**CLASS 8**

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| **TOPIC** | Urban nature and human health | |
| **LEARNING CONTENT - DETAILED CHARACTERISTICS** | Lecture's topic: the importance of studying the relationship between urban nature and human health. Benefits: Improved mental health: Reduced stress, increased happiness, improved mood, and enhanced cognitive function; Enhanced physical health: Increased physical activity, improved cardiovascular health, and reduced risk of chronic diseases; Social benefits: Increased social connections, community cohesion, and social support. | |
| **KEY WORDS** | Human health: Mental, Physical, Social | |
| **SUGGESTED TOOLS** | Interactive lecture  Power-point presentation  Videos and readings  Handouts for analysis in groups  Discussion | |
| **TIPS / METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS**  **(if applicable)** | ……………………… | |
| **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLASSES** | **STEP 1** | Presentation: Biodiversity and Health in Urban Areas - Explanation of the importance of biodiversity in urban environments and its connection to human health. |
| **STEP 2** | Discussion: research findings and case studies on the health benefits of biodiversity in cities, including:   * + Increased mental well-being through exposure to diverse plant and animal species.   + Enhanced immune function and reduced allergies associated with exposure to diverse microbial communities.   + Potential for natural remedies and therapeutic uses of urban biodiversity |
| **STEP 3** | Videos: Access and Equity in Urban Nature  1.<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRXx0QyxBFo>  2.<https://youtu.be/jrlJQZMywTk> |
| **STEP 4** | Quiz: Access and Equity in Urban Nature  Work card 1 |
| **STEP 5** | Outdoor exercise: Nature Walk and Observation  Work card 2 |

**ADITIONAL MATERIAL 1 (WORK CARD, PICTURE, RECORDING, QUIZZ, PRESENTATION, ASSIGNEMENTS)**

**WORK CARD 1.**

**Read the text: Associations between Nature Exposure and Health: A Review of the Evidence:** [**https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/9/4790**](https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/9/4790)

1. Stress Reduction: Spending time in nature can significantly reduce stress levels. Research has shown that exposure to natural environments, such as forests or gardens, can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol (stress hormone) levels. Nature acts as a soothing and calming influence on our minds, helping us relax and recharge.
2. Improved Mood and Mental Health: Engaging with nature has been linked to improved mood and mental health. The presence of green spaces has been associated with lower rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses. Natural environments promote positive emotions, increase self-esteem, and enhance overall well-being.
3. Cognitive Benefits: Interacting with nature can boost cognitive abilities and improve concentration. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors, even for short periods, can enhance focus, memory, and attention span. Nature's inherent tranquility allows our brains to rejuvenate and improve cognitive performance.
4. Physical Activity and Exercise: Engaging in outdoor activities within natural environments promotes physical health, which in turn positively impacts psychological well-being. Walking, jogging, or cycling in natural surroundings not only provides exercise but also helps reduce stress and improve mood through the release of endorphins (feel-good hormones).
5. Connection and Restoration: Nature provides a sense of connection and restoration, helping individuals feel more connected to something larger than themselves. Spending time in natural settings promotes feelings of awe, wonder, and spirituality, fostering a sense of purpose and meaning in life.

# B.Quiz: Access and Equity in Urban Nature

Instructions:

1. Read each question carefully.
2. Choose the best answer from the options provided.

**Once you have completed all the questions, check your answers against the answer key provided.**

Questions:

1. What does access to urban nature refer to?
2. The availability of parks and green spaces in urban areas.
3. The ability to physically enter a city.
4. The ease of transportation within urban areas.
5. The number of trees in urban environments.
6. Why is access to urban nature important for communities?
7. It provides recreational opportunities only.
8. It fosters social connections and community engagement.
9. It has no significant impact on health and well-being.
10. It increases noise pollution.
11. What does equity in urban nature refer to?
12. Ensuring that all individuals have equal access and opportunities to engage with urban nature.
13. Ensuring that urban nature is limited to specific communities.
14. Prioritizing the preservation of natural habitats over human needs.
15. Creating urban nature exclusively for wildlife conservation.
16. Which of the following factors can contribute to inequitable access to urban nature?
17. Socioeconomic disparities
18. Geographic location
19. Discrimination and systemic biases
20. All of the above
21. How can cities promote equitable access to urban nature?
22. By providing a variety of parks and green spaces throughout the city
23. By ensuring that disadvantaged communities have equal access to urban nature
24. By engaging the community in the planning and design of urban green spaces
25. All of the above
26. What are some strategies to improve access and equity in urban nature?
27. Creating green corridors and connecting fragmented green spaces
28. Implementing transportation options to facilitate access to urban green spaces
29. Designing inclusive and accessible parks for people with disabilities
30. All of the above
31. True or False: Access to urban nature has no impact on human health and well-being.
32. True
33. False
34. Which term refers to the unequal distribution of urban green spaces and nature-based amenities?
35. Environmental degradation
36. Environmental justice
37. Environmental conservation
38. Environmental inequality
39. What role does community involvement play in achieving equitable access to urban nature?
40. It is not necessary for promoting access and equity.
41. It helps ensure that the diverse needs and preferences of the community are considered.
42. It hinders the development of urban green spaces.

d) It promotes exclusion and division among community members.

1. What is the ultimate goal of promoting access and equity in urban nature?
2. To limit access to urban green spaces for certain groups.
3. To ensure that urban green spaces are only available to affluent communities.
4. To provide equal opportunities for all individuals to benefit from urban nature.
5. To prioritize the needs of wildlife over human needs.

**ADITIONAL MATERIAL 2**

**OUTDOOR EXERCISE: NATURE WALK AND OBSERVATION**

**Objective:** To engage students in firsthand observation and exploration of urban nature, while considering its impact on human health and well-being.

Materials Needed:

* Access to a nearby urban green space or park
* Notebooks or worksheets for data collection and reflection
* Writing materials

**Instructions:**

1. Introduction (5 minutes):
   * Explain the objective of the exercise: to observe and reflect on the impact of urban nature on human health and well-being.
   * Discuss the potential health benefits of spending time in nature, such as stress reduction, improved mood, and increased physical activity.
2. Pre-Walk Discussion (10 minutes):
   * Engage students in a discussion about their expectations, thoughts, and perceptions of urban nature and its impact on human health.
   * Encourage students to consider what they hope to observe or experience during the nature walk.
3. Nature Walk and Observation (30-60 minutes):
   * Lead the students on a guided nature walk in the chosen urban green space or park.
   * Encourage students to observe their surroundings, paying attention to elements such as trees, plants, wildlife, sounds, smells, and overall atmosphere.
   * Remind students to stay mindful, using their senses to fully engage with the natural environment.
4. Data Collection and Reflection (15 minutes):

Provide students with notebooks or worksheets to record their observations and reflections.

Instruct students to jot down their observations, thoughts, and feelings about the urban nature they encountered during the walk.

* + Encourage students to reflect on the potential impacts of the natural environment on their well-being and consider how it relates to the discussed health benefits.

1. Group Discussion and Sharing (20 minutes):
   * Gather the students together for a group discussion.
   * Ask students to share their observations, reflections, and thoughts on the impact of urban nature on human health.
   * Facilitate a discussion around the different experiences and insights shared by the students, encouraging active listening and respectful dialogue.
2. Summary and Reflection (10 minutes):
   * Summarize the main points discussed during the group discussion.
   * Engage students in a reflective activity, asking them to individually consider how the nature walk and observations affected their mood, energy levels, or overall well-being.
   * Encourage students to think about how they can incorporate more nature-based activities into their daily lives and advocate for the preservation of urban green spaces.
3. Conclusion (5 minutes):
   * Emphasize the importance of urban nature in promoting human health and well- being.
   * Encourage students to continue exploring and connecting with urban nature in their own lives.
   * Remind students of the value of green spaces and the role they play in creating healthier and more sustainable urban environments.