

STUDY GUIDE



# Ecotherapy

S H O R T C O U R S E



# HOW TO WORK THROUGH THIS COURSE

Over the following pages, you will move through a logical, self-paced learning experience that can enlighten and educate you in Ecotherapy.

It is important from the outset to understand that learning about something is not the same as just reading about it. Learning implies a permanent change in what you know and can do.

Anyone can read a book and understand it; but for most people the detail of what you read is largely forgotten.

Reading something once only puts information into short-term memory. It is soon lost if you don't 'work' on it. Studying the same information takes longer, but by thinking about it and processing it you can transfer that information to long-term memory. This way, you will enhance your ability to recall and apply that information for years to come. If you take your time to work through the 8 lessons that follow, you will learn.

## Read, Reflect, Research, Revise

Throughout the following pages, you will find not only things to read about, but also things to do:

1. Throughout each lesson, there are suggestions of things to do under the headings "Learn More". These are all sorts of ideas about things you can do in order to explore the subject further.
2. At the end of each lesson, there is an interactive self assessment test (assignment), for you to undertake. When you click on this, your computer needs to be online. You will be taken to our cloud-based online school. The answers you choose will be evaluated immediately, and your results can be seen on completion of each test. You can return and repeat tests if you wish.

Undertaking these tasks will involve reflection, research and revision of the topics you read about. By repeatedly encountering each topic in different ways, your perspective on each subject will broaden, and the commitment of information to longer term memory will strengthen.

You don't need to undertake all of the suggested tasks if you don't want to; but we strongly recommend that you do some in each lesson, and that you take all of the self-assessment tests.

The more time you spend doing these things, the stronger your learning will be.

## Completing the Course

After completing all 8 lessons you will be presented with a final assessment which can also be undertaken online.

Do not attempt to do this until you have worked through all 8 lessons, and feel like you have learnt the subject well.

Upon finishing this final assessment you will immediately see your final results, and you can save a pdf copy of those results as a "Certificate of Completion".

## Welcome Audio

Click the button below to listen to the welcome audio for this course. This feature is supported by most computers and some mobile devices.



**HOW DOES THIS COURSE WORK?**

**WATCH THIS VIDEO FIRST**

<https://vimeo.com/441179158>

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DISCLAIMER: This institution accepts no responsibility for the attitudes or actions of our graduates. The education you receive through this course in no way guarantees your actions in the future will always be as they should be. Your actions in your profession, or in any other situation where you apply what you have learnt here, will be affected by many things other than just the learning from this course. Success or failure of a graduate depends upon not only what they learn in this course, but also, what they learn elsewhere, as well as personal qualities and attitudes.

# LESSON 1 NATURE & SCOPE OF ECOTHERAPY

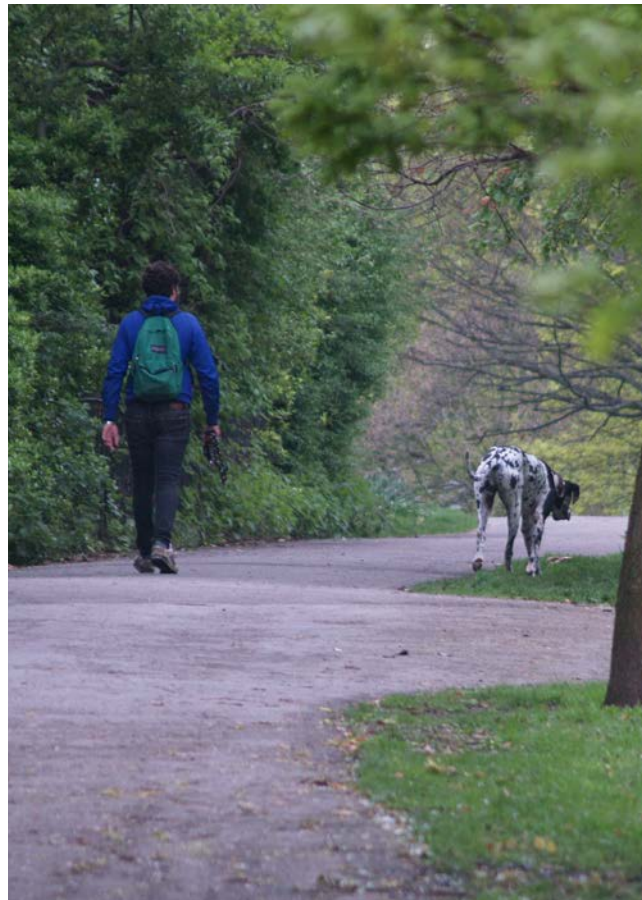
Ecotherapy is also known as 'nature therapy' or 'green therapy'. It is the practice of ecopsychology. Ecopsychology and ecotherapy are relatively new concepts in the field of psychology and counselling.

## APPLICATIONS

Ecotherapy may be used by psychologists, counsellors and other health professionals. Applications are broader than just this though. Examples might include:

- Horticultural therapy involves undertaking gardening activities for physical and/or psychological wellbeing, either as formal guided therapy sessions, or informal activity.
- Pet or animal therapies can be varied, such as riding for the disabled, companion animal visits to hospitals or aged care facilities or farm visits for therapeutic purposes.
- Forest bathing emerged as a form of therapy in Japan in the 1980's. It can involve structured, meditative two or three hour sessions led by trained guides, or less formal as simple as going for a walk in a forest.

As you move through this course you will broaden and deepen your understanding of nature therapies or ecotherapies.



## ECOPSYCHOLOGY

The name 'ecopsychology' is often attributed to Theodore Roszak. Roszak spent much of his working life as a history professor at the University of Hayward, California, where he investigated the impact of culture on behaviour. He first used the term ecopsychology in his 1992 book entitled 'The Voice of the Earth' where he explored the relationship between psychology and ecology. He argued that the needs of the planet and the needs of people should be viewed as being on a continuum rather than being to separate things. Ecopsychology has had some influence on the field

### Suggested Tasks: ▼

*Throughout this course you will be provided with suggested tasks and reading to aid with your understanding. These will appear in the right hand column. Remember: these tasks are optional. The more you complete, the more you will learn, but in order to complete the course in 20 hours you will need to manage your time well. We suggest you spend about 10 minutes on each task you attempt, and no more than 20 minutes.*

of psychology in general, and sub-branches of psychology such as environmental psychology. It has also had some influence on psychotherapy and counselling. However, it is still outside mainstream psychology.

Ecopsychology is both an ideology and a therapeutic technique. At its core is the premise that human mind is created in a natural environment, even though it is shaped by the modern world around us.

## WHAT IS ECOTHERAPY?

Ecotherapy is the practical application of ecopsychology. It provides individuals with the opportunity to explore their relationship with nature. This can often be overlooked in other forms of therapy. Underlying ecotherapy is the idea that we can treat people's psychological issues by enabling them to become spiritually closer to nature. So, the aim of ecopsychology is to remedy psychological problems by creating an emotional connection between nature and humans.

Many ecotherapists use the principles of ecopsychology in their work with people who need help and support. Ecotherapy is based in the belief that people are part of the natural web of life and that our minds are not separate and isolated from the environment. Our connection with the world around us is at the very core of ecotherapy i.e. the wellbeing of the individual and the wellbeing of the planet are not separate from each other, but the two are intertwined. Many ecotherapists believe that the earth has a way to keep itself in balance and that if individuals can harmonise with this, it can improve their wellbeing. Individuals

are therefore part of this system of interaction with the world around them.

Ecotherapy focusses on the activity itself rather than a focus on the person and their mental or physical health difficulties, which is another area that makes it different to other forms of therapy. Although ecotherapy activities may be facilitated by a therapist, coach, or guide, it is nature itself which is the real therapist. Therefore, ecotherapy is more of a passive therapy. Submersing oneself in, or surrounding oneself with, nature and natural things allows nature to heal us or enhance our wellbeing.

Ecotherapy helps us to look more closely at the world around us and become more aware of what is happening to nature. In doing so, ecotherapy also seeks to promote and maintain sustainability as people become more in tune with nature.

Sustainability is quite a complex term with multiple interpretations. A relatively simple definition might be the capacity for human civilisation and the biosphere (all the ecosystems in the world) to live side-by-side with environmental, economic, and social domains all in balance. From an ecological perspective, it is where species and resources are balanced within a system such that resources are not depleted before they can be renewed naturally. In ecotherapy, people are encouraged to harmonise with the earth and its balance systems because personal wellbeing relies on the wellbeing of the earth. We are all part of one larger system.

To summarise, in ecotherapy it is hoped that people forge greater connections with the natural world and in doing so they experience positive wellbeing.

## LEARN MORE >>>

### Suggested Tasks

Have a discussion with two adult family members or colleagues about how different environments make them feel. Ask them:

In which of the following situations do you feel more relaxed or less stressed?

- Walking through a shopping centre
- Walking along a beach or beside a lake or river.
- Sitting in a garden
- Sitting in a busy fast food restaurant.

Keep each discussion to around 5 minutes, just to get a sense of how some people might react to thinking about being in nature, or being away from nature.