



# Nature Therapy Guide

THE  
Nature Therapy  
CENTER  
*at the Natural Wellness Academy*

## **Curriculum:**

### **Module 1: Nature Therapy (4 hours)**

1. Define nature therapy and provide examples.
2. Summarize evidence-based, research-supported benefits of nature therapy.
3. Discuss hypotheses on why nature therapy exerts positive effects.
4. List barriers to nature access and propose methods to overcome them.
5. Distinguish between the roles of the Guide and the licensed clinician.
6. Identify the Guide's most important role.

**Module materials:** Module 1 Workbook, Nature Therapy Infographic, Types of Nature Therapy Infographic, Using Science to Evaluate Claims Handout, Licensing Considerations Handout, 10 Peer Reviewed Scientific Articles on Nature Therapy, Social Justice and Nature Therapy Handout, Nature as a Guide e-book, Nature Therapy Walks: 22 Sensory Activities to Enjoy in Nature for Wellbeing e-book, Various Video Resources Nature Therapy Guide | Syllabus | 3

### **Module 1A: Nature Therapy for Children (optional)**

- i. Compare and contrast nature therapy approaches for children versus adults.
- ii. List the essential elements of nature play.
- iii. Describe components of effective nature play spaces.
- iv. Discuss how to work with parents to facilitate nature access.
- v. Identify techniques to help children overcome fears of nature.

**Module materials:** Module 1A Workbook, Addressing Fears of Nature Chapter, Children's Nature Play Ideas Handbook, Children & Nature Report, Various Reports, Various Video Resources

### **Module 2: Natural History (4 hours)**

7. Identify your region's biome and eco-region.
8. List your region's prominent natural features and discuss their natural and cultural histories.
9. Identify the region's most common, characteristic, or iconic flora and fauna.

10. Explain how the region's natural history influences its culture and economy.

11. List techniques for effective and respectful wildlife viewing.

**Module materials:** Module 2 Workbook, Wildlife Viewing Tips Infographic, Nature Yearbook

Template, Ecological Regions of North America Article, Resources on Your Ecoregion\*, Various

Video Resources (\*student accesses these using provided links and, as needed, instructor assistance)

### **Module 3: Spiritual Nature (4 hours)**

12. Develop an individual definition of “spiritual” and discuss how nature can be incorporated therein.

13. Describe mindfulness and its relationship to nature therapy.

14. Describe how to navigate multicultural beliefs regarding nature and spirituality.

15. Define “archetypes” and list nature-specific examples for application in nature therapy.

16. Discuss spiritual or cultural principles or beliefs associated with your region's nature and environment.

17. List key pathways to nature connectedness.

18. Identify options for conducting nature therapy sessions indoors.

19. Discuss reasons and processes for building nature shrines.

**Module materials:** Module 3 Workbook, Spiritual Nature Infographic, Mindfulness in Nature Infographic, Meditation Music, Animal Speak Excerpt, Archetypes Handouts, Indoor Nature Therapy Handout, 2 Guided Meditations, Building a Nature Shrine Handout, 31 Nature Poems, 3 Peer Reviewed Scientific Articles on Mindfulness, Peer Reviewed Scientific Article on Nature Connection, Example of Interpretation of Geologic Features, Various Video Resources

### **Module 4: Practical Aspects (4 hours)**

20. Describe interpretation and list interpretative techniques that can be used in nature therapy.

21. Differentiate between ecophilia and ecophobia.

22. Identify common natural hazards in your region and discuss risk management techniques.

23. Discuss group dynamics and illustrate basic techniques to manage groups. Nature Therapy Guide | Syllabus | 4

24. Explain how to utilize “Leave No Trace” principles during Nature Therapy Walks.

25. Locate and select appropriate settings to hold nature therapy sessions.

26. Describe the “sales funnel” and how you can utilize it to attract participants and companies.
27. List options for integrating nature therapy into a career.
28. Describe approaches for working with clinicians to help clients achieve goals using nature.

**Module materials:** Module 4 Workbook, Practical Aspects Infographic (Selecting a Trail; Trail Safety; Marketing), Trail Etiquette Infographic, Working with Clients and Clinicians to Achieve Goals Using Nature Handout, Nature Therapy for Workplace Wellness Handout, Interpretive Techniques Handouts, Sample Waiver, Making a Difference Excerpt, Business Worksheet, Sample Walk Announcement and Follow-up Email Templates, Managing Groups Handout, Environmental Education in Urban Areas Handout, Various Video Resources

#### **Module 5: Template (4 hours)**

29. List key features of the Nature Therapy Walk Template.
30. Explain how template components can translate into a positive experience for participants.
31. Develop specific nature therapy activities.

**Module materials:** Module 5 Workbook, Nature Therapy Walks Template Worksheet, Survey and Debriefing Worksheet, Custom Guided Activity Worksheet, Nature and Tea Ceremonies Infographic, Nature Arts and Crafts Infographic, Various Video Resources

#### **Module 6: Practicum (4 hours)**

32. Demonstrate core competencies by designing, conducting, and analyzing a nature therapy session.

**Module materials:** Module 6 Workbook, Nature Therapy Walks Guide Business Cards, Graduation Certificate (upon graduation) Assessments (Assignments and Quizzes):

Each module includes an assignment (“Learning Experience”) featuring some combination of essay response questions and small projects. Students may utilize outside resources and research to support completion of their assignments. However, assignments must be the original work of the student, written in the student’s own words, with quoted materials and images properly cited.

All assignments are assessed by an instructor, who will mark the assignment as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory and provide appropriate feedback. Students may reattempt unsatisfactory assignments. The practicum final report should provide compelling evidence of the student’s competence in designing and facilitating safe and positive nature encounters with participants. Additionally, the first module includes a quiz, and the final module includes a final exam. Students may consult their notes and other written or recorded resources when completing an assessment; however, students may not utilize the assistance of another individual. The assessments are automatically graded upon submission and may be repeated (without penalty) to achieve a passing score of 80 percent. Nature Therapy Guide | Syllabus | 5

Students must satisfactorily pass all assignments and assessments to graduate from the program.

#### **Timeline:**

The recommended timeframe for FAST-TRACK program completion is 1 to 2 weeks, but students can proceed at a pace that works with their own schedules and study needs within a maximum period of 2 months. Although students continue to maintain access to the course portal and materials indefinitely, students that require longer than 2 months to graduate will need to petition the Academy to maintain active standing, which could involve an additional tuition fee. Students are encouraged to communicate with their instructor regarding submittal timelines.

### **Advanced Track:**

An optional Advanced Track is included with the course at no additional cost.\* The advanced track forces the student to grapple with concepts more in-depth and therefore requires a higher time investment of the student. Advanced Track learning experiences are listed at the end of Modules 1 through 4; students wishing to complete the Advanced Track should include responses to the standard AND advanced questions in their learning experience submissions for those modules. (Students who do not wish to complete the advanced track do not need to respond to the advanced questions.) Additionally, advanced students are expected to review most or all of the optional resources, such as journal articles. Finally, the practicum report will be assessed more stringently to ensure the student meets the higher standards required of the advanced track. Advanced Track learners will receive a special designation on their graduation certificate. However, the advanced track does not result in additional continuing education credits.

\*Students can complete the Advanced Track during their first run-through of the course for no additional cost. After graduation, a student who did not initially complete the Advanced Track may incur an additional tuition charge if they wish to complete the advanced track after they already graduated from the standard track.

### **Required Materials:**

The tuition fee includes all required materials as digital copies. The curriculum outline above has a listing of materials for each module. Additionally, students receive access to the Natural Wellness Academy student Facebook Group and the Nature Therapy Walks class forum, where instructors share and analyze recent news and research articles. As a bonus, you will be automatically enrolled, at no additional cost, into the Academy's Webinars Library and Essential Effective Coaching courses.

For the Natural History module, you will access one or more books or free online resources that cover specific knowledge areas about your region; we provide a list of websites and ideas to start your search. Knowledge areas include geography, climate, geology, ecology, hydrology, flora, fauna, and relevant cultural history. The resources do not need to be geared towards technical specialists but should provide you with a good overview of the knowledge areas for your region. If you need assistance, your instructor will be happy to work with you to identify appropriate resources.

### **Continuing Education Credits:**

Upon request, the Academy will award 24 continuing education hours for successful completion of this course, if the following conditions are met. First, the student must satisfactorily graduate from the program to receive credit; partial credit is not awarded. Second, you must warrant that all you viewed all listed module videos and recordings. Your warrant is implicit when you submit a module assignment and relies on the honor system. Third, if you are seeking continuing education credits for completing this course, each module includes a mandatory one-hour one-on-one virtual meeting with your mentor; an optional onboarding call may also count toward this requirement. We

recommended scheduling these meetings to occur after each module so that you can discuss module concepts and prepare for the next module or graduation. With your mentor's preapproval, this requirement may be substituted on an hour-by-hour by a) attending one or more of the Academy's regularly scheduled live calls or webinars and providing documentation of attendance, b) viewing or listening to one or more of the Academy's existing webinar videos or audio recordings and providing your mentor with your written responses to its "Q&A" prompts, or c) reviewing one or more external videos or recordings and providing your mentor with a written reflection of at least two paragraphs on the material; in all cases, the material must be on a topic relevant to course. This requirement is above and beyond the required standard module videos, readings, learning experiences, and exam; all students must successfully complete all assignments and assessments to graduate. These additional requirements allow us to adhere to the standards of credit-approving bodies.

Students seeking continuing education credit should proactively plan to meet these requirements, as credit cannot be retroactively awarded. Contact your mentor if you have any questions about the process for continuing education credits.