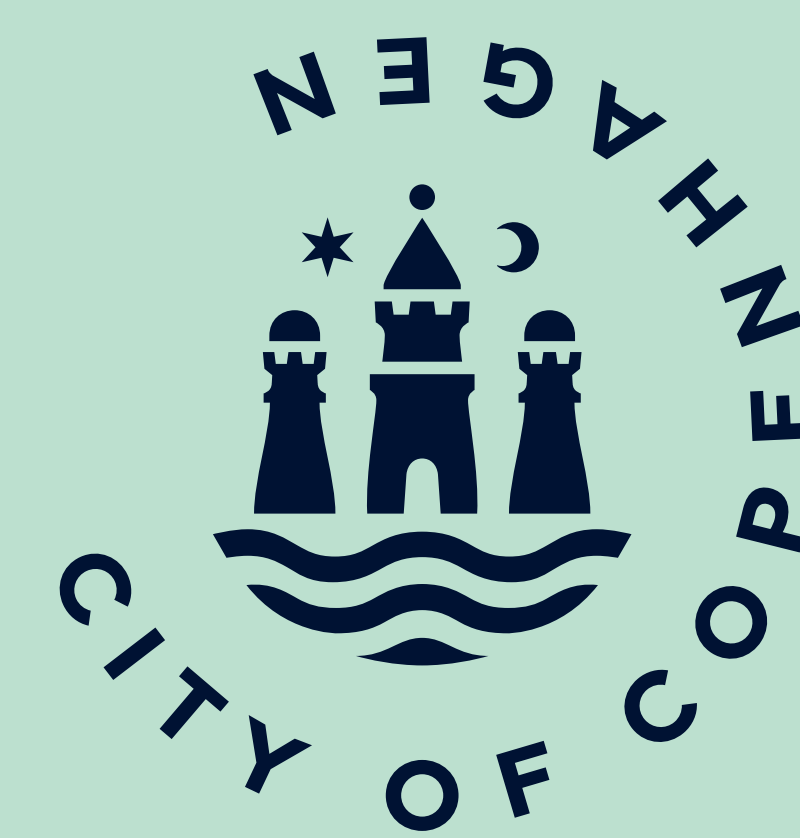


Nature and Craft:

A rehabilitation intervention improving mental health

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Background

From January-June 2024 The Copenhagen Centre for Cancer and Health tested and evaluated a new rehabilitation intervention 'Nature and Craft - a Break in Everyday Life'. The hypothesis is that rehabilitation focusing on a common activity can

- improve mental well being
- enable inclusion regardless of health literacy and socioeconomic position, thus contributing to social equity.

The intervention in brief

- Objective: To reduce stress and enhance mental wellbeing
- Method:
 - Craft activities combined with nature-based therapy
 - Peer-to-peer exchanges of knowledge and experiences
- Place: Court yard and the local environment
- 6 sessions, rolling admission, max 10 participants
- 2 instructors (dietician and nature therapist and occupational therapist)
- The craft activities introduced were always related to nature through nature materials and narratives
- Structure: Welcoming, grounding, the craft activity, a small meal, sharing of take-home experiences.



Evaluation

Mixed method design:

- Before and after each session participants scored experienced distress (Distress Thermometer)
- After each session participants responded to questions inspired by 'Restorative Outcome Scale'
- At the end of the program participants responded to a questionnaire addressing outcomes and satisfaction
- Focus group interview with 8 participants.

Results

RESTORATIVE OUTCOME SCALE (ADJUSTED) n=79	SCORE 0-5 (max)
Felt calmer	4,2
Experienced more enthusiasm and energy	4,3
Were able to focus and concentrate	4,3
Were able to forget worries	4,3

DISTRESS THERMOMETER n=79	SCORE 0-10 (worst)
Distress reduction (average)	↓2,5
Range in reduction (individual)	0 - ↓10
Range in reduction (average per course)	↓1,3 - ↓4,1

This is what I should be doing, it is good for my mind and my hands.

I am in pain and slept poorly last night. I am happy to learn new things here. It gives positive thoughts and energy, and I meet wonderful people.

I am actually capable of doing something: I have gained self-confidence. It has changed me physically and mentally, the way I am in my family.

It is good to have something to take home with me. There are so many days when I don't do much I can talk about.

Conclusion

Rehabilitation interventions integrating nature therapy and craft activities are promising.

This intervention:

- included vulnerable individuals with low physical and/or cognitive functional level
- included palliative as well as rehabilitative perspectives
- had positive impacts on participants' mental wellbeing
- experiences and introduced techniques were transferred to everyday life.