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INSIGHTS ON THE HEALING GARDEN METHODOLOGY AT JARDINES TERAPÉUTICOS PALMLÖF

Jardines Terapéuticos Palmlöf (JTP) has been dedicated to implementing the Healing Garden methodology since 2018. Our approach draws inspiration from a fusion of Occupational Therapy, Social and Therapeutic Horticulture, and Gardening models, incorporating theories and science-based practices. By utilizing the cultivation and nurturing of plants, along with nature-based crafts and social interactions, we aim to create a healing environment that fosters both mental and physical health benefits while promoting overall well-being.

At Jardines Terapéuticos Palmlöf, we engage in therapeutic gardening activities on a yearly and monthly basis. Our planning process revolves around the changing seasons, specific horticulture and gardening tasks, traditional festivities associated with agriculture or nature, and the local weather patterns. This meticulous planning ensures that we offer meaningful occupations throughout the year while providing opportunities to promote various aspects of health and well-being. By aligning our activities with these factors, we create a diverse and enriching experience for our participants.

We implement the social/recreational, therapeutic and vocational areas of application in therapeutic gardening. All interventions are conducted in a group setting, taking into consideration the specific therapeutic needs of the participants. Depending on these needs, some individuals are categorized under the social focus, while others, with more specific occupational therapy requirements, fall within the therapeutic area.

For participants with therapeutic needs, individual assessments are carried out to determine their specific therapeutic objectives. These assessments are conducted by healthcare professionals, such as occupational therapists at JTP. The interventions for these individuals are more person-centered, focusing on their unique needs and goals.

On the other hand, participants in the social focus, particularly in our 'active aging' category, undergo a more general assessment. In this case, overall group objectives are defined, which may include promoting general well-being, socialization, and enhancing quality of life, among other aspects.





By offering both social/recreational and therapeutic interventions, we ensure that participants receive tailored support based on their individual needs and goals, fostering their overall health and well-being within a group setting.

The use of occupational therapy's adaptations and gradation of activity/occupation, along with its key components, is indeed a crucial aspect of the methodology at Jardines Terapéuticas Palmlöf (JTP). The ability to adapt and grade activities plays a fundamental role in our interventions and the pursuit of therapeutic objectives.

Adaptations enable individuals to engage in gardening activities in a way that suits their abilities and promotes their active involvement.

Adaptation involves modifying objects or environments to challenge or enhance a client's ability to perform certain tasks. It can be implemented by both the therapist and the client. In the JTP therapeutic garden, adaptations have already been incorporated into the environment. The design of the garden is accessible and tailored to meet the needs of diverse user groups with varying disabilities and abilities. For instance, raised beds have been implemented to eliminate the need for crouching or bending, allowing individuals to participate in planting activities without physical discomfort. These adaptations enable individuals to engage in gardening activities in a way that suits their abilities and promotes their active involvement.

By incorporating such adaptations into the therapeutic garden, we ensure that individuals with different needs and abilities can fully participate and benefit from the therapeutic interventions, enhancing their overall experience and progress towards therapeutic goals.





Grading, on the other hand, involves systematically adjusting the level of difficulty or challenge within an activity by modifying factors such as size, effort or energy required, attention demands, judgment or discrimination required, and more. By employing grading techniques, we aim to support service users in successfully performing the activity, keeping them engaged and motivated to continue participating. Conversely, grading can also be used to increase the complexity or challenge of an activity, pushing the user to work towards achieving desired goals.

An illustrative example of grading within our therapeutic gardening practice at JTP would be providing wooden beams on the planting beds. This adaptation serves two purposes: preventing trampling of the plants while simultaneously increasing the effort required for balancing, thereby working on the vestibular system.



Additionally, it also promotes the development of midline crossing skills when individuals need to bend down and plant, further enhancing their motor coordination and cognitive processes.

By integrating adaptations and grading techniques into our activities, we can ensure that individuals receive personalized support, allowing them to participate at an appropriate level while addressing their therapeutic goals and fostering growth and development in various aspects of their well-being.

Through the implementation of the Healing Garden methodology, Jardines Terapéuticas Palmlöf (JTP) is dedicated to providing opportunities for all service users to actively engage in horticulture, gardening, sensory, and nature-based activities. Our approach is centered around maximizing the strengths of each individual, regardless of their specific needs or abilities.

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THE WORK PROGRESS ON LOCAL HEALING GARDENS

The development of local healing gardens in partner countries has made substantial progress, with a focus on creating serene and therapeutic environments that foster healing and well-being within the community. Here is an update on the recent activities conducted by each partner organization over the past few months.

PROGRESS AT INTRAS VALLADOLID)

The construction of the healing garden in Valladolid has made remarkable progress in recent months. Our team of dedicated gardeners has successfully completed several time-consuming tasks, including leveling the land, constructing a retaining wall using gabion stones, carefully measuring and delimiting the garden's layout, and paving the path with smooth concrete. Currently we are assembling the greenhouse structure.

At the same time, our gardeners are diligently tending to and nurturing the plants generously donated by the University of Valladolid. Among the donated species, there are *Laurus nobilis*, *Punica granatum*, *Photinia serrulata*, *Arbutus Unedo*, and *Viburnum tinus*, to name a few.



PROGRESS AT DIAKONIE KLINIK MOSBACH

The therapeutic garden project holds a special place in our hearts, as it is supported by numerous partners at the Johannes Diakonie in Mosbach. The collaborative efforts of the dedicated teams from the Diakonie Clinic and the gardening department of the Berufsbildungswerk Mosbach-Heidelberg are driving the project forward. At the Diakonie Klinik Mosbach, the Johannes Diakonie Mosbach has recently established and is further developing a therapeutic garden, designed to provide patients with a nurturing and healing environment.

Significant progress has already been made, with the creation of plant beds and the planting of various flora. Looking ahead, our vision for the garden encompasses the addition of a marble run, a pergola, and a small lawn with comfortable deck chairs. We also intend to expand the vegetable beds, allowing patients to actively engage in gardening. Furthermore, a sensory garden area is in the plans, featuring an array of fragrant plants.

We are thrilled about the ongoing development of the garden and eagerly anticipate its progress. The plans will continue to evolve through extensive discussions and will be regularly adapted to meet the seasonal requirements.

Furthermore, three employees from the garden department and the Diakonie Klinik participated in the 17th International Grünberg Garden Therapy Days on May 12-14, 2023. This event focused on health prevention and served as a platform for international exchange.



PROGRESS AT THEOTOKOS FOUNDATION (ATHENS)

TDuring the winter period, the Healing Gardener team worked on designing the areas of the healing garden. The trainees participating in the program have learnt about different soils, materials to make paths, trees, shrubs and flowers. They were excited to participate in the research conducted on internet to find the most suitable materials for the different areas of the garden, to choose the furniture and the vegetation.



The trainees from our gardening workshop collaborated with the woodwork workshop to design the pergola, tables and raised beds. Due to the extended rainy period, works have been delayed, but we are all eagerly waiting to start planting the trees, shrubs and flowers we have chosen.



THE BEGINNING GARDENER QUIZ

Take our Gardening Quiz to see how much you already know about gardening:

1. What is the primary purpose of compost in gardening?
 - a. Adding nutrients to the soil
 - b. Controlling pests and diseases
 - c. Improving water drainage
2. Which of the following is an example of a perennial plant?
 - a. Tomato
 - b. Sunflower
 - c. Rose
3. What is the best time of day to water plants?
 - a. Morning
 - b. Afternoon
 - c. Evening
4. Which vegetable plant requires trellis or support?
 - a. Carrot
 - b. Lettuce
 - c. Pea
5. What is the purpose of mulching in gardening?
 - a. Controlling weed growth
 - b. Providing shade for plants
 - c. Increasing air circulation
6. Which factor is crucial for successful seed germination?
 - a. Sunlight
 - b. Fertilizer
 - c. Cold temperatures
7. What does the term "pH" refer to in gardening?
 - a. Soil acidity or alkalinity
 - b. Plant height
 - c. Water content in the soil
8. Which of the following is a warm-season vegetable?
 - a. Broccoli
 - b. Cucumber
 - c. Spinach
9. What does the term "deadheading" mean in gardening?
 - a. Removing dead leaves from plants
 - b. Pruning overgrown branches
 - c. Removing faded flowers
10. Which continent is known as the native land of the potato?
 - a. Europe
 - b. Asia
 - c. South America

Answers: 1A 2C 3A 4C 5A 6A 7A 8B 9C 10C

**If you scored correct on 6 or more questions, you are on the right track to becoming a gardener.*

**If you scored below 6, you need to learn some more about plants and gardening tools*

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