurred, and highlights a systematic review of 35 controlled and observational studies that found overall significant improvements in health outcomes for patients with varying diagnoses.

Conclusions from this article show that horticultural therapy can be a stress-reducing and cost effective alternative therapeutic approach that can also be esthetically pleasing for healthcare settings such as in a hospital or doctor office. Research has grown to support cognitive, psychologic, social, and physiological benefits of horticultural therapy, and can help to foster collaboration between health care professionals, horticultural therapists, and other interdisciplinary professional teams centered around patient care.

Kim, K., Detweiler, M., et al. (n.d.). What is the evidence to support the use of therapeutic gardens for the elderly? *Psychiatry Investigation*, 92(2), 100-110. Retrieved from:

<http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=05211467-e247-42a8-89bc-bb1a5c4fd217%40sessionmgr104&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=000305445100002&db=edswss>

Psychiatry Investigation released a study on the effectiveness of horticultural therapy and plant/nature based activities that can be used to help rehabilitate and improve quality of life in an article *what is the evidence to support the use of therapeutic gardens for the elderly?* Horticulture therapy research has shown reported benefits of reducing pain, improving attention, alleviating stress and aggression, and helping to reduce medications needed which can translate into helping elderly individuals who suffer from many of these behaviors or conditions. This article reviewed extensive literature on horticultural therapies, and highlights a need for more research on the topic while also using theoretical framework to show how horticultural therapy and therapeutic gardens could be integrated into elderly care units and medical complexes. Research and evidence based studies have proven the need for additional studies on elderly care because of the already established benefits of horticultural therapy that could be applied to this population.

Cincinnati Children's Hospital. (2013). Horticultural therapy for children and adolescents in residential treatment for mental health. *Therapeutic Recreation/Residential Treatment for Mental Health/Horticultural Therapy BEST Statement*, 146.

Cincinnati Children's Hospital released a report on *horticultural therapy for children and adolescents in residential treatment for mental health*. Children ages 8-18 years of age were included in the study, and all were diagnosed with a mental health disorder and in a residential mental health facility. Participating in horticultural therapy can help children display fewer aggressive episodes while in this therapy, help children feel pride and accomplishment from their efforts, and in turn increase confidence levels in children. This study also assessed literature on other studies done on horticulture therapy, showing a lack of evidence with pediatric studies, however previous studies with adults showed successful outcomes with treating depression and anxiety. This article argues the validity in being able to transfer the adult evidence to children and adolescents because of the similarities in activities and other therapeutic interventions comparable outcomes for adults and children.

Rra, M., Angst, F., et al. (2012). Horticultural therapy for patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain: results of a pilot study. *Alternative Therapies in Health & Medicine*, 18(2) 44-50. Retrieved from:

<http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.memphis.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=eec89d5e-c33b-4be5-8b14-f6c597f7a2fc%40sessionmgr104>

Alternative Therapies released a study on the effects that *horticultural therapy can have on chronic pain patients*. This study explores the option of using horticultural therapy as a combined therapeutic approach with medical treatments to help bring about positive change in physical, emotional, and mental health. The objective was to assess the outcomes of combining horticultural therapy with a pain-management program that combines a therapeutic intervention with medical treatments. This study looked at 79 nonrandomized controlled subjects in a control and intervention group with horticultural therapy as the defining difference in interventions that were currently enrolled in the Zurich Interdisciplinary Pain Program in Switzerland.

Findings from this study showed that there was measurable improvements to patients in the pain management program who partook in horticultural therapy groups compared those individuals who did not receive horticultural therapy. Patients in the horticultural therapy group showed a greater improvement in mood following therapy sessions, experienced decreases in depression, anger, stress, and fatigue, and experiences a reduction in stress levels.