2024 Report

Exploring Anxiety Through Nature

PsychosynthesisTrust

Exploring Anxiety

AIM

Exploring Anxiety is a project aimed at supporting a direct need in society. Our research recognised that anxiety is a growing golden thread that runs through various demographic groups, largely being influenced by political unrest, climate crisis, Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. We want to make a positive impact through psychospiritual philosophies of psychosynthesis.

Main highlights

Training Exploring Anxiety Facilitators

10 facilitators have been trained to deliver Exploring Anxiety programmes within third sector organisations including **schools, colleges, wellbeing centres, refugee centres and community gardening projects.**

Partnering with Charities, Community Gardens & Social Farms

60 participants have attended EA programmes across Southwark, Kingston and Wiltshire with a variety of community gardens & social farms. The Psychosynthesis Trust have also partnered with The Natural Academy to include **Eco-psychology** principles in the programme.

Decreasing Participants Anxiety Symptoms

Participants on average, **reduce anxiety and depression by 11%** on the GAD-7 and PHQ-9 psychological assessments after the programme. **70% of participants continue to volunteer at the community gardens** and have kept engaged with their group.

Theory Of Change

Inputs

- Staff
- Facilitators
- Social needs research
- Programme resources
- Community gardens and social farm venues

Activities

- 10-week programmes for 10 participants
- Local signposting
- Training facilitators
- Researching different relaxation techniques
- Providing Exploring Anxiety toolkits
- Developing a digital community

Outputs

- GAD7 and PHQ-9 anxiety and depression scores
- Simetrica Wellbeing assessment
- Number of participants and their session attendance
- Numbers of facilitators trained
- Number of hours spent in nature

Outcomes

- Increased mental health and confidence
- Greater sense of community and belonging
- Increased volunteering activity
- Reduced stigma associated with anxiety
- Reduced isolation

Impact

To reduce anxiety, increase confidence and develop a sense of belonging with people who are at risk of being marginalised, disadvantaged or excluded due to their background, race, mental health, socio-economic status, gender, physical abilities or sexual orientation.

Reviews

A Word From A Local Social Prescriber

"I would highly recommend this programme to anyone who wants to gain useful tools and knowledge to manage life's everyday stressors. Anxiety and stress are among the most common issues faced by our service-users at Southwark Wellbeing Hub, and this much-needed programme provides people with a calm and safe space to express themselves, uncover their strengths and connect. Keep up the incredible work!"

Participant Feedback

"I would recommend this programme to anyone who wants to meet good people, learn new skills, build routine into your week and find ways to connect with nature"
- Natasha 35 years old

"I found the outpouring of kindness very powerful"
-Vaughan 64 years old

"I liked the idea of exploring anxiety; as opposed to group therapy"
- Gill 67 years old

"The programme exceeded my expectations and has helped me distance myself from anxiety"
- Mustafa 41

Participant Feedback

"It helped me set better boundaries in my relationships and prioritise my own well-being, which has improved my mental health and how I interact with others. I've become more confident in expressing my needs, both at home and in my personal life. The programme provided me with the tools and support to make these changes, especially by creating a space where I felt understood and empowered to be vulnerable. This has had a lasting impact on my health and relationships, as I now feel more balanced and self-assured"

- Sasha 28 years old

"I have always known about the connection between nature and self- care; however, knowing and actually experiencing them are two different things"

- Afaf 33 years old

"I got to explore what anxiety tools worked and didn't work for me"

-Yen 38 years old

Reviews

Mel's Review Of The Programme

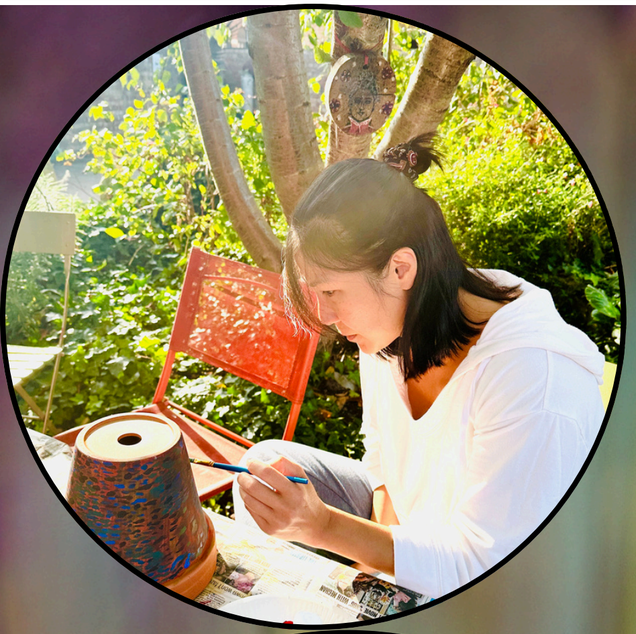
The programme far exceeded my expectations in every way. Not only was the content comprehensive and insightful, but the instructors were also incredibly knowledgeable and supportive. I was particularly impressed by how practical and applicable the skills I learned were to my personal life. The environment was welcoming and inclusive, which made me feel comfortable from the start, and the course went beyond simply meeting my needs—it offered new perspectives and tools that I hadn't even anticipated. Overall, the program delivered much more than I expected and has had a significant positive impact on me."

Poem Programme Review

At Surrey Docks, beneath the sky so wide,
We came to explore what anxiety hides inside.
With racing hearts and minds that won't be still,
We learned to scan our bodies, noticing each chill.
The weather mirrored what we felt each day—
Storm clouds of worry, skies heavy and gray.
Rain fell like tears, our hearts full of weight,
But nature whispered, "It's never too late."
With mindful steps, we walked the green and ground,
In the earth's embrace, our peace was found.
We breathed in deep, slow and full of care,
Aromas of lavender floating through the air.
Compassion grew with each image we'd see,
A tree of life, roots strong and free.
We shared our stories, each one unique,
Finding strength in every word we speak.
Saying "no" with grace, learning to protect,
Building resilience, gaining self-respect.
The weather shifted, the winds began to change,
And we noticed our fears weren't so strange.
We mucked the goats and painted pots,
Pressed apple juice, and stirred the compost.
Piglets played, their joy so sweet,
And every day felt more complete.
Between the laughter and all we learned,
We shared treats for which we yearned—
My baked goodies, warm and true,
Carol's jam and chutney, too.
Sasha's lavender lemonade, cool and light,
Turned every sip into pure delight.
Together we feasted, together we grew,
In friendship formed, so strong and new.
And though clouds gathered, dark and cold,
We found within courage bold.
With every breath, with every step,
We conquered the storm, with no regret.
The rainbow appeared, a promise of light,
After the struggle, came colors so bright.
In the animal's small, and the moment's big,
Each day like a dance, a joyful jig.
A special thanks to Kelly and all who care,
For the warmth and guidance, always there.
You've given us tools, taught us to see,
That anxiety doesn't own us, we are free.
The bond we've formed, together so strong,
In this journey, we all belong.
From treats we shared to grounding our feet,
This time at the farm has been truly sweet.
And though the storm still comes and goes,
We've found the rainbow, and it forever glows!

Melanie Sheringham

Photos From Programmes



Photos From Programmes

Meet Our Facilitators

Exploring Anxiety Facilitators Delivering Programmes Across The UK

Anna Green
SOUTHWARK
Southwark Wellbeing Hub
- Seniour Wellbeing Worker

Matt Wilcock
LONDON
Leaves Breathes
- Community Gardener

Karen Hohler
KINGSTON
Refugee Action Kingston
- Counsellor

Matthews Igaga
HOUNSLOW
Riana
- Kenyan Community Support Officer

Emily Weston
CHIPPENHAM
Chippenham Collective
- Community Gardening Trustee

Dharsy Sabapathy
LONDON
Psychotherapy Bereavement Counsellor

Mustafa Korei
SOUTHWARK
Bankside Open Spaces Trust
- Community Engagement Officer

Kate McKinney
SOUTHWARK
Surrey Docks Farm
- Horticultural Assistant

Zoe Marks
LONDON
Domestic Violence Support Officer

Paul Rodriguez-Richards
LONDON
Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies
- Counsellor

Our Funders

Thank You To Those Who Have Financially Supported Us

Co-op Local Community Fund
Bankside Open Spaces Trust
Donnington
Roger Raymond Trust
Jo Li Trust
Team London Bridge
Riana Youth Project

To learn more about the **Exploring Anxiety Project** visit:
www.psychosynthesistrust.org.uk/social-impact