

# Nature & Mental Wellness Ideas for Parks:

## **Self-Guided Relaxation Activities**

Offering guidance for self-guided activities to park goers requires less ongoing effort from staff and allows participants to go at their own rate or "choose their own adventure." There are a variety of ways parks can facilitate these activities, such as installing signage or relaxation stations along a certain walking route, offering an "audio tour" that includes mindfulness activities as participants walk along a trail, or promoting the mental wellness benefits of time in parks and nature to existing audiences.

## **Volunteer or Staff-Led Mindfulness Walks**

Mindfulness walks combine relaxing activities, nature observation, and social connection for participants. Parks can offer regular mindful hiking or forest bathing experiences by enlisting volunteers or a passionate team member to lead various activities along accessible routes in the park. This option requires more ongoing engagement than a "set it and forget it" self-guided option, but increases community interaction at the park.

## **An App for Everything**

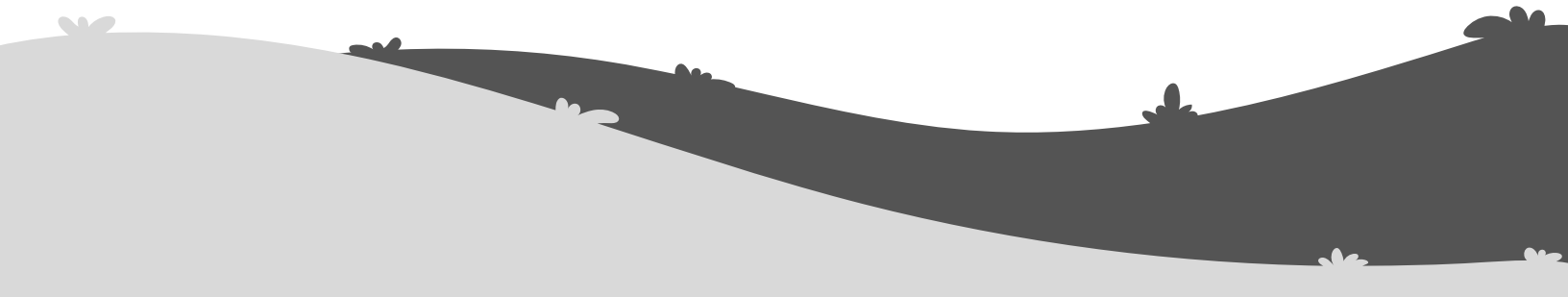
There are consultants who will design an app and nature-based mindfulness activities tailored to your own park. This is a great option for teams who might not have the spare time, but have financial resources to hire outside help.

## **Partner with Local Organizations for Events & Shared Resources**

You don't have to go it alone! Local schools or universities, libraries, mental health organizations, yoga studios, health organizations, veterans or other special interest groups, or programs like Walk with a Doc or Park Rx, are often excited about this type of work and may be willing to share resources, which could include time, money, technical assistance, or volunteers.

## **Participate in Resource Fairs**

You can get the word out about your initiative, find potential partners, and change the narrative about the role of parks and nature in health by participating in local health resource fairs.





## **Resources:**

### **What's Your Role? Nature & Health Recommendations from the CDC**

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/everyone-can-be-involved/parks-recreation-and-green-spaces.html>

### **Example Nature Mindfulness Activities**

<https://www.threeriversparks.org/blog/5-ways-practice-mindfulness-nature>

### **Inclusive Healthy Places Guide for Parks & Recreation Professionals**

<https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/best-practice-resources/inclusive-healthy-places-companion-guide-for-park-and-recreation-professionals/>

### **Find a Trained Nature and Forest Therapy Guide**

<https://www.natureandforesttherapy.earth/guides>

### **Explore Forest Therapy Research & Resources**

<https://www.natureandforesttherapy.earth/library>

### **Example Mindful Nature Walk Format**

<https://bit.ly/3geWxPb>

### **Connect with Marissa Byers & Blair McKissock for support**

[marimbyers@gmail.com](mailto:marimbyers@gmail.com)

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*Find additional resources at [www.ecotherapyforall.com](http://www.ecotherapyforall.com).*

