

Abstract

Forest bathing or shinrin-yoku originated in Japan. It is a nature-based approach to wellbeing that involves a leisurely visit to a forest for relaxation (Li, 2016). There is a growing body of research that suggests there are benefits to health from forest bathing such as reduction in blood pressure; reduced stress; improved mood; an increased flow of energy; increased capacity to communicate with the land and its species; and an overall increase in sense of happiness (Crossen-White & Turner-Wilson, Hansen et al, 2017; Oh et al, 2017; Li and Bell, 2018). As such forest bathing can not only be a potentially useful therapeutic option, but it may also have a protective health effect for the general population.

Given this it fits in with the UN SDGs 3: good health and well-being as it is very much part of contributing to a healthy lifestyle. However many people live in urban environments and traditionally forest bathing is undertaken in deeper more rural wooded locations. Therefore, the purpose of this small qualitative based pilot study was to explore what factors contribute to a sense of wellbeing for adults who have undertaken guided immersive forest bathing (shinrin-yoku) in an urban-type location in Bournemouth, Dorset, UK.

The work showed that guided forest bathing sessions, even within an urban-type location, can contribute to a sense of wellbeing and that the boundaries that we perceive as rural or urban can be merged in these types of settings.

References

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UN SDGs 3: Good Health and Well-being