**Therapeutic landscapes based on green spaces of care ?**

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In today's highly urbanised society, afflictions have shifted from infectious to chronic diseases such as chronic stress, burn-out, diabetes, cancer or cardiovascular diseases, a considerable burden to individuals and society. In a broader acceptation, *"health"* is now defined as not simply the absence of disease, but as a total state of physical, mental and social well-being[[1]](#footnote-1); in this regard, nature is considered to play a crucial role for health restauration and disease prevention.

Urban natural spaces provide various ecosystem services and strongly contribute to people’s health, well-being and quality of life. However urban inhabitants are often exposed to polluted air, noise, smoke, urban life stressors and limited access to nature. Therefore they are often seeking healthy and restorative nature spots to recover from their busy, stressful and intense life style.

On the other hand, more and more people are experiencing loneliness. According to Dr. McPherson Frantz[[2]](#footnote-2), the need of belonging is one of the most powerful motivators of human behaviour and a meaningful psychological relationship with the natural world can fulfil this need. Connection to nature meets our most fundamental psychological needs and can play a very important role in building human resilience, which results in connection with oneself and the larger community. Green care spaces can offer such opportunities to connect with nature.

In our study we assessed the potential of some green care spaces to become therapeutic landscapes in Brussels city and their possible positive outcomes for human health promotion and disease prevention. It seems indeed possible to develop a therapeutic landscape from nature-based interventions and therapies when associated with human health and healing practices of scientifically proven efficacy, for example to develop green exercises, garden therapy, eco-therapy or forest therapy. Nature-based solutions for health and well-being will produce supportive nature and social spaces that can function as restorative places for human health. Such therapeutic landscapes, based on the transformation of the cultural and social urban fabrics and nature spots, significantly impact on connectedness with nature, one-self and social interactions, contributing to into numerous benefits for human health. Aesthetic qualities of such a project, combined with word of mouth and social networking, certainly develops a further sense of security and inclusion.

1. <http://www.who.int/hac/about/definitions/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mayer, F. S., Frantz, C. M., Bruehlman-Senecal, E., & Dolliver, K.  (2009).  Why Is Nature Beneficial? The Role of Connectedness to Nature.  Environment and Behavior, 41, 607-643. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)