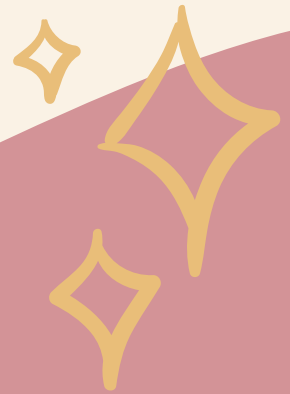
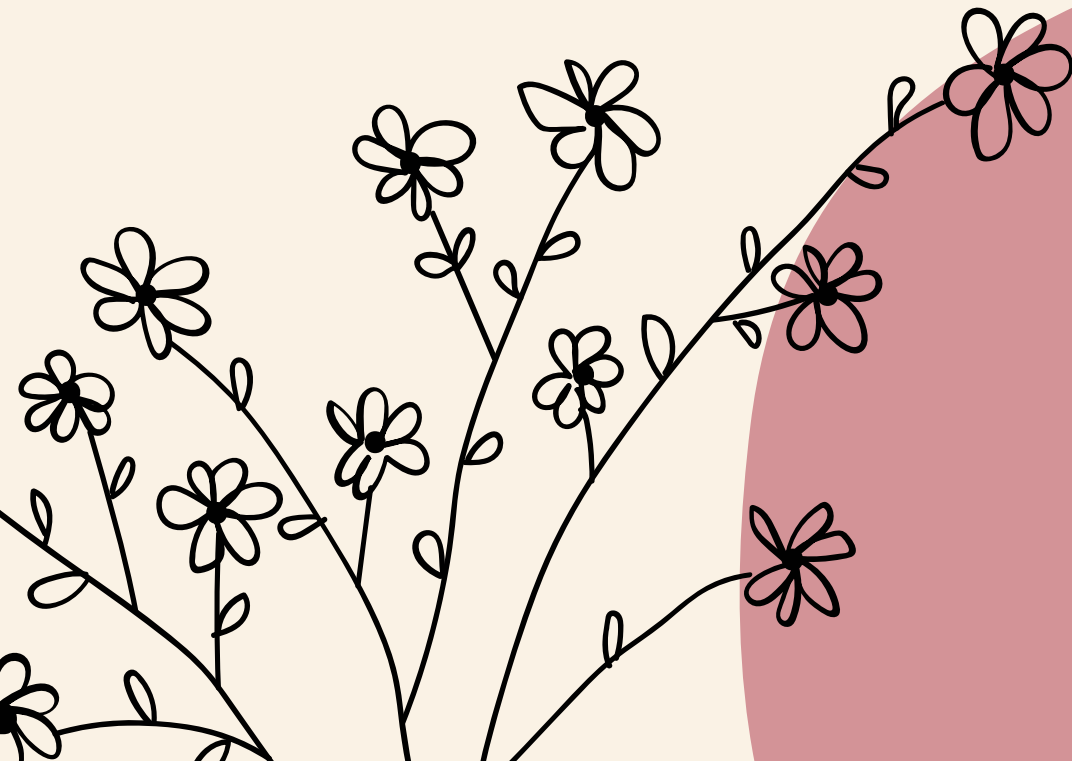




Nature Connection Journal

For Maternal Mental Health Week



Your Mind Matters

Written in
collaboration with
Claire Underwood

Welcome

We have created this nature connection journal, inspired by a fabulous resource written by Claire Underwood, to help individuals take a few moments out to reconnect with the world around them.

We're helping to raise awareness of Maternal Mental Health and are providing this workbook, for free. Please download, share and help raise awareness of maternal mental health. We encourage you to do something for yourself each day, however big or small that might be. This journal is one of the ways that you may choose to support your own wellbeing, through nature connection.

This journal is designed for you to use whenever you are able, however is most successful when used regularly, over a number of different sessions. Once you have completed the journal, feel free to add in more pages and use the question prompts for future sessions.

This resource has been inspired by the original resource from Claire, but has been tweaked and reformatted by Emma Wiid from The Outdoor Club CIC and Muddy Toes groups. Emma is a First Aid for Mental Health trainer, Certified Outdoor Mental Health Practitioner & Therapeutic Outdoor Practitioner. Emma champions the importance of looking after mental health and wellbeing at all stages of parenthood.

If you'd like to give feedback on this resource, please email hello@muddytoes.co.uk and feel free to share with your friends, family and colleagues.

X



Activity 1:

Getting Prepared with a Herbal Tea

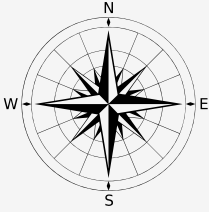
Find yourself a mint plant, either ask a friend or neighbour if they have any spare or buy from a local plant nursery. You will use leaves from this plant each day/week to make yourself a nourishing mint tea.



Finding your sit spot

Find a place outdoors where you can sit in comfort. Choose a place which is easily accessible so you can visit frequently such as a garden, or a group of trees near your home. If possible, plant your mint there otherwise keep it near your house to make yourself a nourishing warm drink of tea. Add a few leaves to your favourite mug of hot water, leave to brew a while before drinking.

To begin with find a quiet place where you can spend some time using this journal. Where is your sit spot? Using the space below, draw either a birds-eye map or a sketch of the view.



Sit Spot Drawing:

Can you discover which compass point are you facing? If you don't have access to a compass you could access one on a phone.

Can you work out where the sun rises in the east and where it will set in the west?

Questions for reflection

Now that you have found your familiar place. Spend a few moments answering the questions below. Let your pen flow freely over the pages, using as much space as you need (even on another page, if necessary). There are no right or wrong answers.

- What do you enjoy about being outdoors?
- Is there a person in your life who has shown you the joy of being in nature? What did they do?
- What do you not enjoy about being outdoors? Is there one thing you can do to help overcome this?
 - Where does that feeling come from?
 - What plants can you name?
 - What birds, animals or insects can you see?



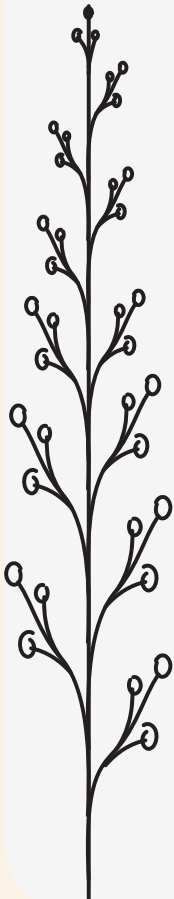
Set this journal to one side as you prepare to engage your senses.

- Let other thoughts float away as you concentrate on the earth you can feel below you.
- Imagine roots growing out from where your body meets the ground.
- What can you hear?
- What can you see?
- Taste your mint tea as you sip and relax.
- Are there any scents that you can detect?
- Sit back and feel into your senses.

After some time let the questions rise in your mind again.

- What part of nature called to you to find out more?
- Maybe there was a plant you didn't recognise?
- Maybe you saw an insect doing something unusual or you spotted a print in the mud.
- What is your mystery of nature upon which you will reflect?

Visit your sit spot as often as you can and record your findings about your mystery of nature below:



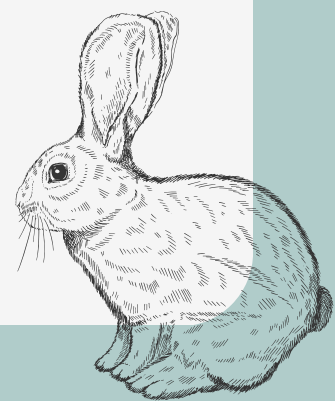
Activity 2:

Prepare your mint tea and mindfully walk to your sit spot. Leave behind your cares and worries whilst breathing deeply and slowly into your belly.

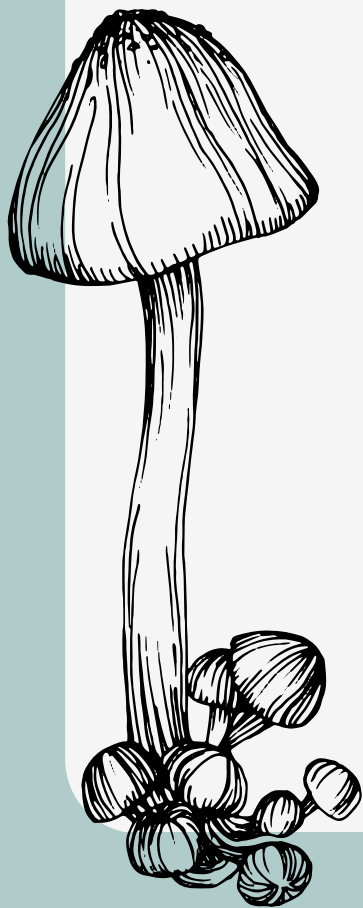
What do you notice this week?

Are there any more plants that you now know?

What birds, animals and insects do you see?



Space for reflection and free writing



Set this journal to one side and engage your senses.

Go through each of the senses to deepen and expand them. Draw attention to your breath and how it fills your body right down to your toes, your fingers and into your brain. Relax your jaw and lower your shoulders. Relax and watch the nature around you.

Sight

Smell

Sound

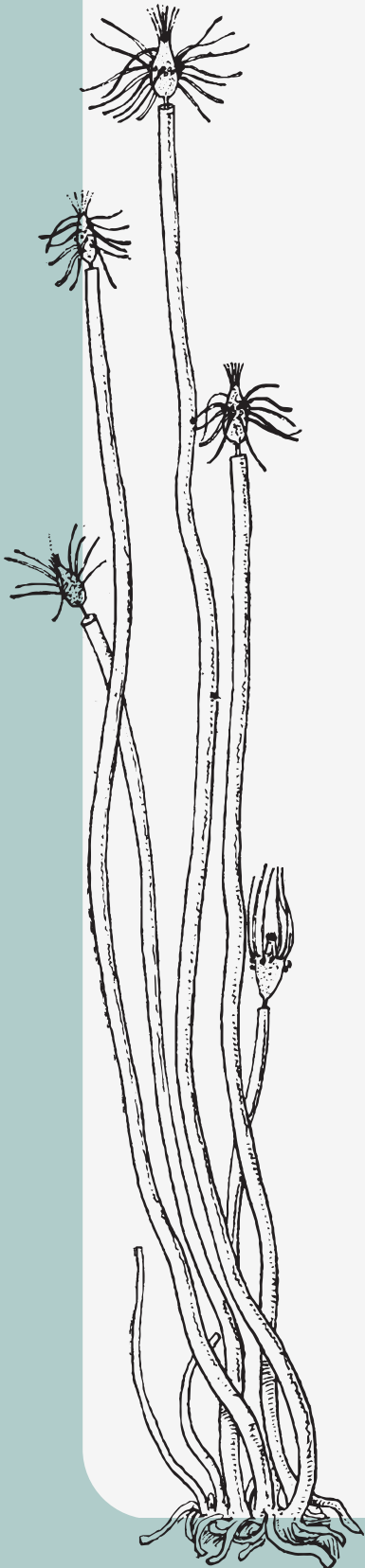
Touch

Taste



What mystery of nature did you witness this week? Maybe it was blossom falling or a bee pollinating.

Visit your sit spot as often as you can and write down what you found out about your chosen mystery of nature below:



Activity 3

Take time this week to go for a wander somewhere wild. As you walk name either out loud or in your mind as many trees, plants, birds, animals and insects as you can. If you do not know the name for them can you invent one?

Use the space below to reflect on your walk.



Activity 3

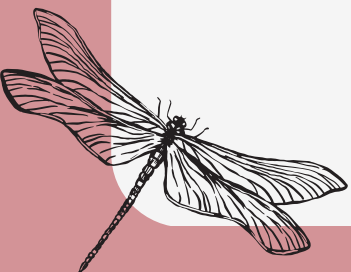
Return to your sit spot with a warm mug of mint tea in hand.

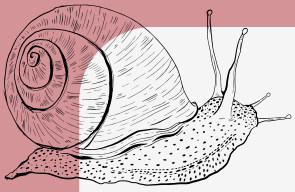
Settle yourself and begin to take notice.

Has anything changed?

Are there any trees or plants you can now name?

What animals, birds or insects can you see?





Activity 3

Set your journal to one side and engage the senses one by one. Feel your stresses and tensions in your muscles melt away. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, slow and steady. As you breathe in let your belly move out to make space for your big breath. And when you exhale feel your belly button push back in toward your spine. Let the sounds of nature fill your ears. What colours can you see? Can you name 5? Take time to observe.

Sight

Smell

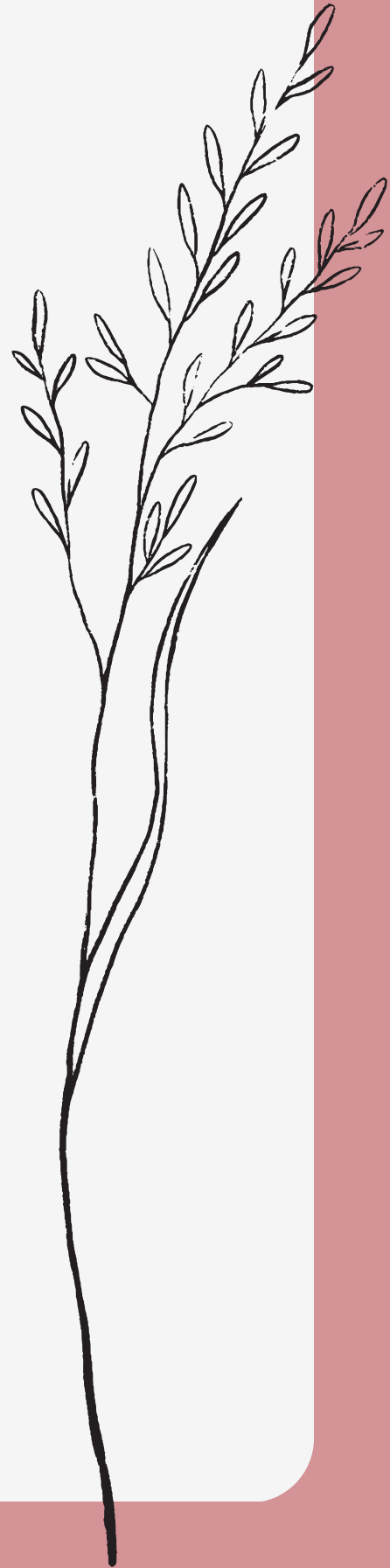
Sound

Touch

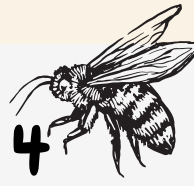
Taste

Activity 3

What mystery of nature did you see? Visit your sit spot as often as possible and write down what you found out about your mystery of nature below



Activity 4



Before you venture outside take a few moments to reflect and answer these questions.

What is it about this project that you like?

Which aspect do you find more challenging?

Is there anything you can do to reduce the challenges?

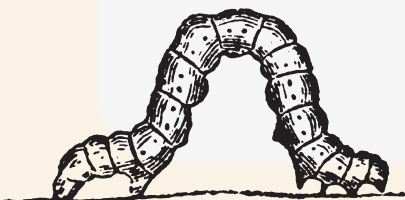
Activity 4

Mindfully make your mint tea, take a moment to inhale the mint steam and feel the warm water vapour on your face. Breathe deep and walk out to your sit spot. Sit in your sit spot as if it was your throne and survey your kingdom. Notice the now familiar plants and trees. How have they changed since you were last here?

What is happening in this moment? What life processes are occurring?

Choose a process to find out more about. Maybe it is photosynthesis or transpiration.

Visit your sit spot as often as possible and write down what you found out about your mystery of nature on the next page:



Mystery of Nature



Activity 5

Feel the now familiar ritual of making your mint tea and walking out to your sit spot.

Settle down and feel your breath slow and deepen, your face and jaw relaxing. Feel gratitude towards your surroundings. Feel a part of your surroundings. This is your home too. As you relax and observe consider the different things you now know and feel about your home in nature.

Think about how you could show your gratitude to this place. Is there something that you could create or make for this place? Maybe you could make a bug hotel or plant some bulbs. Maybe you could plant a tree or put up a bird feeder. You might choose to paint a picture or write a song.

Spend this week creating something for your place in celebration and gratitude.

Write below what you plan to do:





Activity 6

A Celebration and Thank You

In this final stage of the project you choose how you would like to celebrate. You may decide to invite your family or friends and have a little picnic in your sit-spot. You could point out the names of the living creatures and share the mysteries of nature which you found out about over the weeks.

Complete what you had planned to show gratitude to your place.
Note down what you have planned and what you create.

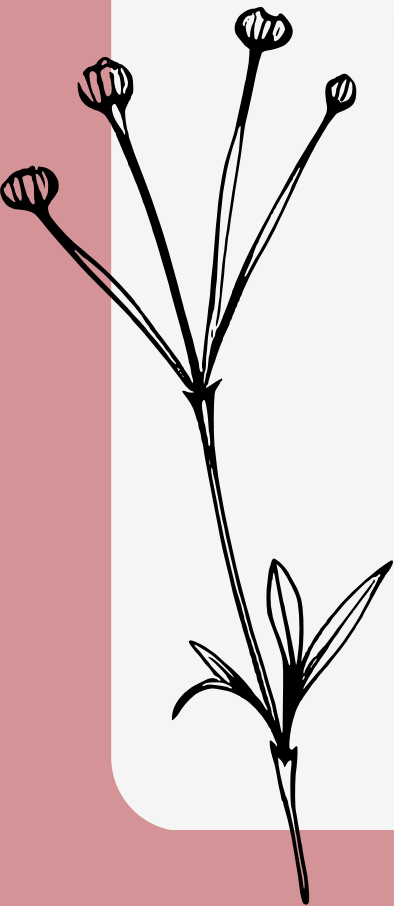
This is not the end, it is the beginning of your journey to become more in tune with nature and more in tune with your own wellbeing.



Final Thoughts

Take some time to consider the following.
What do you enjoy about being outdoors?

How will you be someone who shows others the
joy of being outdoors?





Written in support For Maternal
Mental Health Week