



Happiness is in our Nature: The Importance of Nature Based Activities for Active Aging

© By Paula Frakes, M.A. Consultant Nature Based Activities for Active Aging
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 The reality is that **this all has to start with YOU!** You will need to take the lead to help bring Nature Based Activities into **your own life first**, and then the lives of the older adults you serve where ever you work! 

Terms:

Fibonacci sequence in Nature: The Fibonacci numbers are Nature's numbering system. They appear everywhere in Nature, from the leaf arrangement in plants, to the pattern of the florets of a flower, the bracts of a pinecone, or the scales of a pineapple. The Fibonacci numbers are therefore applicable to the growth of every living thing, including a single cell, a grain of wheat, a hive of bees, and even humans. **See Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt2OIMAJj6o>

Biophilia: (Bio=Life + Phila=Love) The word Biophilia was created by Biologist E.O. Wilson. He believed that we have an inbuilt need to affiliate with other species a genetic need that reflects our evolutionary history in which we had to be with other life forms. It's a physically and psychologically beneficial relationship. The more we expose ourselves to nature the healthier and happy we are! And the more we foster our relationship with nature the more inspired we will be to protect it!

Nature Deficit Disorder: This term was first "penned" in the book written by Richard Louv entitled "**Last Child in the Woods**" where he in detail talked about how our young people today are growing up very much disconnected from their natural environment and very much attuned to the world of technology, but in ways that is hurting their overall wellbeing and health. The term Nature Deficit describes "*the human costs of alienation from nature, among them diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties and higher rates of physical and emotional illness,*" Later on Richard Louv went on to write a new book called "**The Nature Principle**" where he expands on his theories in his book "Last Child in the Woods" to include that it is not just children that are becoming disconnected with nature but other adults as well!

I believe that in our culture today and especially in formal senior Long Term Care communities, senior adults and even the staff who work there, may also suffer from various degrees of Nature Deficit disorder. **See Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFqBl0OuZrk>

Phenology: Phenology is the study of the seasonal timing of life cycle events. You are studying phenology when you record or observe the date a certain plant grows, a tree's leaves emerge, an insect hatches, or a migratory bird appears on its nesting grounds. The dates on which these happen each year are affected by factors such as day length, temperature, and various forms of precipitation.

©Nature Based Activities (NBA): Nature-Based Activities (NBA) are purposeful facilitated activities that encourage interaction with the natural environment and the organisms in these environments. Interactions may include hands on or passive interaction with companion animals and other organic life within ecosystems that may include water, vegetation, wildlife and general green spaces that may occur naturally or within urban or rural environments. **The overall goal of these activities:** is to maintain/improve and or promote health and wellbeing of the participants through interactions that respect and nurture the physical, emotional, behavioral and spiritual needs of all the participants involved including human, animal and any other organic life. ©Paula Frakes - Nature Based Activities for Active Aging Consulting

©Six Areas of Nature Based Activities within the Senior Living Environment:

1a. Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI)

- a. **Animal Assisted Therapy** (Registered Therapy animals (dogs, cats, horses, pot belly pigs etc.) working with Animal Specialist and therapist i.e. Occupational, Physical, Speech Therapist or Nurse, Social Worker, Recreational Therapist)
- b. **Equine Facilitated Therapy or Activities:** (Working with horses & therapist either at your facility or on a horse farm with your seniors and your staff!)

1b. Animal Assisted Activities (Visiting Volunteer registered therapy animals or Staff Working dogs-

I recommend also that they be a registered therapy animal)

- c. **Staff Working Dogs:** Dogs that go to work with their handler who is also a staff person at the facility. The dog is under that staff person or another staff person's supervision at all times.
 - d. **Residential Animals:** (Fish Tanks, Bird Aviaries) I **DO NOT** recommend live-in residential dogs or cats or residential birds larger than the parakeet in the psittacine (parrot) family.
 - e. **Wildlife** (Birdwatching is very popular as well as bird feeders and feeding or observing other wildlife native to your area.)
2. **Access to Green Outdoor Environments:** The ability and accessibility for older adults to go outside. Arranging with staff and volunteers to help people go outside. Accessing the built environment to allow for access to outside.
 3. **Garden Activities:** Includes outdoor and indoor gardening/horticultural activities as well as creating a wildlife habitat at your facility.
 4. **Green Exercise:** (Various forms of exercise outdoors including walking or games played outdoors)
 5. **Aroma Therapy:** Including using diffusor, essential oils & lotions, fresh or dried herbs, herbal teas, sensory tubs including smells & textures from home or nature.
 6. **Nature Learning Options: (For Staff & Residents)** Includes on site or off site educational and experiential programs and excursions

Seven Dimensions of Wellness Defined for Active Aging

1. **Social Wellness** is the ability to relate to and connect with other people in our world. Our ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with family, friends and co-workers contributes to our Social Wellness.
2. **Emotional Wellness** is the ability to understand ourselves and cope with the challenges life can bring. The ability to acknowledge and share feelings of anger, fear, sadness or stress; hope, love, joy and happiness in a productive manner contributes to our Emotional Wellness.
3. **Spiritual Wellness** is the ability to establish peace and harmony in our lives. The ability to develop congruency between values and actions and to realize a common purpose that binds creation together contributes to our Spiritual Wellness.
4. **Environmental Wellness** is the ability to recognize our own responsibility for the quality of the air, the water and the land that surrounds us. The ability to make a positive impact on the quality of our environment, be it our homes, our communities or our planet contributes to our Environmental Wellness.
5. **Vocational Wellness** is the ability to get personal fulfillment from our career or volunteer opportunities while still maintaining balance in our lives. Our desire to contribute in career or volunteer opportunities to make a positive impact on communities, organizations, people, places, animals, and other causes that illicit our passions as a whole leads to Vocational Wellness.
6. **Intellectual Wellness** is the ability to open our minds to new ideas and experiences that can be applied to personal decisions, group interaction and community betterment. The desire to feed our curiosity inklings and learn new concepts, improve skills and seek challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning contributes to our Intellectual Wellness.
7. **Physical Wellness** is the ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows us to get through our daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress. The ability to recognize that our behaviors have a significant impact on our wellness and adopting healthful habits (routine checkups, a balanced diet, exercise, etc.) while avoiding destructive habits (tobacco, drugs, alcohol, etc.) will lead to optimal Physical Wellness.

Local Twin Cities Resources & Contact Information:

Animal-Assisted Interactions (AAI):

- ❖ **Animal Inspirations, LLC: Sherry Eddy-Animal Specialist & Therapy Animal Evaluator**
(For A Professional Therapeutic Animal Program for your residents!)
Website: www.animalinspirationsllc.com Business Phone & Texting: (320) 420-2046 Email: seddy267@gmail.com
- ❖ **Hold Your Horses (Therapeutic Riding Program)**
Website: <http://www.holdyourhorses.org/>
Business phone: (763) 595-7112
Farm location: 6824 County Road 6, Independence, MN 55359
- ❖ **Equul Access, Inc. (Equine Assisted Therapy & Equine Facilitated Learning)**
Website: <http://www.equulaccess.org/>
Business phone: (320) 234 -7895 Contact: Marsha Anderson
Farm location: 13769 Pheasant Road, Hutchinson MN 55350
- ❖ **The Center for Spirituality and Healing University of Minnesota: Nature Based Therapeutics**
<http://www.csh.umn.edu/program-areas-section/nature-based-therapeutics/index.htm>
- ❖ **Twin Cities Obedience Training Club (Therapy Dog Classes & Therapy Animal Visitors)**
Website: <http://www.tcotc.com/tags/therapy-dog-classes>
Club Location: 2101 Broadway St. NE, Minneapolis, MN
Business Phone: (612) 379-1332
- ❖ **Animal Humane Society (Golden Valley)**
Therapy Animal Training Classes & Animal Ambassador (Visiting Volunteers)
Website: <http://www.animalhumanesociety.org>
To request a visit from the Animal Ambassadors at your facility, call (763) 432-4847
- ❖ **Living Designs – Aviaries/Birds/Gardens**
Website: <http://www.mylivingdesign.com/>
Business Phone: Phone: (605) 372-4444
- ❖ **Serenity Aviary Services – Aviaries/Birds & Fish Tanks**
Website: <http://www.aviaryservices.com/>
Business Phone: 1-866-209-0044
Premier Aquarium Services- Fish Tanks/Maintenance Business Phone: (612) 243-1335
Website: <http://premieraquarium.com/>

Gardening Resources:

- ❖ **Ebenezer Horticultural Therapy Program – Paula Vollmar Heywood** Minneapolis, MN
E-mail: pvollma1@fairview.org
Business Phone: 612-871-4594
- ❖ **Gronomics: (Raised Bed Garden Local MN Source in East Bethel)**
Website: <http://www.gronomics.com/>
Business Phone: 763-753-1314
- ❖ **National Wildlife Federation (Certified Wildlife Habitat)**
Website: <http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create-a-Habitat>
Business Phone: 1-800-822-9919 (M-F 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. EST)
- ❖ **Therapeutic Landscape Network**
Website: <http://www.healinglandscapes.org/>
- ❖ **Life Box- Growing trees from a cardboard Box:**
<http://www.lifeboxcompany.com/products.html>

Green Exercise:

- ❖ **Linda Lemke – Queen of Nordic Walking – Nordic Walking Instructor**
Website: <http://lindalemke.com/>
Phone: 952.475.0891 for more information
- ❖ **Nature's Notebook: Phenology – Creating a Phenology Trail & Webinars**
Website: https://www.usanpn.org/natures_notebook
Local MN Contact: Rebecca Montgomery –U of MN Forestry E-mail: rebeccam@umn.edu
Minnesota Phenology Website: <https://www.usanpn.org/mnpn/>

Aroma Therapy:

- ❖ **Young Living Essential Oils**
Website: https://www.youngliving.com/en_US
- ❖ **Mountain Rose Essential Oils – Eugene, OR**
Website: <https://www.mountainroseherbs.com/aroma/ess.php>
Business Phone: Toll-Free - (800) 879-3337
- ❖ **All About Aroma Therapy U of MN Center for Spirituality & Healing (Good Resource)**
Website: <http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/aromatherapy>
- ❖ **National Association of Holistic Aromatherapy**
Website: <http://www.naha.org/>

Learning Nature Options: (Educational Resources)

- ❖ **Minnesota Master Naturalist**
Website: <http://www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org/>
Business Phone: 888-241-4532 (State Office in Morris, MN)
- ❖ **Larry Wade – The Old Naturalist**
Website: www.oldnaturalist.com
Business Phone: (952) 288-5025
- ❖ **Bruce The Bug Guy**
Website: <http://www.brucethebugguy.net/>
Business Phone: (651)-780-8216
- ❖ **Doug Ohman – Pioneer Photography (Great Speaker & Nature Interior Ideas)**
Website: <http://www.pioneerphotography.com/>
Business Phone: (763) 543-1049
- ❖ **Learning Life: College of Continuing Ed (U of MN)**
Website: <http://www.cce.umn.edu/learninglife/>
Class Types: Multi-session courses, one-day immersions, and seminars
Business Phone: (612) 624-4000
- ❖ **International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) –located in Canada**
Website: <http://www.icaa.cc/>
- ❖ **Wildlife Science Center (Education & Guided Tour)**
Website: <http://www.wildlifesciencecenter.org/>
Business Phone: (651)464-3993
- ❖ **SEEK – MN Home for Environmental Educational Resources**
Website: <http://www.seek.state.mn.us/index.cfm>

Nature Excursion Ideas in Minnesota:

Audubon Center of the North Woods: Sandstone, MN <http://audubon-center.org/>

Oliver Kelly Historic Farm in Elk River, MN

Three Rivers Parks: Website: <http://www.threeriversparks.org/>

- ❖ **Baker Near Wilderness Lodge – Maple Plain**
- ❖ **Eastman Nature Center (Elm Creek Park) -Dayton**
- ❖ **Norenberg Gardens - Minnetonka**
- ❖ **Galewoods Farm- Minnetrista**
- ❖ **The Landing – Shakopee**

U of MN Bell Museum of Natural History (Guide Tour w/Curator) **SPARK Tours** for Older Adults with Dementia and their care givers!

U of MN Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (Nature Based Therapeutics Educational Programs)

U of MN Raptor Center (Educational Program & Tour)

Minnesota Zoo – Apple Valley (Behind the Scenes Guided Tour)

Como Conservatory in Como Park (Behind the Scenes Guided Tour)

Stillwater Trolley Tour in the Fall

Taylors Falls Boat Ride in the Fall

Wildlife Science Center – Great Tours in Spring, Summer & Fall

Let's Go Fishing Minnesota (Free Fishing Trips for Seniors)

Tamarack Nature Center in White Bear Lake (Educational program & tour)

Book & DVD Resources: * = Must Read Book or Watch/See Resource

***The Nature Principle – Richard Louv** <http://richardlouv.com/books/nature-principle/>

***Your Brain on Nature – Eva M. Selhub & Alan C. Logan** <http://yourbrainonnature.com/index.html>

Minnesota Nature Notes – Jim Gilbert

Last Child in the Woods – Richard Louv

Design For Nature in Dementia Care- Garuth Chalfont

Transforming the Quality of Life for People with Dementia through Contact with the Natural World: Fresh Air on My Face – Jane Gilleard Editor

***Teaming with Your Therapy Dog (Book & DVD Training 2015) by Ann R. Howie, LICSW & ACSW**

Rosemary Gladstar's Medicinal Herbs: A Beginners Guide – Rosemary Gladstar

A Calendar Year of Horticultural Therapy – Janice Hoetker Doherty

Generations Gardening Together – Jean M Larson & Mary Meyer

***Therapeutic Landscapes: An Evidence Based Approach to Designing Healing Gardens – Clare Cooper Marcus & Naomi A. Sachs**

***Health through Horticulture: Indoor Gardening Activity Plans (2011) – Chicago Botanical Garden HT services**

***The Illustrated Practical Guide to Gardening for Seniors (2012) – Patty Cassidy**

***Access to Nature Planning Outdoor Spaces for Aging -Excellent DVD Series!**

I Highly Recommend This DVD Set!! Website: <http://www.accesstonature.org/products.html>

The Dignity of Risk in Providing Nature Based Activities for Active Aging

“‘The dignity of risk’ is a phrase that grew out of the experience of those who promoted the deinstitutionalization of the developmentally disabled during the 1970s. That entire cohort was deemed incapable of living on its own in the community. Many were thereby deprived of experiencing the richness of the full human experience. That richness included the opportunity to succeed or fail, and the opportunity to learn from that experience.” 1

Often in our culture in regards to older adults it is not uncommon that after a change in their health or functional status, many people, both care providers and the elders themselves, feel that their ability for self-determination has changed.

“In the process of receiving treatment they seem to have somehow given up their ‘right’ to make risky or potentially self-defeating choices without intervention from ... clinicians, service providers or even family members wishing to protect them” 2

Clearly with risk comes responsibility. The risks should be measured, the responsibility taken seriously. But to quote the person who coined the phrase “dignity of risk,” Robert Perske:

“Overprotection may appear on the surface to be kind, but it can be really evil. An oversupply can smother people emotionally, squeeze the life out of their hopes and expectations, and strip them of their dignity. Overprotection can keep people from becoming all they could become. Many of our best achievements came the hard way: We took risks, fell flat, and suffered, picked ourselves up, and tried again. Sometimes we made it and sometimes we did not. Even so, we were given the chance to try. Persons with special needs need these chances, too. Of course, we are talking about prudent risks. People should not be expected to blindly face challenges that, without a doubt, will explode in their faces. Knowing which chances are prudent and which are not - this is a new skill that needs to be acquired. On the other hand, a risk is really only when it is not known beforehand whether a person can succeed. The real world is not always safe, secure, and predictable. Every day we face the possibility of being thrown into situations where we will have to risk everything... In the past, we found clever ways to build avoidance of risk into the lives of persons living with disabilities. Now we must work equally hard to help find the proper amount of risk these people have the right to take. ***We have learned that there can be healthy development in risk taking... and there can be crippling indignity in safety!***” 3

In our current senior living environments we are very risk adverse in most all aspects of the environment. From building and landscape design, to care, and programming options we often do our best to control the choices that the elders are allowed to make. This is especially true in the Long Term Care nursing home environment. I have also seen it also in the many various other senior living environments as well to various degrees. The thing that we have lost sight of in these environments is common sense and also the need for balance in our lives.

“We need to find a balance between the individual’s right to dignity of risk and self-determination and our need to provide care and safety. We may need to provide support and assistance in making a decision, but we must also honor that decision – and as difficult as it may be, we have to accept that people have the right to make a decision that is different from our own. By providing an environment that encourages dignity of risk and self-determination, we lay the groundwork for personal empowerment, hope, increased self-esteem, self-efficacy, and optimism for the person we want to help the most. Before jumping in to rescue your loved one, ask yourself whether this is a decision that they can make, even if it might be one you wouldn’t make yourself.” 4

Paula’s take away on this: Have the audacity and the generosity of heart and mind to allow the elders in your life to live their lives as independently and spontaneously as possible. Take the time necessary to listen to their concerns, desires and passions that give them purpose and meaning. Do your best to provide them ample opportunities to explore the various NBA options I have talked about in this presentation. And in this

case allow them the freedom to choose the NBA option that will bring them joy, happiness and purpose in their lives. They may get a bug bite or scrape but they will actually be living their life—not just waiting to die.

References:

1. Teel, Allan S., "Alone and Invisible No More: How Grassroots Community Action and 21st Century Technologies Can Empower Elders to Stay in Their Homes and Lead Healthier, Happier Lives." 2011, pg. 138.
2. Parsons, C. (2009) *Dignity of Risk: The right to self-governance for people with mental illness*. Retrieved from: <http://www.openforum.com.au/content/dignity-risk-right-self-governance-people-mental-illness>
3. Perske, Robert, "The Dignity of Risk and The Mentally Retarded" MENTAL RETARDATION, Vol. 10, No. 1, February, 1972
4. Rachfall, Tricia MEd, CTRS "Bungee Jumping and the Dignity of Risk" Blog Post from Tactus Therapy, <http://tactustherapy.com/dignity-of-risk/>

Please Contact **Paula Frakes** with any questions, at all, that you have about **Nature Based Activities for Active Aging!**

I also welcome consulting/guest speaking invitations for your organization or group. Contact me for consulting/guest speaking cost.

Email: pkfsunshine65@gmail.com

Phone: 612-269-8407

Linked In Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/paula-frakes-m-a-30132510>

Also see my Senior Adults & Nature Board on Pinterest for lots of wonderful NBA ideas!



<https://www.pinterest.com/pkfsunshine/senior-adults-and-nature/>



Please **"Like"** Paula's Consulting/Educational Facebook Page: **Nature Based Activities for Active Aging-**

<https://www.facebook.com/NatureBasedActivitiesActiveAging/?pnref=lhs>

Great resource for Nature Based Activities for you, your staff and the older adults you serve!

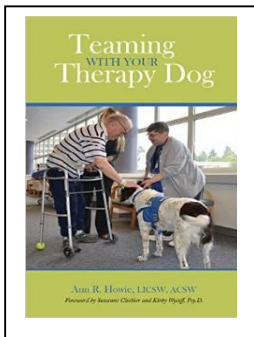


MUST HAVE RESOURCE If You Have Dogs involved in Programing!

From the **Book: “Teaming With Your Therapy Dog”** © (2015) Purdue University Press (pg. xvii)

Author: Ann R. Howie, LICSW, ACSW of Human Animal Solutions

www.humananimalsolutions.com



This is a MUST HAVE BOOK & DVD RESOURCE!

Especially if you are currently working with or aspire to work with a therapy dog or have visiting therapy dogs coming into your work or non-profit setting!

Also available by the same author Ann R. Howie:

“Teaming With Your Therapy Dog” DVD

(Running Time: 4 hrs. 14 mins) Copy Right ©2015 Produced by Tawzer Dog LLC

www.TawzerDog.com

Intended Audience: This DVD is for everyone who owns an animal (not just a dog!), whether a therapy dog or pet. The DVD gives examples from therapy-dog work applicable to beginning through advance handlers.

The Therapy Animal’s Bill of Rights©

As a therapy animal, I have the right to a handler who:

- Obtains my consent to participate in the work
- Provided gentle training to help me understand what I’m supposed to do
- Is considerate of my perception of the world
- Helps me adapt to the work environment
- Guides the client, staff, and visitors to interact with me appropriately
- Focuses on me as much as the client, staff and visitors
- Pays attention to my non-verbal cues
- Takes action to reduce my stress
- Supports me with interactions with the client
- Protects me from over work by limiting the length of the sessions
- Gives me ways to relax after the sessions
- Provides me with a well-rounded life with nutritious food, physical and emotional exercise, social time, and activities beyond work
- Responds to my desire to retire from work when I think it is time

Ann R. Howie, LICSW, ACSW began integrating animals into her counseling practice in 1987. She has both state and national credentials as a clinical social worker (counselor). Combining her master’s degree with a national certificate in canine learning and training. Howie is uniquely qualified to work with both people and animals, specializing in animal-assisted therapy and therapy dog training. She is part of the initial task force that developed *Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Therapy*. She founded and coordinated a hospital animal-assisted activities and therapy program from 1990 - 1997, and she was Pet Partners’ (formerly Delta Society) national director of animal-assisted therapy services from 1995-2000. She is an adjunct faculty member in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver (Colorado) and at Yamazaki College in Tokyo (Japan).