



# EMPOWERED

IMPROVING LGBTQ+ MENTAL HEALTH

## The Impact of Nature on Mental Health & Wellness

by Brynne Popp

*"All nature is doing her best each moment to make us well—she exists for no other end. Do not resist her."*

- Henry David Thoreau

It's no secret that the natural world and being outside has an effect on our bodies both physically and mentally. As the seasons change, our bodies react to the difference in weather and sunlight, which is why you might notice changes in your mood, or feeling more fatigued when it starts to get cold.



**Research shows** that being physically outside and in the sun sends a boost to the brains' serotonin receptors, which in turn boosts our overall mood and can decrease our stress levels. Being outdoors can also increase your concentration and productivity levels. When we aren't getting enough sunlight, it can sometimes result in seasonal depression or increased levels of anxiety and stress.

Spending time outside is a great way to feel connected to the earth around you and can reduce stress, anger, and even fear. Nature has the ability to heal and soothe our minds and bodies, which is why a lot of folks find it relaxing to view landscape scenes and art. In addition to the mental well-being benefits of spending a little time

outside, exposure to nature can also help your physical body out by lowering your heart rate and production of stress hormones.

The healing power of nature is something that has been studied and practiced in many cultures all around the world. By embracing **ancient wisdom** and practices of connecting with the natural world around us, we can begin to bring these practices into our modern approaches to help our overall well-being and connection. By fostering that connection with nature, it can begin to shift our mindfulness practices as well. Observing, meditating and appreciating the beauty of nature can lead us to improved clarity and overall happiness.

### Five ways to connect to nature daily

- **Take a walk:** Getting outside for even 5-10 minutes and being active will increase your serotonin and production endorphins instantly.
- **Plant something:** Whether it's a house plant or a garden, getting your hands in the dirt can help you feel more connected.
- **Find some green space:** Your backyard, a local park or even sitting underneath a tree can boost your mood.
- **Enjoy the sunshine:** Spending a few minutes outside or sitting by an open window has the potential to create all the vitamin D you need.
- **Practice gratitude:** Nature is everywhere, inside and out. Whether it is a balcony, communal garden, or out in the wilderness. Once you can begin to tune into your senses and surroundings, you will find these moments so meaningful.

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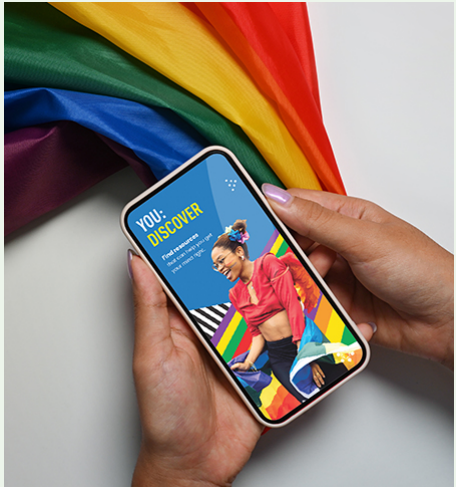
## Envision:You Garden Party June 1, 2024

Mark your calendars for the Envision:You Annual Garden Party on June 1 from 4-7 p.m. at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Early-bird tickets go on sale April 1 for \$50. Prices will increase to \$75 May 1. We can't wait to see you there!



## Introducing You:Flourish – an innovative digital wellness platform crafted by and for the LGBTQ+ community

Launching in April! Explore our nurturing online community, crafted to elevate your well-being and foster connections. Access tailored resources created by and for LGBTQ+ individuals, immerse yourself in diverse self-help materials, and discover healthcare professionals dedicated to affirming your identities and advancing equality. To learn more, go to [you-flourish.com](https://you-flourish.com).



“My therapist didn’t ask about my pronouns, so I left.”



ENROLL NOW

## LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Provider Training Program

The training program has much to offer for behavioral health professionals who want to learn how to better support their LGBTQ+ clients. Our comprehensive training consists of the Level 1: Introductory Training and the Level 2 live in-person or webinar training that dives deeper into providing affirming care to the LGBTQ+ community. With generous grant funding, we’re offering the Level 1 & 2 Learning Pathway at no cost or at a discounted rate. We have partnered with the Colorado chapter of the National Association of Social Workers to offer 11 CE for the entire Level 1 & 2 Learning Pathway. To take advantage of our grant funding, [fill out this interest form](#). Visit [envision-you-training.org](https://envision-you-training.org) to learn more.