



HEALING
gardener

Tour Guide
manual



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The HEALING GARDENER is a specialized training program focused on therapeutic gardening, designed to assist individuals with diverse disabilities in learning how to create healing gardens and comprehend the benefits that nature offers in our lives. These gardens have been established across various locations, including Spain, Greece, and Germany, through hands-on training courses conducted in vocational, occupational and rehabilitation centers.

The Healing Gardener program invites to actively engage the learners in constructing the therapeutic gardens, serving as a valuable rehabilitation tool for the participants themselves and to others frequenting these spaces. The learners become part of a collaborative creation process that enriches the overall well-being of their communities.

About the Tour Guide Manual

The Healing Gardener Tour Guide Manual is a tool to train the participants to become tour guides of the therapeutic gardens created during the project.

The manual covers essential aspects related to guiding visitors through the Healing Garden. It provides instructions on organizing and leading group visits efficiently. It delves into the role of guides in creating a welcoming and enjoyable environment for visitors, highlighting professionalism, kindness, and responsibility. A significant focus lies on effective communication, emphasizing the importance of expressing oneself clearly, listening and understanding visitors' queries. It stresses the need for preparedness, encouraging guides to seek assistance from supervisors for unexpected questions. The content further explores the concept of therapeutic gardens and their elements, and the significance of sustainable gardening practices and environmental responsibility. Finally, the manual educates guides about identifying potential hazards in the garden, preparing to minimize incidents, and effectively managing risks to ensure visitors' safety and enhance their experience.

Structured into modules, the Tour Guide Manual offers a balanced approach to learning, encompassing conceptual information, practical guidelines, case scenarios, hands-on exercises, and self-assessment tests. This approach ensures a comprehensive learning experience for aspiring tour guides.

The manual is intended for trainers implementing the Healing Gardener program with students, students participating in the program, as well as trainers and students interested in guiding garden visits, irrespective of their involvement in the Healing Gardener program.





MODULE 1: Organization and protocol basics

Conceptual information on the topic

This Module will help you learn how to organize and conduct a group visit to the Healing Garden. By following these steps, you can make sure that the visitors have a great time.

STEP 1. Getting Ready for the Group

Preparing for a group tour in the Healing Garden is crucial to make the visitors' experience enjoyable. We need to get ready beforehand to create a welcoming and safe place. Here are the things you should take into consideration when preparing for the visit:

- Keep the garden clean and neat so it looks inviting.
- Check that all paths are safe and easy to walk on (For more information on Risks to consider before and during the visit, see the Module 6. Risks Management).
- Make sure there are enough places to sit.
- Make sure there are enough shady areas under the trees. If there aren't, consider placing big umbrellas.
- Arrange for drinks to be available or ask the visitors to bring their own.
- Make sure the garden isn't crowded and has spaces for group activities.
- If there are more people working/using the garden at the same time, agree with your colleagues who will use which part of the garden.
- If you will implement some gardening activities with the group, get all the tools you need for gardening ready (shovels, brooms, watering cans, etc.) and make sure they are in good working condition.
- Prepare maps, brochures, or flyers to give to the visitors.
- Plan for bad weather or especially hot days by having a backup activity indoors or under cover.
- Ask the visitors to wear comfortable clothes and shoes and bring raincoats, umbrellas or sunscreen (depending on the expected weather).

STEP 2: Welcoming the Group





Welcoming the group in a friendly and informative manner is crucial as it sets the tone for the rest of the visit. Here are some tips to ensure a positive start to the visit:

- Meet the group at the garden entrance and greet them warmly.
- Explain what they can expect during the tour (what they'll see, types of activities, duration of the tour).
- Tell them about the rules they need to follow in the garden, such as walking on the designated paths, not running or not eating any fruit or berries unless explicitly permitted.

STEP 3: Leading the Tour

During this part of the visit, you will guide the group through different areas of the garden and explain how each one contributes to its therapeutic purpose. The specific activities and focus areas will depend on the program you have planned for the visit. Remember that it's important to consider the unique characteristics and needs of each group of visitors. Here are some suggestions to enhance the tour experience:

- Take the group to different parts of the garden and explain what role each area plays in the therapeutic activity.
- It can be engaging to share interesting stories about the garden and its elements. These stories can help create a stronger connection with the visitors and enrich their understanding. For instance, you can explain the origins of the therapeutic garden concept and the inspiration behind it. If there is any furniture or objects in the garden that were created by the participants, you can share the story behind their creation. Additionally, it can be valuable to highlight success stories of individuals who have benefited from the garden's activities and how it has positively impacted their well-being. These stories serve as real-life examples of the garden's effectiveness and can inspire the visitors.
- At some point during the visit, it can be a good idea to allow the visitors to independently explore and enjoy the garden, provided they are adults and you have ensured that there are no hazards present.
- Be available to answer any questions.

STEP 4. Ending the Tour

- Finish the tour with a final statement and thank the group for coming.
- Give them a chance to share their thoughts or ask more questions.





- Offer your contact information if they need to reach out later.
- Give them materials to take home, like brochures or maps, to remember their visit.
- Make sure the garden is clean and tidy after they leave.

Do's and don'ts

DO	DON'T DO
Prepare for your group thoroughly. Learn about the elements and functions of the garden.	Do not be late for the tour.
Make sure that the garden is clean before receiving the group.	Do not eat anything during the tour.
Introduce yourself to the visitors.	Do not answer your phone or send text messages during the visit.
If the day is hot, procure for the group to stand in the shade.	Do not receive visitors if you are wearing stained or muddy overalls.
Speak loud enough for every visitor to hear.	Avoid using slang. Do not speak too fast.
Make sure to wash the soil off your hands.	Do not take photos without the consent of the participants.
Question about physical limitations.	Do not force anyone to do something they do not want to do.
Choose tasks for participants so that they do not feel overwhelmed.	Do not ignore any objections or fears of the participants.
Be a role model and be respectful of nature and the garden.	
Be careful with the equipment.	
Wear protective equipment when necessary. Have protective equipment available for participants.	
Respect the physical boundaries of the visitors.	
Consider offering recovery breaks when the visit is longer than 2 hours.	

Case scenarios

Case scenario 1: Safety in the garden

Michael, a gardening VET student, is excited to lead a visit to the Healing Garden for a group of students from a local primary school. As the tour begins, he warmly welcomes the young





visitors and explains what they can expect during the tour. The children are eager to explore the garden.

During the tour, Michael forgets to inform the children about the rules they need to follow in the garden, such as staying on designated paths and not eating any fruit or berries unless explicitly permitted. While exploring the garden, one of the children, curious about the fresh strawberries, tastes one without seeking permission. Michael notices it immediately and realizes the potential risk associated with eating berries without proper guidance and authorization.

Though nothing serious happens on this particular occasion, such an oversight could lead to unintended incidents, like allergic reactions or ingesting unsafe plants.

Questions:

1. What could happen if kids eat fruits or berries from the garden without asking for permission first?
2. How can Michael tell the visiting children about the rules and safety guidelines without overwhelming them or making the experience feel restrictive?
3. What can Michael do to make sure the children understand the risks of eating unknown plants in the garden and encourage them not to do it, while still letting them be curious and explore the garden?

Case scenario 2

Olivia is to guide a group of senior citizens on a tour of the Healing Garden. She encounters heavy traffic on her way to the garden, making her late for the tour. Despite the delay, Olivia apologizes and tries to make up for the lost time by quickly starting the activities.

As the tour progresses, the group engages in a seed planting activity, and Olivia is focused on guiding the participants through the process. Suddenly, her phone rings, and she answers it.

During this moment, one of the visitors accidentally cuts herself while handling the gardening tools. The visitor, visibly distressed, asks for help, but Olivia is occupied with the phone call and doesn't notice what has occurred. Realizing the situation, another member of the group quickly rushes to provide first aid and comfort to the injured visitor. Once Olivia ends the call she rushes to assist the injured visitor. She tends to the cut and ensures the visitor is safe.





Questions:

1. What could Olivia have done to arrive at the garden on time?
2. What happened when Olivia received a phone call during the seed planting activity, and how did it affect her ability to notice the injured visitor?
3. Could Olivia have avoided the accident? If so, how?

Exercises

Exercise 1. Creating an activity to awaken senses and memories

The purpose of this exercise is to plan and test an activity involving sensory experiences to implement with a group of visitors to the Healing Garden (70 min).

In a few days you will guide a visit for a group of elderly people from a nearby day care center. You've been informed that some of the participants have health conditions like cognitive deterioration and memory loss and you need to plan an activity suitable for the group. Your supervisor proposes that you organize a sensory stimulation activity in the garden. To do so, you will follow the steps below:

STEP 1: Research (20 mins):

Research information on sensory experiences and memory activation and think of how you can apply it in the Healing Garden. Write down the essential information so that you can present the activity to the group of visitors.

STEP 2: Handout Preparation (20 mins):

Plan how you are going to organize the sensory stimulation exercise. Prepare a handout for seniors to record their impressions during the visit.

You can focus on different senses or one concrete sense, e.g. touch, sight, smell, sound. For instance, if you choose to focus on smell you could include questions such as "What do I smell?", "What does it smell like?", "What plant could it be or is it?", and "Does this smell remind me of something, e.g., from childhood?"

STEP 3: Practice Session (30 mins):

In a practice visit to the healing garden, pair up with another student. One of you will act as a senior visitor and the other as a guide. The latter will guide their peer through the





garden, encouraging them to carry out the exercise in step 2. The “visitors” will note down their impressions using the handout.

Debrief the experience, discussing the significance of different senses and the impact on memory and well-being.

Exercise 2: Customized tours for diverse visitor groups

In this exercise, we'll have the opportunity to tailor a tour specifically for different groups of visitors, such as senior citizens with memory loss, children with special needs, persons with physical disabilities, or refugees and newcomers. The goal is to foster creativity, empathy, and inclusivity in designing tours that respond to the unique needs and interests of various visitor groups.

Instructions:

Form small groups of 3 to 4 trainees. Each group will focus on creating a unique tour program for one specific visitor group.

Select one of the following visitor groups to design your tour for:

- a) Senior citizens with memory loss
- b) Children with special needs, such as sensory sensitivities
- c) Persons with physical disabilities
- d) Refugees and newcomers

Plan your tour program (20'): Brainstorm and outline the key elements of your tour program. Use the worksheet 1 (Annex 1). Consider the following points:

- Which areas of the Healing Garden will you visit, and why are they relevant to the specific group?
- What therapeutic activities will you include during the tour to meet the needs of your chosen visitors?
- How will you make the tour engaging and interactive for your target group?
- What key points or stories will you share to create a meaningful connection with the visitors?
- Are there any specific accommodations or adjustments you'll make to ensure inclusivity and accessibility?

Prepare your presentation (10'): Create a brief presentation of your tour program. Be ready to explain your choice of activities and how you believe the program will benefit the participants (Write it down in worksheet 1).





Present and discuss: Once all the groups have prepared their presentations, take turns sharing your customized tour programs. After each presentation, we'll have a short discussion and feedback session.

Reflect and refine: After all the presentations, we'll reflect on the different approaches and ideas presented. Collaboratively, we'll identify the most effective elements from each program and discuss how to further refine our overall tour offerings.





Self-assessment

Now that we have finished this Module, you are ready to assess your learning and understanding of its contents. Please, rate each proposed statement with a score from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “definitely yes”.

Please, reflect upon your answers and be sincere. Hand the filled self-assessment sheet to the facilitator.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can prepare the Healing Garden to create a welcoming and safe place for the group visit.					
2. I understand why it is necessary to inform the visitors about the garden's rules and guidelines for their safety and enjoyment.					
3. I am aware of the importance of tailoring a garden tour for specific visitor groups to make their experience meaningful.					
4. I understand the importance of questioning the visitors about physical limitations to adapt the activity accordingly					
5. I know how to organize a hands-on gardening activity					
6. I know how to conclude the tour by thanking the group and providing them with materials to remember their visit.					





Annex 1. Worksheet: Customized Tours for Diverse Visitor Groups

Plan the visit to the garden for the group. Describe what you intend to do in each phase of the visit in a step by step manner.

Target group		
Number of visitors		
Duration of the visit		
Activity	Time (minutes)	Step by step description
Introduction		
Garden tour		
Activity 1		
Review and closure		
Farewell		





Explain your choice of activities for the target group:

Sample solution Module 1. Exercise 2. Customized Tours for Diverse Visitor Groups

The sample plan below might help you design your own plan for the tour.

Target group	Refugees and newcomers	
Number of visitors	10	
Duration of the visit	75 minutes	
Activity	Time (minutes)	Step by step description
Introduction	10 min	We welcome the group to the Healing Garden. We say our name and tell them what our role and connection is to the garden. We ask the group for their names and where they are from. Ask them what a garden means to them. Do they see a garden as a place to rest and relax, a place to work and grow plants or something else? Find out if they think of it as a space to be alone or a place to be with others.
Garden tour	15 min	We take a walk through the garden, presenting each area to the group, looking at the plants and flowers, and using our senses to enjoy them. We talk about how the garden is special for everyone in our organization and why it's important.
Activity "Planting seeds"	40 min	We organize a planting seeds activity to engage the participants and let them experience the joy of gardening. We make sure to prepare everything needed, including pots for planting, soil, seeds of various plants, watering cans, and gardening gloves.





		<p>Divide the group into smaller teams and provide clear and simple instructions on how to plant the seeds, making sure everyone understands the process. We offer help and support to anyone who needs it, ensuring everyone feels included and capable of participating.</p> <p>During the activity, we invite the participants to share agricultural practices from their native cultures.</p>
Review and closure	5 min	<p>We ask the participants about what they liked and learned during the visit.</p> <p>We prepare a few simple questions regarding what was discussed during the visit to check if the message was correctly received.</p> <p>We invite the participants to ask us any questions they might have.</p>
Farewell	5 min	<p>We thank the participants for coming and for sharing their experiences. We invite them to come back anytime and tell others about the garden too.</p>

Explain your choice of activities for the target group:

Our visit plan focuses on sharing and learning from each other's cultures. We will talk to the participants about where they come from and what gardens mean to them. During the garden tour, we'll point out the plants that have cultural significance and discuss how they relate to the newcomers' backgrounds. In the hands-on gardening activity, we will encourage everyone to share their traditional planting practices and gardening stories from their home countries. This way, we can create a friendly space where we celebrate our diverse identities and experiences together.





MODULE 2: Communicating effectively

Conceptual information on the topic

Communicating effectively is about expressing yourself and understanding others. As a tour guide, you can learn and remember some things that you will need to say, and for others, you may need to have some notes as a reminder. Each group of visitors is different, and they may ask some questions you are not prepared for, but you can always ask for assistance from your supervisor.

As a tour guide of the Healing Garden, you will need to learn what to say and how to say it. What you say will refer to the content and information you provide to the visitors. Some topics you will need to cover are:

- Introducing yourself
- Introducing your organization
- Outlining the rules of safety and appropriate behavior
- Talking about the Healing Garden idea and the goals of its use
- Talking about the different areas of the garden and their use
- Talking about the plants, trees and flowers
- Giving instructions about activities

Your trainer will help you organize this information and you will learn more about these topics in the other Modules of this Guide. To communicate this information well, you will need to consider how you express all of the above. The “how” of communicating refers to the way you use your voice and speaking skills, the language you use, and what you do while you are speaking and listening. The following communication skills will ensure you and your visitors will have an enjoyable and useful time during the visit.

Some tips related to your **voice and speech** are:

- **Pace of speaking** – Speak at an appropriate speed, not too fast or too slow.
- **Pause** every now and then – this will give the visitors time to understand what you have said and also allow time for questions
- **Volume** – Your voice should be loud enough for the entire group to hear. If you speak with a low volume voice, you can express this to the group and ask them to come





closer, quiet down and listen closely. If they have a question, they can raise their hand rather than talking over you. You can practice some breathing skills and try to project your voice so it is louder without shouting.

- **Pronunciation** – Speak clearly, pronouncing each word separately.

Some tips on how to position your **face and body** are as follows:

- Your **body language** says a lot about your mood, confidence and how you are feeling. Make sure to smile and have a pleasant facial expression. Your body posture should be upright. Use your hands to make gestures as you speak, but don't overdo it.
- Keep in mind the **appropriate distance** needed between people. Don't get too close and don't touch people.
- **Eye contact** is important but not essential. Try to look at all the people in the group. If it is difficult for you to make eye contact, try looking at a point in the distance, just behind the group. Another strategy is, try looking down or somewhere else and just briefly glancing at the people every now and then.
- Take care of your **appearance** (hygiene, hair, clothes)
- Make sure everyone can see you – Stand up if they are sitting. If you are all standing, get the group to form a half circle around you.

Some tips related to the **language** you use:

- Keep things **simple** – Avoid difficult terminology and jargon.
- Be **concise** – Say what you want to with one sentence instead of using lots of words.
- The level of **formality** of the language you use may change depending on the group. In some cultures, it is necessary to use plural language when talking to seniors.

Some tips related to **communication** are:

- Listen to the visitors – It is important to pay attention to what the visitors have to say and to respond to their questions.
- Be aware of the **listeners' feedback**. Look for signs of boredom, fatigue, illness.
- **Ask questions** to keep the group active and interested
- A good **sense of humor** will also keep people's attention – prepare a joke or a funny story to say.





- Be polite

If it is difficult to remember all the information you have to say. You could help yourself by:

- Practicing with somebody else or on your own.
- Recording yourself and listening to the recording.
- Using cue cards with key words or pictures.

If you see or feel that the visitors aren't paying attention to what you are saying, don't stress. It is likely unrelated to you or what you are talking about. Some signs that someone is tired or bored, may be:

- They are looking at something else
- They are talking about something else with the others
- They look distracted or are looking at their phones
- They are moving away from the group
- They are not participating by commenting or answering questions

Here are some tips on what you can do in these situations:

- Ask the visitors if they are tired. Consider taking a small break.
- Consider doing a short activity and then continue with the tour.
- Ask them if they are having difficulty understanding you. Repeat the part that was difficult. Use simpler language or show them if it is possible.
- Ask them if they have a query.
- Ask them to share an experience related to something in the garden

Do's and don'ts

DO	DON'T
Keep the appropriate distance from visitors. Respect their personal space.	Don't get too close to the visitors and don't touch them. Also, don't allow the visitors to get too close to you either.
Observe the visitor's reactions and behavior.	Don't ignore signs of tiredness, disinterest or boredom.
Introduce yourself and your organization to the visitors.	Do not answer personal questions about yourself.
Keep a professional appearance and behavior.	Do not answer your phone or send text messages during the visit.





Speak slowly.	Do not rush to say everything.
Use simple, clear sentences.	Do not use slang.
Speak loud enough for every visitor to hear you.	Don't whisper. Don't shout.
Explain new or difficult words. Show pictures to help the visitors understand if needed.	Don't use jargon (difficult terminology).
Make eye contact with the visitors.	Don't stare and don't look at the same person or place all the time.
Respond to the visitors' comments and questions.	Don't ignore a question you did not hear or understand well. Ask the person to repeat.
Keep calm if a particular person is making things difficult for you. Politely ask them to stop. If this doesn't work, ask for help from their or your supervisor.	Don't be rude to someone who is acting inappropriately. Seek help.
Be prepared to adapt the content of what you want to say depending on the needs of the visitors. You may need to say less or more. You may need to describe what you are showing with more detail.	

Case scenarios

Case scenario 1

Bill is conducting a tour of the Healing Garden with a group of young visitors with hearing impairment. The visitors show great interest. Shortly after the tour starts, the noise of a lawn mower prevents the visitors from following the tour. Two young people appear not to be watching Bill. They are standing a little further away and looking at a flowering bush. Bill notices it and politely invites them to return to the group while making a gesture at the same time. He realizes that not everyone is watching and listening to him and tries to speak louder.

Questions





1. What prevented the visitors from listening to the guide?
2. Was the guide's reaction correct?
3. What else could he have done to continue the tour without difficulty?

Case scenario 2

Kathy welcomes a group of 10 adults using wheelchairs to the garden. It is the first time she is doing a tour and she is nervous. She speaks with a low voice and has difficulty keeping the group's attention. There is not enough room for all the wheelchairs and some people in the back cannot see her. Some of them start talking amongst themselves. Others are looking at their phones. Kathy decides to split the group in two and asks one of her fellow students to help. She assigns a group of 5 people to her fellow student and they do the activity at the planters which was planned for later. She continues the tour with the other 5 people and finds it much easier to manage the smaller group.

Questions

1. Why was it difficult for all the visitors to follow the tour?
2. Was splitting the group into two groups of 5 a good solution?
3. What else could the guide have done?

Exercises

Exercise 1: Practicing and rehearsing my script

You are organizing a visit to the garden for a group of primary school students (11 years old). The duration of the visit is 45 min. Look at the outline of a script in the Annex and think about what else you will include and what you will leave out.

Activity	Time	Description
Practice making introductions	10 minutes	Introduce myself. Introduce my organization. Get to know the visitors (ask their names and simple questions like: does your family have a garden? Have you ever planted a plant?)
Garden tour	15 minutes	Explain what a therapeutic garden is, what activities we implement in our garden





Introduction to plants in our garden	10 minutes	Introduce 5 (or more) plants in our garden, tell the visitors about their characteristics and/or uses
Closure	10 minutes	Conduct a short quiz about the therapeutic garden uses and elements, the plants in our garden, etc. For highly functional students, we could prepare a handout with questions to answer. For students with more challenges, we could do the quiz verbally. Short feedback on the visit (a thought and a feeling)

Exercise 2: Planning and explaining an activity

You are organizing a visit to the garden for a group of adults with physical disabilities. Some of the visitors also have difficulty concentrating. The duration of the visit is 1 hour and you want to carry out an activity where they will transplant bulbs into the planters.

Activity	Time	Description
Plan and explain the activity	3 minutes	Write or draw the instructions in a step by step way. Think about how you could change the steps so that it is easier for the students to do the activity.
Show the steps	5 minutes	Demonstrate what you expect the students to do. Practice the verbal instructions.
Problem solving during the activity	10 minutes	The trainer could have a list of possible difficulties the tour guide may face. Some examples are:





		<p>The visitors put the bulbs in the soil the wrong way up. How will you correct by providing feedback and explain the mistake?</p> <p>The visitors plant the bulbs too close together. How will you correct by providing feedback and explain the mistake?</p> <p>One visitor using a wheelchair cannot reach into the planter. How will you help this person participate?</p>
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Alternative: For trainees facing more difficulties, the assignment might be organizing the steps of the activity and writing them in a table in the correct order or placing pictures of the steps in the correct order.





Worksheet. Exercise 1: Practicing and rehearsing my script (more information here)

Look at the outline of a script in the Annex and think about what else you will include and what you will leave out. Write down your own script below:

Introductions

-
-
-
-
-
-

The beginning of the tour

-
-
-
-
-

During the tour

-
-
-
-
-

Throughout the tour

-
-
-
-

Closing the tour

-
-
-





Worksheet. Exercise 2: Planning and explaining an activity

Write the instructions for transplanting the bulbs. Write one sentence for each step.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Write the solutions to each of the problems presented. What would you say to the visitors in each case?

1. The visitors put the bulbs in the soil the wrong way up.

2. The visitors plant the bulbs too close together.

3. One visitor using a wheelchair cannot reach into the planter.





Self-assessment

Now that we have finished this Module, you are ready to assess your learning and understanding of its contents. Please, rate each proposed statement with a score from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “definitely yes”.

Please, reflect upon your answers and be sincere. Hand the filled self-assessment sheet to the facilitator.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I can adjust the volume of my speech depending on the group and the conditions					
2. I can name 5 things to do with my face and body that help communicating effectively					
3. I can remember the order of the things I have to say during the tour					
4. I can name 3 different things to do to simplify the information so that the visitors understand me.					
5. I know how to identify when the visitors are getting bored or are having difficulty understanding me.					





Annex

Prepare a script that suits your Healing Garden. The script could be more or less detailed depending on the skills of the tour guide. It could be supported by photos, pictures or symbols depending on the needs of the visitors.

Following is an example, but it is only an outline of the possible topics a tour guide needs to cover and some reminders about good communication.

Example:

1. Introductions

I greet and welcome the visitors.

I say my name and briefly describe my role.

I say a few sentences about Theotokos.

I ask the visitors to say their names.

I talk about the rules of the garden (safety and behavior)

2. Beginning the tour

I explain what a Healing Garden is

I briefly talk about its uses and benefits

3. During the tour

I describe the different areas/zones of the garden

I explain how they areas are used.

I show some of the plants, trees, flowers and other features.

4. Closing the tour

I ask visitors if they have any questions.

I thank the visitors for their attention and

I bid them farewell.

Things to remember throughout the tour

I speak slowly, loudly, clearly.

I look at the visitors.

I stand in front of the visitors.

I avoid a lot of movement (hands, feet, body)

I pause briefly to observe visitors.

I watch the body language of the visitors.

I allow time for them to ask questions

I listen carefully to visitors' questions.





MODULE 3: Professionalism and ethics

Conceptual information on the topic

As gardening guides, you have a special role in making visitors feel welcome and helping them enjoy their time in the garden. In this module, we'll explore how to be professional, kind, and responsible guides.

What is professionalism?

Professionalism means acting in a skilled, honest, and responsible way in your job or role. It includes how you behave, your attitude, and following ethical rules. It shows you're dedicated to your work and the people it affects. Different jobs have different ways of showing professionalism. For example, in healthcare, being professional would mean talking kindly with patients, giving correct advice, and keeping their information private. Teachers are professional by preparing lessons, making a good learning environment, and treating students fairly.

Garden guides also show professionalism. They give helpful tours, create a friendly garden, and treat visitors kindly. Being professional means doing your job really well. When you're professional, visitors feel happy, safe, and respected. It's like you're a guardian of the garden, making sure everything is great and everyone feels comfortable. You're showing that you care about your job and the people you're guiding.

No matter what job you have, professionalism shows your dedication to doing your best, always getting better, and treating your coworkers, clients, and community with respect.

Code of Ethics

A code of ethics is like a special guide that shows you how to be an excellent guide. Think of it as a set of rules that help you act honestly, respectfully, and fairly. This ethical code is like a compass that guides you. Imagine wearing a "good behavior" cape. Your actions show you're dedicated to the garden and its visitors, making their experience better. Just as a superhero's moral code empowers them to make the world a better place, your adherence to this ethical guide empowers you to create an incredible and memorable experience for every visitor you guide through the garden.





Gardening guide's Code of Ethics

Respectful Interaction	Treat all visitors with kindness and inclusivity, honoring their uniqueness and fostering a positive atmosphere.
Privacy and Trust	Safeguard personal information and stories, respecting visitors' confidentiality and gaining explicit permission for any sharing.
Honesty and Accuracy	Provide accurate information, admit when uncertain, and maintain transparency in all interactions.
Safety Priority	Prioritize visitors' safety, guiding them away from hazards and responding calmly in emergencies.
Cultural Sensitivity	Embrace and learn from diverse cultures, adapting your approach to create a respectful and inclusive experience.
Environmental Care	Promote responsible behavior and respect for the environment, ensuring the garden remains a thriving and cherished space for all.

Being a responsible and respectful guide

Being truthful and accurate in your interactions is like planting seeds of trust with every word you speak. When you provide information, make sure it's correct and reliable. If you're not sure about something, it's absolutely okay to say so. Just like a garden's growth, your honesty and transparency create a solid foundation for a positive and trustworthy relationship with the visitors. This approach helps them feel confident in the information you share and builds a connection of reliability between you and the garden's guests.

Talking and listening a key to creating a good guiding experience. When you talk to visitors, use kind words and a friendly tone. Listen carefully to what they say, and if they have questions, try your best to answer them. Good communication helps everyone understand each other better. Check Module 2 for more information on Effective Communication.

Remember that safety is extremely important. Look around the garden and check if there is anything that could be dangerous. If you find something, let your supervisor





know. And if there's an emergency, stay calm and do what you've learned to keep everyone safe. Check Module 6 for more information on Risk Management.

Fostering diversity for all visitors

Think that every visitor is special, and some might need extra help or have different needs. It's important to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Imagine you're making new friends and you want them to feel happy and welcome.

In our diverse world, people come from different places and backgrounds. This means they might have unique traditions, languages, beliefs and ways of doing things, which is really great because we can learn from each other. As a garden guide, it's important to be respectful and considerate of these differences. Treat everyone with kindness, just like you would want to be treated. When visitors share stories or beliefs, listen and learn from them. You can ask questions and share about your culture too. This creates a friendly atmosphere where everyone feels valued and respected.

People have a wide range of physical appearances, such as skin color, facial features, and hair types. These differences make each person unique and special. As a garden guide, it's important to treat everyone with kindness and fairness, no matter how they look. Remember, the beauty of the garden lies in its diversity, just like the variety of flowers. Embrace and celebrate these differences, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all visitors.

You can take advantage of the cultural richness among the visitors group and make the visit even more interesting and instructive for everyone. For instance, visitors might share stories about how certain plants were used in their cultures for healing, cooking, or rituals, or how similar plants are used in festivals or celebrations in their countries. Some plants in the garden might have interesting stories or myths associated with them in different cultures. Visitors could share these stories, adding a layer of storytelling and connection to the garden.

Securing confidentiality and data protection

As a garden guide, you play a pivotal role in creating a welcoming and secure environment for all visitors. Respecting their privacy and safeguarding their personal information is of utmost importance. Let's explore how you can ensure that every visitor feels safe and respected during their time in the garden.

Personal information





Visitors may provide you with personal information like their name, surname, and contact information. They might also share personal details with you when sharing their thoughts or stories taken from their lives. Just as you value your own privacy, it's crucial to extend the same regard to their information even if it seems trivial. This involves securing their data and not disclosing it to others unless they grant permission or if safety necessitates it. By keeping the confidentiality of their personal details, you showcase your commitment to their trust, thus establishing a secure and comfortable environment for everyone involved.

Photographing

When it comes to taking photos, it's essential to always ask for permission. If you want to take a picture of visitors or a group, kindly request their consent. This shows respect for their personal space and preferences. Moreover, if you plan to use these photos for any publication, such as on a website or in promotional material, it's vital to have written permission. This permission ensures that visitors are aware of how their images will be used and gives them the choice to agree or not. Make sure to have consent forms ready for visitors to sign. These forms clearly outline the purpose of the photos and where they will be used.

Do's and don'ts

DO	DON'T DO
Provide correct information and let visitors know when you're not certain about something.	Avoid giving wrong information or assuming things without checking the facts.
Keep personal information and stories safe, showing respect for visitors' privacy. Always ask for permission before sharing anything.	Never share personal details or stories from visitors unless you have explicit permission.
Treat everyone kindly and respectfully, taking into account their different backgrounds and needs.	Don't treat visitors differently based on how they look, where they're from, or what they can do.





Keep visitors safe by guiding them away from hazards and responding calmly in emergencies.	Do not take photos without obtaining visitors' permission or use their images for publication without written consent.
Encourage responsible behavior and respect for the garden among visitors.	Avoid doing anything that could upset or exclude people from diverse backgrounds.
	Avoid invading the personal space of the visitors especially during interactions or activities.

Case scenario

Sara is guiding a tour in the garden on a pleasant May morning. The garden is filled with lovely flowers. Inspired by the beauty around her, Sara decides to take some photos to share on social media. She believes these pictures will capture the enjoyable visitor experience and the garden's charm. Sara uploads the photos and receives praise from colleagues and friends. However, the situation takes an unexpected twist when Carla, a participant from the garden tour, contacts the organization. Carla expresses her discontent because her photo was used without her permission in the social media post. She values her privacy and is unhappy that her picture was shared publicly without her explicit agreement.

Questions:

1. What action did Sara take during the garden tour that led to a situation of concern?
2. How did Carla react to the use of her photograph in the social media post? Why did Carla feel unhappy?
3. How could Sara have acted to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the visitors?

Exercises

Exercise 1: Interactive Role-Play Scenarios

In this exercise, we'll be doing role-play scenarios to simulate real-life situations you might encounter while guiding visitors through the garden. These scenarios will focus on respectful interaction, adaptability, and inclusivity.

Step 1: Scenario Setup (10 minutes)





Choose a scenario that you'd like to develop and role-play:

1. **Scenario 1: Welcoming a Child Explorer** Imagine you're guiding a group that includes a young child who is curious about everything. How would you adapt your explanations and engage the child's interest while also keeping the adults engaged?
2. **Scenario 2: Assisting a Visitor with Limited Mobility** You're leading a tour with a visitor who uses a wheelchair. How do you ensure they have a comfortable experience and can access different parts of the garden?
3. **Scenario 3: Language Barrier** You have visitors who speak a different language and have limited understanding of your language. How do you effectively convey information and create an inclusive atmosphere?
4. **Scenario 4: Unforeseen Emergency** During a tour, a visitor suddenly feels unwell. How do you handle the situation calmly, ensuring the visitor's safety while keeping the rest of the group engaged and informed?

Step 2: Role-Play (20 minutes)

Now, it's time to pair up and take turns being the gardening guide and the visitor in each scenario. Remember to focus on respectful communication, adaptability, and inclusivity.

Step 3: Group Discussion (15 minutes) After each role-play, let's come together as a group and discuss what went well and what could be improved. How did you adapt your communication? What strategies did you use to make sure everyone felt included and comfortable?

Step 4: Reflection (10 minutes) Think about how these scenarios relate to the principles we've discussed, such as being respectful, adapting to different needs, and prioritizing safety. How did these scenarios help you understand the importance of these principles in your role as a gardening guide?

Use the [Interactive Role-Play Scenarios worksheet](#) to plan the role play and write down your reflections.

Exercise 2: Collaborative knowledge challenge

In this activity, you will work together to create a multiple-choice questionnaire to test your fellow trainees' knowledge on various aspects of being a responsible and respectful gardening guide.





Here are the specific topics to develop questions for:

- What is professionalism
- Gardening guide's code of ethics
- Respecting visitors' privacy and confidentiality
- Fostering cultural sensitivity and inclusivity

Step 1: Elaborating the questionnaire (40 minutes)

Divide into groups of 3-4 persons. Within your groups, collaborate to design meaningful multiple-choice questions for the assigned topics. Your questions should reflect the core principles outlined in the module. Develop at least 10 questions for each topic. Each question shall have 4 alternative responses (A, B, C, D), of which only one is correct. Remember to indicate the correct answers on a separate page.

As you create the questions, keep in mind the ethical code you explored in the module. Ensure that your questions align with the principles of respectful interaction, honesty, accuracy, safety, cultural sensitivity, and data protection.

Step 2: Knowledge challenge (20 minutes)

Exchange the questionnaires with the other groups. Individually answer the questions on the questionnaire you received. Check the answers.

Step 3: Reflective discussion (15 minutes)

Come together as a full group following the knowledge challenge. Take a moment to think about the experience collectively. Share what you've discovered, any difficulties you encountered, and the lessons you've taken away. How has this activity improved your understanding of ethical principles and their importance in your role as a gardening guide?

Example of a question:

Why is safeguarding visitors' personal information important?

- A) To use it for your personal gain
- B) To ensure visitors provide accurate information
- C) To respect visitors' privacy and build trust
- D) To share it with colleagues





Correct answer: C) To respect visitors' privacy and build trust

Self-assessment

Now that we have finished this Module, you are ready to assess your learning and understanding of its contents. Please, rate each proposed statement with a score from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “definitely yes”.

Please, reflect upon your answers and be sincere. Hand the filled self-assessment sheet to the facilitator.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know what it means to be professional					
2. I understand why professionalism is crucial for creating a positive experience for garden visitors					
3. I can name the key components of the Gardening Guide's Code of Ethics					
4. I understand how to show sensitivity and inclusivity in interacting with diverse visitors					
5. I can explain why safeguarding visitors' personal information is so important					





Worksheet: Interactive Role-Play Scenarios

Scenario (Choose one scenario: Child Explorer, Limited Mobility, Language Barrier, Unforeseen Emergency)

Planning:

1. Describe how you will prepare for the role-play. Consider tone, body language, and any necessary materials.

2. Write down and explain at least one strategy that you will use to adapt your communication and approach for the chosen scenario, e.g. visual aids, simplified language, clear directions, nonverbal communication, use of technology, active listening.

Reflection:

1. Identify two positive aspects from the role-play. How did your adaptability enhance the experience? Were you able to ensure inclusivity?





2. Note one aspect you could refine. How could your approach further prioritize safety and respect for the visitor's needs?





MODULE 4: Therapeutic gardening and the Healing Gardener Project

Conceptual information on the topic

What is a therapeutic garden?

A therapeutic garden is a specially designed, plant-dominated environment where the visitor/user and nature are the main protagonists. It allows for meaningful interactions with nature, supported by carefully chosen features that address the needs of a specific group of individuals. The design is adapted to the participants' therapeutic goals and encourages engaging interactions between people and plants, incorporating elements that promote sensory stimulation, horticultural therapy, physical activity, and reminiscence. It is aimed at fostering well-being and motivation. Evidence based research supports the effectiveness of therapeutic gardens, and their design and therapies have been scientifically validated.

Currently, the disconnection of individuals and society from nature has led to a negative impact on physical and psychological health. Many experts now view contact with nature as a tool to improve overall health, as there is evidence that natural sunlight triggers the production of serotonin, known as the hormone of happiness, leading to feelings of well-being, relaxation, and increased self-esteem. Also, being outdoors and exposed to beneficial bacteria found in nature contributes to a stronger immune system. This notion aligns with the concept of biophilia, which suggests that humans possess an inherent inclination to seek connections with nature and other life forms. Biophilia serves as an explanation for why we experience an improved sense of well-being in natural settings.

Who is the therapeutic garden for?

Therapeutic gardens are beneficial for individuals of all ages and abilities. They are particularly valuable for individuals dealing with physical disabilities, cognitive decline, or mental health challenges. These gardens offer a mix of purposes, covering social, recreational, therapeutic, and vocational aspects. Depending on the focus, the sessions conducted in these gardens can aim at promoting overall well-being, addressing specific health goals, or improving skills that could lead to participation in meaningful daily activities or future employment opportunities. It's important to keep in mind the cultural factors at play, as the beliefs and values of various groups play a significant role in shaping how the garden is approached and designed.

Here's a closer look at each area of application and its goals:





1. **Social/Recreational:** The focus is on creating an environment that enhances a sense of well-being, improves quality of life, and encourages social interactions. The garden serves as a space for leisure activities, where people can relax, communicate, and engage in gardening activities at their own pace.
2. **Therapeutic:** In therapeutic programs, the garden takes on a crucial role in maintaining and restoring health. The approach is personalized to the individual, tailored to their unique health objectives. Healthcare professionals oversee these interventions to ensure they are effective and suitable.
3. **Vocational:** Programs designed to develop the skills that will lead the service user to find employment. These programs provide structured skill development, preparing participants for work in gardening or related fields. Vocational rehabilitation efforts aim to retrain individuals who may have faced setbacks due to injury, illness, or disability, equipping them with horticultural expertise for future job prospects.

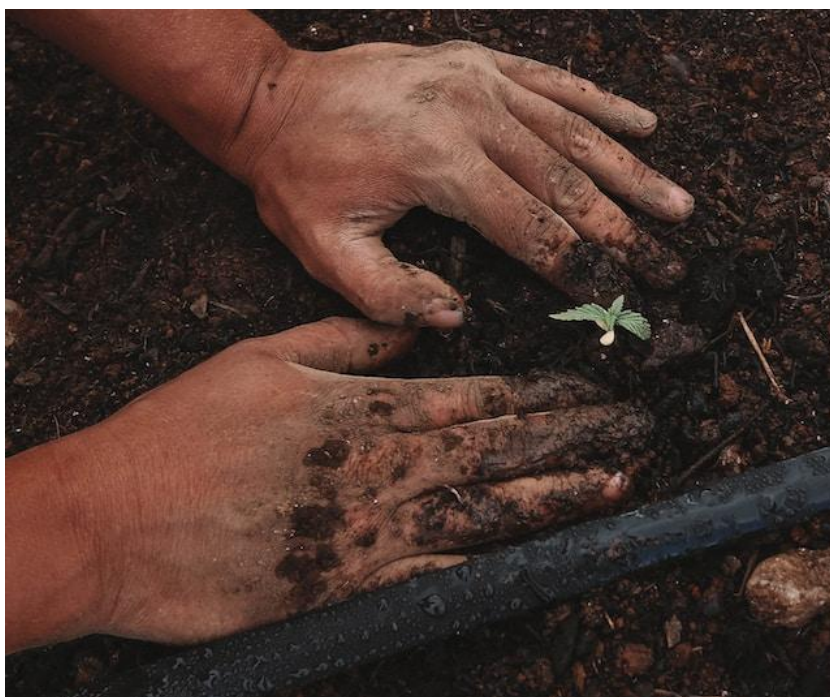


Photo by [GreenForce Staffing](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Elements of a therapeutic garden

Therapeutic gardens consist of various components that contribute to creating a healing environment. These include a wide variety of plants, pathways, seating areas, water features, and structures like pergolas and fountains. Integrating these components enables a range of therapies and exercises, fostering well-being and





autonomy. Designing a therapeutic garden needs finding a balance between aesthetics, functionality, historical and cultural context, and accessibility.

A therapeutic garden is divided into distinct zones, making it easier to plan outdoor therapy in a way that maximizes benefits and also helping users orient themselves within the garden more effectively. Depending on the group's needs, these four segments can expand into even more specialized areas.

Now, let's delve deeper into these segments:

Sensory zone:

This zone features diverse small perennial plants positioned at different heights, that engage our senses. Raised beds facilitate care, harvesting, and enjoyment of their aromatic properties. These plants are used for relaxation exercises and in the creation of herbal teas and soaps. Ground-level aromatic plants release pleasant scents when stepped on, while shrubs offer tactile experiences when touched with hands or legs. A variety of textures, like the velvety petals of roses or the rugged bark of trees, help us become aware of the present and provide material for creative crafts.

Horticultural therapy zone:

This zone centers around horticultural therapy. Within this space, we find distinct raised beds, adapted gardening tools, a water source, compact greenhouses, storage for tools, and seating areas for rest after engaging in intensive physical activities. This ample area has sturdy flooring, allowing free movement for tending to vegetables, flowers, and fruits.

Physical activity zone:

Consists of a free-form enclosed pathway encircled by a handrail to support walking and balance exercises. In the center lies a lawn area suitable for activities like yoga, tai chi, relaxation, and sports. There is a slope that offers opportunities for challenges such as strengthening leg and foot muscles. The design is addressed at mild to moderate exercise, with adjacent plantings along the path contributing to training efforts. Ideally, various sports equipment are available, including elastic training bands, balls, and dumbbells.

Reminiscence zone:





This zone is linked to horticultural therapy. Here is a selection of fruit trees and crops associated with the region's historical and cultural heritage, such as olives, figs, vines, and hazelnuts in Spain. Elements like walls, fences, and a well serve as hints for recognizing the geographical context. The objective is to spark discussions by introducing elements like weather stations, birdhouses, and local traditional harvesting tools, encouraging positive memories and fostering new dialogues.

In addition to the stimulation and motivation offered by the plants and diverse features, it's vital that the garden's design promotes the user's comfort. Adequate seating or leaning options, shaded spots during intense sunlight, and non-slip surfaces are essential considerations. Physical challenges must suit each zone, and universal accessibility is prioritized to accommodate individuals of varying physical and cognitive abilities. By addressing every design detail, the user's autonomy is enhanced.



Photo by [Tim Cooper](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Activities in a Therapeutic Garden

The therapeutic garden offers a variety of activities tailored to the needs and interests of participants. These activities are carefully planned, taking into consideration factors such as target population, cultural context, session duration, climate, and individual/group preferences. Activities can range from sensory stimulation to horticultural therapy, physical exercises, and reminiscence therapy. The modules within the garden, such as the Sensory zone, Horticultural therapy zone, Physical activity zone, and Reminiscence zone, provide organized spaces for diverse therapies.

Designing sessions involves understanding the specific population, cultural considerations, group dynamics, focus areas, and goals. By selecting and adapting activities, therapists ensure that sessions are engaging, meaningful, and aligned with therapeutic objectives. Adaptations and modifications are made as needed to respond to individual strengths and needs.





THERAPEUTIC GARDEN <u>IS</u>	THERAPEUTIC GARDEN <u>IS NOT</u>
A carefully designed space where people and nature come together for healing and well-being.	Randomly designed gardens without a focus on accessibility.
It has well-defined perimeters and specialized activity zones that redirect focus, intensifying engagement with distinct components in the garden.	A garden that lacks a variety of plants, structured zones, and well-defined perimeters.
Its design is adapted to cater to the specific needs and goals of the people who use it.	A garden that lacks recognizable placemaking and fails to create a unified, easily comprehended environment.
Elements like sensory plants, therapeutic features, and areas for physical activity contribute to the garden's healing effects.	A Garden that doesn't prioritize well-being, engagement, and diverse sensory experiences.
It provides a secure and comfortable environment, avoiding harmful chemicals, offering shade, and creating a refuge for users.	A garden without a focus on guided activities and experiences.
It is accessible and thus invites people of all abilities to engage their senses in enjoyable ways.	A garden lacking in scheduled and programmed activities.

Case scenario

"Place to Be," an organization that provides support for emotional and social well-being, established a therapeutic garden in a city environment. During the garden's first activity, which involved a group of clients with diverse cognitive and physical abilities, specific challenges became apparent. Participants experienced confusion while moving between different areas of the garden. Notably, a participant using a wheelchair encountered obstacles in accessing certain parts of the garden and required assistance from others. Additionally, this person was unable to engage in a horticultural activity





due to inaccessible planting beds. Furthermore, following a physically active session, there was insufficient shaded seating for all ten participants to comfortably rest.

Questions:

1. How well does the garden design align with the fundamental characteristics of a therapeutic garden?
2. What were the particular challenges encountered by participants during their time in the garden?
3. In what ways could the organization enhance the garden's accessibility and overall comfort for all participants?

Exercises

Exercise 1: Showcasing therapeutic garden features

This exercise will help you enhance your ability to effectively present the therapeutic features of the garden to visitors during a guided tour through interactive demonstrations.

Step 1: Key features identification:

- Identify key therapeutic features in the garden that you want to highlight during the guided tour. These could include sensory plants, relaxation areas, horticultural therapy zones or water features.
- Gather information about the benefits and significance of each feature. Understand how they contribute to the overall therapeutic experience.

Step 2: Demonstration planning and preparation:

- Choose one feature that you would like to demonstrate more thoroughly to the visitors. Think about an activity that could best represent the therapeutic aspects of this feature. For instance, you could guide visitors in a mindfulness exercise using sensory plants, demonstrate basic horticultural therapy techniques, or lead a brief relaxation session by a water feature.
- Develop clear and concise explanations for the demonstration. Highlight the key benefits and outcomes that visitors can expect from engaging with the featured element.
- Plan for props, visuals, or tools that you'll need to effectively demonstrate the activity. These could include plant samples, gardening tools, or guided meditation cues.

Step 3: Guided interactive session:

- Test the activity with your peers. Pair up and act as a visitor and a guide alternatively. Lead your visitor through the interactive activity you've planned.





Provide clear instructions and demonstrate the activity as you explain its significance.

Step 4: Discuss and draw conclusions:

- After the interactive session, initiate a discussion with the peers. Share feedback on different approaches to demonstrate the garden's features

To implement the activity use the Showcasing therapeutic garden features [worksheet](#).

Exercise 2: Therapeutic gardening essentials quiz

1. What is the primary focus of a therapeutic garden?
 - a) Providing entertainment
 - b) Aesthetics only
 - c) Healing and well-being
 - d) Horticultural research
2. What are the key elements of a therapeutic garden's design?
 - a) Random assortment of plants
 - b) Overcrowded pathways
 - c) Well-defined perimeters and activity zones
 - d) No seating arrangements
3. Who can benefit from a therapeutic garden?
 - a) Only young adults
 - b) Only individuals with physical disabilities
 - c) Individuals of all ages and abilities
 - d) Only trained horticulturists
4. What is the purpose of specialized activity zones in a therapeutic garden?
 - a) To limit access for certain participants
 - b) To create barriers between different zones
 - c) To direct focus and engagement
 - d) To block sunlight
5. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of a therapeutic garden?
 - a) Universal accessibility
 - b) Lack of pathways
 - c) Sensory plants
 - d) Focus on well-being and engagement
6. How does a therapeutic garden contribute to well-being and health?





- a) It doesn't have any effect on well-being
 - b) It provides entertainment
 - c) It is solely for aesthetic purposes
 - d) It plays a significant role in maintaining and restoring health
7. What is the significance of recognizable placemaking in a therapeutic garden?
- a) It is not important for the garden's design
 - b) It enhances the unique identity of the garden
 - c) It limits visitors' experiences
 - d) It promotes isolation
8. What is the role of scheduled and programmed activities in a therapeutic garden?
- a) They are unnecessary
 - b) They deter visitors from engaging with nature
 - c) They discourage social interactions
 - d) They guide and promote beneficial experiences
9. How does a therapeutic garden promote inclusivity?
- a) By limiting access to certain groups
 - b) By excluding individuals with disabilities
 - c) By providing a secure and comfortable environment
 - d) By focusing solely on aesthetics
10. What is the potential downside of a poorly designed therapeutic garden?
- a) It has no impact on visitors
 - b) It may not provide intended therapeutic benefits
 - c) It only caters to experienced gardeners
 - d) It leads to overstimulation

Check the correct answers [here](#)





Self-assessment

Now that we have finished this Module, you are ready to assess your learning and understanding of its contents. Please, rate each proposed statement with a score from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “definitely yes”.

Please, reflect upon your answers and be sincere. Hand the filled self-assessment sheet to the facilitator.

E.g. For the module of Environmental Responsibility

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know what a therapeutic garden is and how it differs from other types of gardens.					
2. I am able to recognize the significance of universal design and accessibility in creating inclusive therapeutic spaces.					
3. I am able to identify and describe the three main focus areas of therapeutic gardens: social/recreational, therapeutic, and vocational.					
4. I understand how sensory plants, therapeutic features, and physical activity areas contribute to the healing effects of a therapeutic garden.					
5. I know how to plan demonstrations to showcase specific therapeutic garden features to visitors.					

References

- Hazen, T. (n.d.). Therapeutic Garden Characteristics. A Quarterly Publication of the American Horticultural Therapy Association, 41(2).
- Palmlof, K., Healing Gardener Curriculum, 2023
- Smith Rodriguez, A., Healing Gardener Methodology, 2023





Exercise 1: Showcasing therapeutic garden features. Worksheet

This worksheet will help you plan and execute an engaging demonstration of a therapeutic garden feature during the guided visit.

Feature Selected: _____

Briefly describe the activity you will lead to demonstrate the selected therapeutic garden feature.

Outline the main points you will discuss with visitors during the demonstration.

List any materials or props required for the activity.





Exercise 2: Therapeutic gardening essentials quiz. Correct answers

1. c) Healing and well-being
2. c) Well-defined perimeters and activity zones
3. c) Individuals of all ages and abilities
4. c) To direct focus and engagement
5. b) Lack of pathways
6. d) It plays a significant role in maintaining and restoring health
7. b) It enhances the unique identity of the garden
8. d) They guide and promote beneficial experiences
9. c) By providing a secure and comfortable environment
10. b) It may not provide intended therapeutic benefits





MODULE 5: Sustainable gardening

Conceptual information on the topic

What is sustainable gardening?

Sustainable gardening is an eco-friendly approach to creating and maintaining gardens. It employs natural and organic techniques for plant growth, waste reduction, and protecting the ecosystem. These methods involve using compost and natural fertilizers to promote soil health, efficient irrigation, and rainwater collection. Integrating native plants and biodiversity attracts beneficial insects and birds, reducing the need for chemical pesticides and ensuring a safer environment. Sustainable gardening not only lets us enjoy nature's beauty but also actively contributes to its preservation.

Why is environmental responsibility in gardening important?

Practicing environmental responsibility in gardening is crucial for several reasons. It plays a vital role in conserving and safeguarding the natural environment, lessening the impact on ecosystems, soil health, water resources, and biodiversity. Environmentally responsible gardening addresses climate change by capturing carbon dioxide through strategies like tree planting and nurturing healthy soil. This practice also conserves water and positively impacts personal and community health.

Assuming responsibility for our gardening practices positions us as guardians of the environment, committed to a sustainable future. Embracing environmental responsibility is a conscientious choice influenced by factors like ensuring a livable world for future generations, reconnecting with the natural world, prioritizing healthier eating, and reducing pesticide use. As a community, we can collectively make a substantial impact. Gardening offers an opportunity to improve well-being through physical activity, fostering social interaction, and nurturing a sense of care.

Here are some ways to be sustainable in our gardens

Save water and control water runoff

First and foremost, it's essential to water your plants only when they truly need it. This practice not only saves water but also ensures that your plants receive just the right amount of moisture to thrive. To keep track of how much water nature is providing, consider setting up a rain gauge. This simple device helps you monitor weekly rainfall, allowing you to adjust your watering schedule accordingly. Another great water-saving





technique is to utilize rain barrels. By strategically placing these barrels, you can collect rainwater, which can then be used for watering your plants. One clever way to gather rainwater is by redirecting the flow from your roof's drain pipes directly into the barrel. Practicing efficient watering techniques like drip irrigation and mulching further enhances water conservation.

Photo by Aqua Mechanical on Flickr.com



Select plants carefully

Choose native plants adapted to your area. These plants have thrived over time, aligning with the local climate, soil, and moisture conditions. Native plants support insects crucial for the ecosystem. Avoid invasive species that disrupt this balance and reduce insect populations.

Opt for drought-tolerant plants to save water. Replace water-hungry plants with hardier alternatives, ensuring your garden's vitality during dry periods.

Diversity is vital. Plant a variety of species to create habitats for beneficial insects and build natural resistance against diseases. Your choice also helps preserve genetic diversity, crucial for healthy plant populations. Your garden's impact goes beyond looks— it's a nurturing ecosystem that supports nature.

Pest management

Opting for organic pest control methods over chemical pesticides is a responsible choice that helps maintain a delicate ecological balance. We can also implement companion planting for pest repellence and soil improvement. By avoiding the use of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides, we prevent potential harm to not only our garden but also the surrounding ecosystem and the valuable organisms within it. This conscious decision promotes a harmonious coexistence where beneficial insects and natural processes can thrive, safeguarding the long-term vitality of our garden while preserving the broader environment.

Compost plants

Composting is an eco-friendly way to deal with waste. It turns organic materials into nutrient-rich soil enhancers, balancing soil pH and increasing nutrient availability. Compost also strengthens soil against extreme weather like droughts and floods.





Creating your own compost pile is an opportunity to give back to the earth. Instead of discarding organic waste in a landfill, transform it into valuable compost that can nourish your garden's soil.

The speed at which compost matures varies, taking anywhere from one to twelve months. The duration depends on factors such as the materials' size within the compost system, the level of management, and the intended use. For instance, if you plan to use the compost as a top dressing or mulch, it can be applied with a shorter wait. On the other hand, if you intend to use the compost for growing plants in containers, thorough composting is necessary.



Photo by melGreenFR on Pixabay

Plant a pollinator-friendly garden

Creating a pollinator-friendly garden is a wonderful idea with significant benefits. Many plants rely on pollination to produce seeds, flowers, fruits, and vegetables. These plants release nectar, a sweet liquid that attracts pollinators like bees, butterflies, hoverflies, and moths. As these pollinators flit from one flower to another, collecting nectar, they also carry pollen from one plant to another.

Pollinators play a crucial role in our food supply. Without them, our food security is threatened, and numerous plant species may dwindle and vanish.

Here's how we can attract pollinators: Select plants known to draw in pollinators. Arrange them in clusters rather than scattering them. Clusters of plants are easier for the pollinators to spot and feed on than single individual plantings. To make your garden irresistible, choose plants with a variety of colors and scents that appeal to different pollinator species.

Around 4 out of 5 crops and wild flowering plant species depend on animal pollination





Photograph by Michael Reichelt on Pixabay

Recycle and reuse materials and supplies

Adopting recycling and reusing practices is a cornerstone of sustainable gardening that not only reduces waste but also benefits our time and budget. They can even spare us from unnecessary expenses at a garden center. Here are some recycling techniques to kick start the eco-friendly gardening journey:

- Transform shredded newspapers or fallen leaves into mulch. This not only repurposes these materials but also enhances the soil's health.
- Repurpose cardboard egg cartons to grow indoor seedlings and herbs. This clever hack not only reduces waste but also provides a nurturing environment for young plants.
- Slide cardboard sheets beneath the soil's surface between rows of plants. This acts as a natural barrier, stopping weed growth.
- Reuse old objects such as tires, cans, or buckets as planters for flowers or herbs. Paint them for a pop of color and a unique garden feature.

Do's and don'ts

DO	DON'T DO
Plant native species for less maintenance and wildlife habitat.	Avoid planting invasive species that can outcompete native plants and disrupt the ecosystem.





Install a rainwater collecting system.	Do not overwater the plants, as it can lead to water wastage and potentially harm the roots.
Compost kitchen scraps and yard waste for natural fertilization.	Do not dispose of garden waste in regular trash bins; instead, compost or recycle them appropriately.
Attract beneficial insects for pollination and pest control.	Avoid excessive pruning or removal of plant material, as it disrupts the natural habitat and may harm beneficial insects and birds.
Implement companion planting for pest repellence and soil improvement.	Do not neglect regular maintenance and inspection of the garden for signs of pests or diseases that can spread and damage the plants.
Use organic pest control methods instead of chemical pesticides.	Avoid using synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides that harm the environment and beneficial organisms.
Practice efficient watering techniques like drip irrigation and mulching.	Avoid excessive use of non-biodegradable materials such as plastic mulch or synthetic fabrics.
Recycle and repurpose materials to reduce waste and add creativity to the garden.	

Case scenario

Carlos tends to his garden on a hot evening, eager to nurture his beloved plants. He starts by clearing away fallen leaves and branches. He gathers them into a large plastic bag and he discards the bag into the regular trash bin. While inspecting his plants, Carlos realizes that some of them are struggling with pests. He reaches for a chemical pesticide and applies it generously to the affected areas. When he's done, he grabs a hose and waters the plants, letting the water flow freely onto the soil. He waters the garden thoroughly and then decides to water the paths as well to refresh the garden after a hot day.





1. Has Carlos tended to the garden in a sustainable way?
2. What are the potential consequences of Carlos' gardening practices on the garden's long-term well-being?
3. What could he have done differently?

Exercises

Exercise 1: Exploring native plants

Native plants are the foundation of a thriving and eco-friendly garden. In this activity, we will delve into the significance of native plants and their essential role in creating a sustainable and resilient garden environment.

Use the Worksheet Exploring native plants to do the activity.

Step 1: Identify native plants (15 minutes)

Compile a list of 6 native plant species that thrive in your local area. Search for their pictures.

Step 2: Your Favorites (30 minutes)

Choose one plant from the list that you find interesting. Provide a description of the plant. Share your choice with the group and briefly explain why you are drawn to that particular plant.

Step 3: Group discussion (15 minutes)

Discuss the advantages of using native plants, such as requiring less water, supporting local wildlife, and enhancing ecosystem health.

Reflect on what you have learned about the importance of native plants and how we can incorporate them into our gardening practices.

Exercise 2: True or false

Below are ten statements about sustainable gardening. Indicate whether each statement is true or false.





1. Sustainable gardening focuses on eco-friendly practices for plant growth, waste reduction, and ecosystem protection. (True/False)
2. Sustainable gardening incorporates the use of chemical pesticides to ensure healthy plant growth. (True/False)
3. Integrating native plants and biodiversity can reduce the need for chemical pesticides in a garden. (True/False)
4. Drip irrigation and mulching are effective water-saving techniques in sustainable gardening. (True/False)
5. Composting can enhance soil resilience against extreme weather conditions. (True/False)
6. The duration for compost to mature is the same, regardless of the composting materials used. (True/False)
7. Pollinators like bees and butterflies play a crucial role in our food supply. (True/False)
8. Planting a variety of species is not important for attracting pollinators. (True/False)
9. Recycling techniques in sustainable gardening contribute to waste reduction and cost savings. (True/False)
10. Reusing old objects for gardening purposes has no impact on sustainability. (True/False)





Self-assessment

Now that we have finished this Module, you are ready to assess your learning and understanding of its contents. Please, rate each proposed statement with a score from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “definitely yes”.

Please, reflect upon your answers and be sincere. Hand the filled self-assessment sheet to the facilitator.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know what sustainable gardening is and I can explain it to others					
2. I understand the importance of conserving water by implementing efficient irrigation methods					
3. I understand why it is important to choose native plants adapted to the local climate					
4. I know how to create a pollinator-friendly garden by strategically planting a variety of flowers that attract bees, butterflies, and other essential pollinators,					
5. I understand the importance of raising awareness about environmental responsibility among the visitors of the garden					





Worksheet: Exploring native plants

Step 1: Identify Native Plants

Compile a list of 6 native plant species that thrive in your local area. Search for their pictures and write down their names.

1. Native plant name: _____
2. Native plant name: _____
3. Native plant name: _____
4. Native plant name: _____
5. Native plant name: _____
6. Native plant name: _____

Step 2: Your Favorites

Choose one plant from the list that you find the most interesting. Provide a description of the plant and answer the questions below.

Selected native plant: _____

Write a brief description of the plant, its appearance, and any unique features.

Explain why you find this plant interesting and appealing.





Provide one reason you believe it would be beneficial for a sustainable garden.

Step 3: Group Discussion

Discuss the advantages of using native plants with your group. Consider the following questions:

1. Why do native plants require less water compared to non-native plants?
2. How do native plants support local wildlife and contribute to biodiversity?
3. In what ways do native plants enhance the health of the ecosystem?





Exercise 2. True or false. Correct answers

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. False
9. True
10. False

References

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MODULE 6: Risk management and customer service

Conceptual information on the topic

In this Module you will learn about potential hazards in the therapeutic garden. You will learn how to identify these hazards, how to prepare to reduce the possibility of incidents occurring and how to manage the risks so that the visitors have the best possible experience.

The preventative part of managing risks is to be prepared and to avoid unfortunate events or accidents from happening. Sometimes things may go wrong, so you will need to know how to handle unexpected situations.

Customer service is about making sure that visitors are comfortable and safe, and that their reasonable needs are met. In Module 1 you learned how to conduct the tour. But what happens if things don't go as planned? You will need to know what to do if someone needs something like a drink of water, a rest, or to go to the bathroom. Sometimes the visitors may not be happy about something, and they may have a complaint. You will need to know what to do in these situations.

Let's take a closer look at **risk management**.

Risk is the likelihood that a person or object exposed to a hazard will be harmed or damaged.

A **hazard** is anything that may:

- Cause harm or injury (e.g., chemicals, tools, working at height, etc.),
- Have a bad effect on health
- Damage someone's belongings or other objects

A hazard is a situation that poses a level of threat to life, health, property or the environment.

For someone or something to be considered a risk you must think about the exposure to this hazard. For example, the sun is usually not considered dangerous, but if you are exposed to the sun without the right protection for a long time during the hot days of summer, then you are increasing the risk of getting sunburnt or heatstroke .

There could be a high or low risk of something undesirable or dangerous happening. So, the way we make sure the risk is low is called risk management.





Risk management is the process of identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

Everything could potentially be identified as a hazard, but if we thought about life and our environment like this, we would never leave our house, eat or do anything.

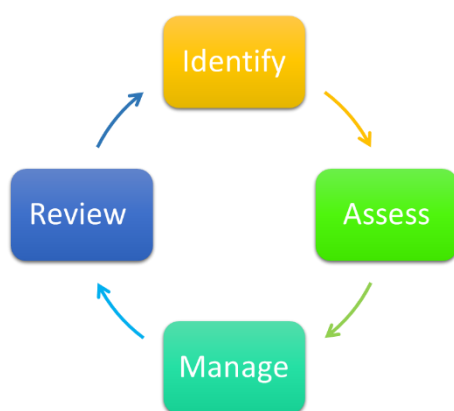
That is why we need to assess how much of a risk a hazard is.

To **assess** the risk, you need to think about the exposure to the hazard:

- How much?
- For how long?
- How often?

As well as what the consequences of this exposure are.

The basic steps of the risk management process are:



The importance of managing risks is to ensure that the visitors (customers) are safe both physically and emotionally. **Safety** refers to being free from harm or injury, danger, accidents, abuse and difficult situations.

To make the therapeutic garden safe and run safe activities, you need to think about safety and well-being and follow the steps in the risk management process.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS





1	Identification	Become aware of potential hazards. Locate and document the hazards and dangers.
2	Assessment	Evaluate the extent of the exposure to the hazard and the consequences.
3	Management	a) Prepare the area / equipment / activities
		b) Prepare to deal with the incident
		c) Deal with the incident
		d) Actions to do after the incident
4	Review	Make necessary changes/improvements

An example of using the Risk Management Process is:

IDENTIFY: While walking in the garden, we see a rake left on the path, which could be a fall hazard.

ASSESS: We analyze what might happen if someone accidentally steps on the rake and gets hurt.

MANAGE:

a) Make the area safe: We remove the rake from the path.

b) Get ready to handle problems: We tell everyone about the rake and ask them to be careful while walking.

c) Deal with accident: If someone gets hurt because of the rake or anything else, we help them right away and provide first aid if needed.

d) Do things to improve afterwards: After the incident, we write down what happened, think about how we handled it, and see if there are any ways we can make things safer in the future.

REVIEW: Based on this situation, we think about what we can change or do better next time. For example, we might talk to colleagues and ask them to store the tools in a designated place and check the paths more often to make sure they're clear of anything that could cause accidents, like tools or other objects left on the path.





Who are the visitors?

The visitors can be of any age and there are different risks associated with different age groups.

The visitors may have physical, sensory, psychological and/or cognitive challenges. Each challenge may present different risks.

The visitors may have real or perceived challenges and it is necessary to be aware of these.

The safety and wellbeing of the visitors is very important, and you need to be flexible and accommodating to their diverse needs. You may need to prepare differently for the different groups of visitors. If everything is prepared well then all will go according to plan.

In the following table you will find some actions that will help you prepare for receiving your visitors and some actions to avoid so as to ensure safety.

Do's and don't's

DO	DON'T DO
Identify and list the possible risks and dangers in the garden. Check the items on the list before each visit.	Don't assume the garden is safe.
Check the factors related to buildings and structures. Are doors unlocked and working properly?	Don't leave the entrance gate unlocked at the end of the day.
Be aware of what to do in case of an electrical failure or a fire. In case of a fire, evacuate the group immediately. Call a responsible teacher/trainer.	Don't deal with the problem yourself. Don't allow visitors to smoke or use lighters.
Check the garden area for fallen branches, rocks or other objects that people may trip on.	Do not leave tools that may be dangerous lying around the garden. Do not leave any fertilizers, sprays or other chemicals in accessible places.





	Don't leave the cleaning of the garden for the next day. You may not have time before the tour group starts.
Check equipment and materials to be used by visitors	Do not leave broken tools in the gardening area. Remove and send for maintenance or replacement.
During the activities, provide clear instructions on the proper use of tools if they are being used.	Do not let children use dangerous tools.
Find out about the needs of the group beforehand to prepare the activity properly.	Don't overlook the need for proper supervision, especially with children or vulnerable individuals. Do not allow visitors to run or engage in reckless behavior. If there is a visitor with reduced mobility, do not lead the group through inaccessible areas of the garden.
Inform the visitors beforehand about wearing clothes and shoes that are appropriate for the visit.	Don't expose the visitors to unsuitable conditions.
Be aware of signs of inclement weather or hazardous conditions. If the day is hot, make sure the entire group is standing in the shade.	Don't follow the program step by step if the conditions do not allow for the usual plan and order of the steps.
If a visitor becomes upset or agitated, suggest for them to go to a more private area/relaxation area.	Do not ignore a visitor that is getting agitated or starting to complain. Deal with the issue before it gets out of hand.
Show the visitors where to wash the soil off their hands before eating, drinking and before leaving the garden.	Do not neglect the hygiene rules for guests. Don't allow visitors to touch or consume plants or berries.





Make sure there is a First Aid Kit available in the garden.	Don't deal with injuries yourself. Call a responsible teacher/trainer or nurse if available.
Make sure the emergency contact telephone numbers are written somewhere.	Don't try to find solutions for all the problems.

Case scenarios

Case Scenario 1

Melisa is showing the Healing Garden to a group of visitors from a community center in the neighborhood. The morning is hot and sunny but, apparently, the visitors haven't been prepared for this as they are not wearing hats or sunglasses. Melisa shows them around the garden as usual and stops next to the plant beds to introduce the history and the uses of the garden to the group. The plant beds are placed in a very sunny spot, and the little lettuces shimmer in the sunlight. A few minutes later, one of the visitors says she is feeling unwell. Melissa leads her to a bench in the shade and offers her some water. At that point, Melissa suggests that everyone else in the group finds a shaded area to avoid prolonged sun exposure.

Questions:

- e) What might have made the visitor feel unwell?
- f) Did Melissa take all the precautions to keep the visitors safe and comfortable?
- g) What can Melissa do next time to prevent such a situation from happening?

Case Scenario 2

John is showing a group from a local high school around the Healing Garden. While they explore, John sees that one person is attempting to use pruning shears incorrectly and in an unsafe manner. He takes the shears from the visitor and explains how to use them correctly, reminding everyone to wear protective gloves. John keeps an eye on the group to make sure they stay safe, and reminds them to follow the rules during the tour.

Questions:

- h) How could John have prevented the hazardous situation with the visitor's misuse of the pruning shears?





- i) What steps could John have taken to identify and address potential risks in the healing garden?

Exercises

Exercise 1: Practice identifying possible hazards and risks in the garden.

Activity	Time	Description
Identifying hazards and risks.	40 minutes	<p>The trainer places some potentially dangerous objects (or photos of objects or situations that might take place) in various places in the garden. The trainer asks the students to walk around the garden, to check-all areas and try to locate the hazards. The students should write their findings in a list, accompanied by a short assessment of the risks identified. The findings are presented to the whole group. Then as a group, discuss possible solutions or preventative actions.</p> <p>Use Worksheet 1</p>

Exercise 2: Knowledge Check.

Activity	Time	Description
Garden safety. True or false questions	30 minutes	<p>The trainer prints the “Worksheet 2. Garden safety. True or false.” for each student. Ask the students to circle the correct answer.</p> <p>Alternatively, the trainer could read each statement and ask the students to answer. The use of photos may be helpful for some students. Based on the students’ answers, the trainer may need to elaborate further on some of the topics to ensure the students have understood.</p>





GARDEN SAFETY

Worksheet 1. Identifying hazards and risks.

The hazards located in the garden:

Name	Risk assessment





Worksheet 2: Garden safety. True or false questions.

Read the statements. For each one, circle whether it is TRUE or FALSE.

1.	Visitors can eat plants or berries found in the garden.	TRUE	FALSE
2.	It is important to check the garden for any fallen branches, rocks, or other objects that visitors may trip on.	TRUE	FALSE
3.	Children can cut branches and play with them.	TRUE	FALSE
4.	Children can play ball games in the gardening area where there are plant beds.	TRUE	FALSE
5.	All tools should be stored safely before each visit.	TRUE	FALSE
6.	If a visitor falls and is in pain, call a teacher or trainer to deal with the injury.	TRUE	FALSE
7.	Children can run in the garden.	TRUE	FALSE
8.	If it starts raining during a visit, continue until you have finished the tour.	TRUE	FALSE
9.	If works are being carried out in the garden, these areas should be clearly marked and the visitors not allowed to go there.	TRUE	FALSE
10.	Children do not need supervision.	TRUE	FALSE
11.	On very hot days, activities should be done in shady areas.	TRUE	FALSE
12.	If there are not enough tools in good condition for an activity, it is okay to use some broken tools.	TRUE	FALSE
13.	A First Aid Kit should always be available somewhere close to the garden.	TRUE	FALSE





1. Self-assessment

Now that we have finished this Module, you are ready to assess your learning and understanding of its contents. Please, rate each proposed statement with a score from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “definitely yes”.

Please, reflect upon your answers and be sincere. Hand the filled self-assessment sheet to the facilitator.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know what to do if I see that someone is not feeling well during the visit to the garden.					
2. I can name 5 possible hazards in the garden					
3. I understand why it is important to be aware of the hazards in the garden and what to do if something goes wrong					
4. I can name 3 different groups of visitors that may pose different risks in the garden.					
5. I understand the importance of informing the visitors about potential hazards					





Exercise 2. Garden safety. True or false. Correct answers

1.	FALSE
2.	TRUE
3.	TRUE
4.	FALSE
5.	TRUE
6.	TRUE
7.	FALSE
8.	FALSE
9.	TRUE
10.	FALSE
11.	TRUE
12.	FALSE
13.	TRUE

References

Hazards and Risks Definition. (2022, August 26). [safetysection.com](https://www.safetysection.com).

