



Importance of Nature

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Learning Outcomes

- Familiarize yourself with how nature can impact your well-being.
- Incorporate nature into practices of mindfulness and self-care.
- Understand nature's benefit on our mental health.



Importance of Nature

- Being in nature allows one to (Bratman et al., 2012):
 - De-stress
 - Focus on the moment
 - Elevate positive emotions
- 5 Types of Nature (Bratman et al., 2012):
 - Countryside/farmland
 - Water Bodies
 - Urban Green
 - Forest/woodlands
 - Wilderness

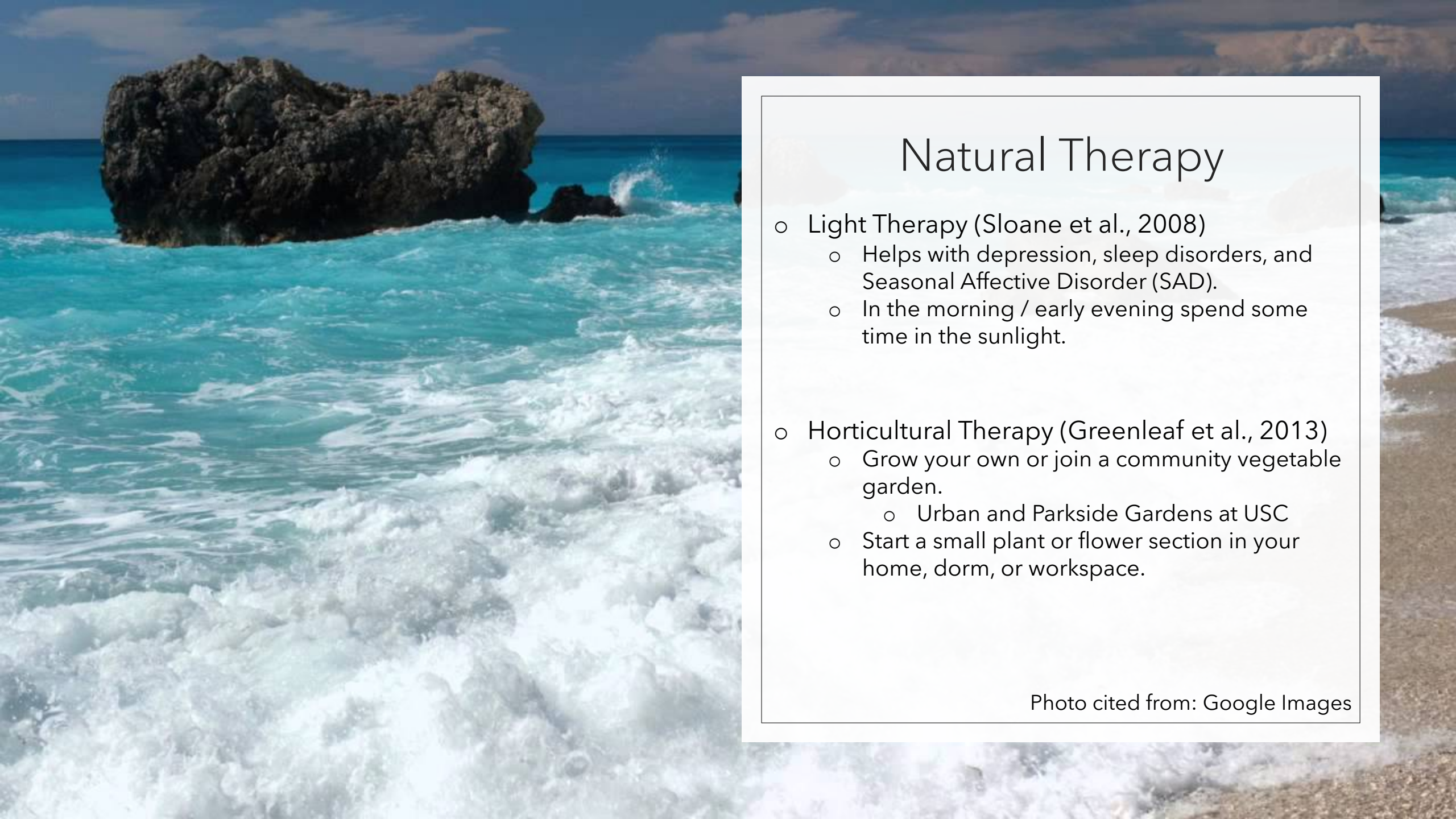
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Benefits of Nature

- Nature provides the following benefits:
 - Sense of calm, energy, or focus.
 - Reduce feelings of anxiety and stress.
 - Social meeting place.
- Greenleaf et. al, 2013 found that it is also helpful to access nature through technology (phone, tablet, laptop):
 - Ringtones
 - Calming sounds
 - Background noise
 - E-mail or browser themes

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Natural Therapy

- Light Therapy (Sloane et al., 2008)
 - Helps with depression, sleep disorders, and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).
 - In the morning / early evening spend some time in the sunlight.
- Horticultural Therapy (Greenleaf et al., 2013)
 - Grow your own or join a community vegetable garden.
 - Urban and Parkside Gardens at USC
 - Start a small plant or flower section in your home, dorm, or workspace.

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Summary: Ways to Connect with Nature

- Meditate on grass or on the beach.
- Walk around campus and focus on the noise of birds or trees gusting in the wind.
- Reflect on your day while being in nature.
- Use apps. (i.e. *Calm*, Nature videos on *YouTube*) to give background noise.
- Step outside when taking a break from studying.

Photo cited from: Google Images

References

- Bratman, G.N., Hamilton, J.P., & Daily, G.C. (2012). The impacts of nature experience on human cognitive function and mental health. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*.
- Greenleaf, A.T., Bryant, R.M., & Pollock, J.B. (2013). Nature-based counseling: integrating the healing benefits of nature into practice. *Springer Science +Business Media New York*.
- Sloane, P.D., Figueiro, M., & Cohen, L. (2008). Light as therapy for sleep disorders and depression in older adults. *Clin Geriatr*.

Images:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f77SKdyn-1Y>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nd7e4SNjGBM>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/426293920955319931/>
- <https://oregonwild.org/wilderness>