

ASLA Career Discovery and Diversity

Landscape Architecture and Mental Health

Connecting People to Natural Landscapes

The idea that spending time in nature can make you feel better is intuitive. We all feel this to be true, and many of us have anecdotes of our own or from friends or family that support that idea. People who have been suffering from stress, sickness, or a trauma can spend quiet contemplative time in gardens or taken to the mountains or woods to heal. But nature is not just wilderness. The benefits of nature can also be found in our communities' parks and green spaces.



Landscape architects design these and many other outdoor spaces where people can walk, sit, play, exercise, explore, and look at the stars. They design outdoor spaces to be safe and accessible to all people. Below is a collection of ASLA resources that cite how landscape architects connect people to natural landscapes, as well as the benefits of healthy outdoor spaces.

Blog Posts

- Lisa Bailey, “Icons of Healthcare and Therapeutic Garden Design: Clare Cooper Marcus,” *The Field*, March 8, 2018, <https://thefield.asla.org/2018/03/08/icons-of-healthcare-therapeutic-garden-design-clare-cooper-marcus/>.
- ———, “Your Brain on Water,” *The Field*, April 14, 2016, <https://thefield.asla.org/2016/04/14/your-brain-on-water/>.
- Rebecca W. Flemer, “A Healing Garden in a Therapeutic Landscape,” *The Field*, July 18, 2019, <https://thefield.asla.org/2019/07/18/a-healing-garden-in-a-therapeutic-landscape/>.
- Jared Green, “A Cost-effective Way to Treat Depression: Greening Vacant Lots,” *The Dirt*, August 15, 2018, <https://dirt.asla.org/2018/08/15/a-new-way-to-treat-depression-greening-vacant-lots/>.
- ———, “Living near Nature Provides Long-term Mental Health Boost,” *The Dirt*, January 14, 2014, <https://dirt.asla.org/2014/01/14/living-near-nature-improves-mental-health/>.
- David Kamp, “Expanding Horizons: The Life Enrichment Center,” *The Field*, January 24, 2013, <https://thefield.asla.org/2013/01/24/expanding-horizons-the-life-enrichment-center/>.
- Nancy Wicks, “Therapeutic Gardening for an Adult Inpatient Psychiatric Unit,” *The Field*, April 17, 2018, <https://thefield.asla.org/2018/04/17/therapeutic-gardening-for-an-adult-inpatient-psychiatric-unit/>.



(Photo Credit: Rendering for Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital Healing Garden / image: Adam E. Anderson)



American Society of Landscape Architects



@NationalASLA



@NationalASLA

Books

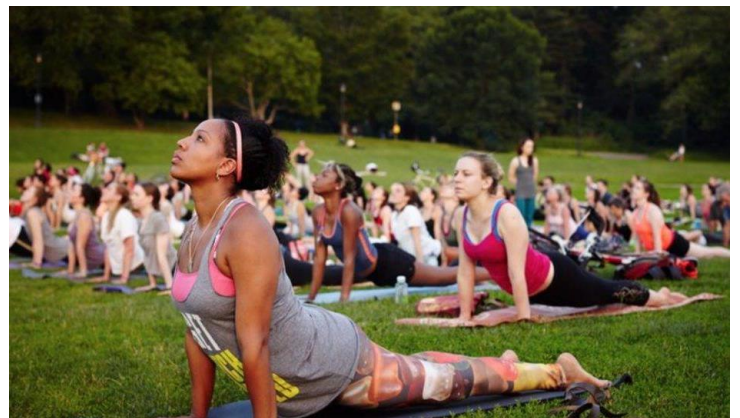
- Timothy Beatley, [*Handbook of Biophilic City Planning and Design*](#) (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2016).
- Garuth Chalfont, [*Design for Nature in Dementia Care*](#) (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley, 2008).
- Nancy Gerlach-Spriggs, Richard Enoch Kaufman, and Sam Bass Warner, [*Restorative Gardens: The Healing Landscape*](#) (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).
- Clare Cooper Marcus and Naomi Sachs, [*Therapeutic Landscapes: An Evidence-based Approach to Designing Healing Gardens and Restorative Outdoor Spaces*](#) (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2014).



(Photo Credit: Aga Khan University Medical Campus, Karachi, Pakistan / image: Adam E. Anderson)

Landscape Architecture Magazine

- Kevan Busa, [*“The Designer Becomes the Patient: Fighting Leukemia Gave Me a New Perspective on Healing Gardens.”*](#) *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 103, no. 6 (June 2013): 114-118.
- Katarina Katsma, [*“Mind, Soul, Design: Practicality Resides at the Core of Every Virginia Burt Design.”*](#) *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 108, no. 3 (March 2018): 62-73.
- Jeff Link, [*“The Road to Evidence: The Military-medical Complex Is Looking at Environmental Approaches to Treating Trauma.”*](#) *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 106, no. 11 (November 2016): 58-68.
- Jane Margolies, [*“The Schoolyard Is Sick: The Design of School Grounds Is Being Rethought for Many Reasons. Claire Latané Wants Improving Students’ Mental Health to Be One of Them.”*](#) *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 109, no. 6 (June 2019): 72-89.
- Bill Marken, [*“The Healer: If Not for Clare Cooper Marcus, We Might Have Missed the Tonic Powers of Design.”*](#) *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 101, no. 2 (February 2011): 38-46.
- Joann Plockova, [*“Mood Enhancers: A Cross-disciplinary Team Examines the Effects of Nature on the Urban Mind in Real Time.”*](#) *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 108, no. 6 (June 2018): 26.
- Kyna Rubin, [*“Do No Harm: In Portland, Oregon, Quatrefoil Designs a Healing Garden for Patients in Crisis.”*](#) *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 108, no. 4 (April 2018): 38-40.



(Photo Credit: Prospect Park)



Professional Practice

- Healthcare and Therapeutic Design PPN *Field* Posts, <https://thefield.asla.org/category/healthcare-and-therapeutic-design/>.
- Professional Practice Health Benefits of Nature Guide, <https://www.asla.org/healthbenefitsofnature.aspx>.
- Professional Practice Healthy and Livable Communities Guide, <https://www.asla.org/livable.aspx>.
- Professional Practice Networks: Healthcare and Therapeutic Design, <https://www.asla.org/healthcare.aspx>.



(Photo credit: Getty)

Contact Info

Please direct questions about ASLA Career Discovery to Lisa J. Jennings, Manager, Career Discovery and Diversity at discover@asla.org



American Society of Landscape Architects



@NationalASLA



@NationalASLA