

TH Activity Plan – Field Trip to Community Garden

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Photo by L. Fleming



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Visiting a community garden, experiencing a green space as a group outing.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Learn about community gardens, community resources, gardening, biodegradable materials & environmentally responsible practices

Physical: Build physical stamina walking & standing; strengthen balance walking on uneven ground

Psychological/Emotional: Develop sense of belonging with group members; sense of place in a community facility; practice public outings

Sensory: Practice exposure to outdoor conditions (sunlight, heat, wind)

Social: Work collaboratively & cooperatively travelling to & touring garden

Materials

Transportation
Water access for hydration @ site
Emergency contact info for each participant
Seating @ site

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Prep:** Prior to actual field trip, develop a plan to include transportation, supervision, drop-off site, facility contact person, restroom/seating requirements & availability, duration of visit, weather elements. Communicate these to participants & care partners, parents or others.
2. Transport participants, promoting social interactions among group members in support of social & psychological goals.
3. With facility contact, tour the community garden, sharing environmental & horticultural facts appropriate for group. If tasting of produce will occur, prior approval & review of allergies, food sensitivities or other food considerations should have been done.
4. Plan a rest break at site, providing short activities to promote socializing among participants (game, share your favorite plant we saw). Allow sufficient time for bathroom & hydration break.
5. Follow-up activities at subsequent TH sessions can include recounting plants, drawing flowers or plan/design of the garden, making a group photo book or planning a home garden.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: A field trip is appropriate for most populations unless they are incarcerated, prohibited from said facility, or are a flight or elopement risk. Small group numbers will provide for adequate supervision, easing potential confusion or flight from group. For larger sites, the visit could be limited to a children's garden, vegetable garden or area closest to drop-off point accommodating for physical limitations, time limitations or other considerations pertinent for the visiting group.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Transportation & particular needs of participants should be considered & planned prior to field trip including availability of accessible facilities. Seniors' facilities or schools may have their own accessible transportation. Leader should have emergency contacts for each participant.

If individuals are meeting at site, not transported as a group, prior directions & clear meetup spot with signs are essential. The site may not be fully accessible or available to all participants. Some paths may be uneven, bathrooms & seating may be limited. Supervision and appropriate leader-participant ratios will vary by population. For example, people living with dementia may be accompanied by care partners, or group size may be small based on elopement tendencies. Hydration & sun protection for all populations should be considered, especially in hot climates.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: A variety of locations & facilities can be considered as field trip destinations which may offer different focuses, for example: food production (urban farm); art & plant integration (botanical garden); sustainability & environmental best practices (nursery or permaculture farm); or school gardens with inclusive programming & education. Field trips to other locations can coincide with the kind of TH programming that is done at the facility. For example, a trip to greenhouse or garden center with a focus on care for indoor and greenhouse plants, community garden with a focus on growing vegetables or flowers in ground, raised bed or container gardens. For a full circle approach, a field trip can start community relationships. Residents of adult day centers visiting a community garden or greenhouse (commercial greenhouse or university agricultural center) may observe plant propagation, then do this type of activity at their facility, followed by donating plants to an early childhood center or college urban farm.

From a different perspective, health practitioners may find a field trip expands their practice, understanding of client benefits & inspiration for their services. For example, seeing propagation at the community garden can lead to a propagation activity, discussion of cycle of life, sexuality of plants & people, or sense of community. Tours can provide new ideas and new therapeutic goals incorporated into programming. For example, goals related to increasing client's sense of responsibility or practice initiating tasks may be appropriate, with outcomes evident in these domains as well as participants taking greater roles in planning TH activities at their facility, with outcomes of greater sense of choice, responsibility, and accomplishment.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:



Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.