

A RESEARCH GUIDE: TRACKING NATURE CONNECTEDNESS THROUGH ARTS BASED ACTIVITIES

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INTRODUCTION AND HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is meant to document the methodology used over a nine month long citizen science project commissioned by Kerry Lemon on behalf of Moda, Hove Central. This guide details the research that ran alongside the activities associated with "Wild Neighbours", an arts based programme run for Moda, Hove Central residents that focused on increasing feelings of nature connectedness through arts based activities.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Kerry Lemon, a certified B Corp organisation, was commissioned by MODA to run a nine month long artist in residence project in Moda, Hove Central. The project ran from October 2024 - July 2025 and focused on the question, "How do other species experience MODA?"

The project aimed to engage site residents through four key interventions during the project. They included:

- Launch event on 17th October (6-8pm)
- Various creative interventions led by experts and arts practitioners, including a site walk focusing on sight and soundscapes on 2nd November 2025 (full day)
- Various creative interventions led by experts and arts practitioners, including a site walk focusing on sight and soundscapes on 27th April 2025 (full day)
- Closing party and BBQ on 20 July 2025

RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this research was to measure residents' connection to nature over a period of 9 months and understand how the project impacts this feeling of connectedness (if at all).

The goal was to develop robust evaluation research in order to understand if over the course of the nine months, the residents feel:

- More connected to nature
- Less humancentric
- More empathetic
- Have added positive environmental behaviours into their lives

This research built on the work done by the Nature Connectedness Research Group at Derby University by using their 5x pathways for nature connection. (for more information please see further reading).





RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research took a mixed-methodological approach, with surveys as the predominant methodology. This was combined with qualitative feedback and observations that took place during key activities in the programme.

This methodology was chosen due to two main reasons:

1. We wanted to be able to understand how attitudes towards nature connectedness changed over the course of nine months in a systematic way
2. We also wanted to allow for nuanced understanding of how arts based activities influenced nature connectedness.

SURVEYS

For the surveys, a main survey was developed and used repeatedly throughout the year and after each key activity. It included a set of scales that tracked connectedness to nature as well as a couple of key questions around the impact of the event / experience. For a full breakdown of the survey questions used, please see the appendix.

The survey was adjusted based on whether participants were taking the survey before their first activity or at the end of their engagement on the day / of the programme. A shorter survey focusing only on the key indicators was used at the beginning of the day, and a longer survey including feedback on activities was used at the end of the engagement. Names were collected in order to track repeat participation over the course of the programme.

WHAT DID WE LEARN

Survey completion was high, with over 75% of participants completing at least one survey during the programme. This success rate was due to the programme being described as a citizen science project, with opportunity to fill out the survey built into the timetable from the beginning. Participants felt excited about the prospect of contributing to a citizen science project while also participating in arts based activities, which led to high completion rates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & FURTHER READING

A variety of connectedness to nature scales were referenced and used to tailor the survey to be specific to the project. Scales referenced to develop the survey included:

- Mayer, F. S., & Frantz, C. M. (2004). The connectedness to nature scale: A measure of individuals' feeling in community with nature. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 24(4), 503-515.
- Personal well-being user guidance from the Office for National Statistics
- The People and Nature Survey For England (PANS001).

Sincere appreciation goes to Carly Butler, a researcher in Nature Connectedness at the College of Health, Psychology and Social Care at the University of Derby for her support in developing the scales used in this project.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Activities

1. What activities did you participate in today?
 - a. (multiple choice based on activities available)
2. What was your favourite session and why?
 - a. Open text box

Understanding your relationship with nature (Behaviours)

1. How important is spending time in nature to you?
 - a. Very important
 - b. Important
 - c. Neither important nor unimportant
 - d. Not very important
 - e. Not at all important
2. When you think of "nature," what comes to mind?
[open text box]
3. I often notice everyday nature (for example butterflies, bees or flowers)
 - a. Not at all (0) → All the time (100)
4. Can you describe a specific moment, big or small, that made you feel connected to the natural world? [open text box]
5. What are barriers to spending more time in nature? [open text box]
6. Thinking about the last month, which of the following have you done?
 - a. Recycled items
 - b. Brought your own bags when shopping
 - c. Bought produce that is grown locally or in season
 - d. Bought second-hand items
 - e. Watched wildlife/nature programmes
 - f. Picked up litter that I saw
 - g. Use an app to identify a plant or animal
 - h. Taken photos of nature
 - i. Done an activity in nature to support your wellbeing
 - j. None of the above

Understanding your relationship with nature (Attitudes)

1. On the line before each of the following statements, use the scale below to indicate how you generally feel about each one. Be as honest as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

- a. I often feel a sense of oneness with the natural world around me.
- b. I think of the natural world as a community to which I belong.
- c. I recognize and appreciate the intelligence of other living organisms.
- d. I often feel disconnected from nature.
- e. I often feel a kinship with animals and plants.
- f. I have a deep understanding of how my actions affect the natural world.
- g. When I think of my place on Earth, I consider myself to be a top member of a hierarchy that exists in nature.
- h. My personal welfare is independent of the welfare of the natural world.
- i. I feel part of nature
- j. Being in nature makes me feel very happy
- k. I take time to notice nature every day